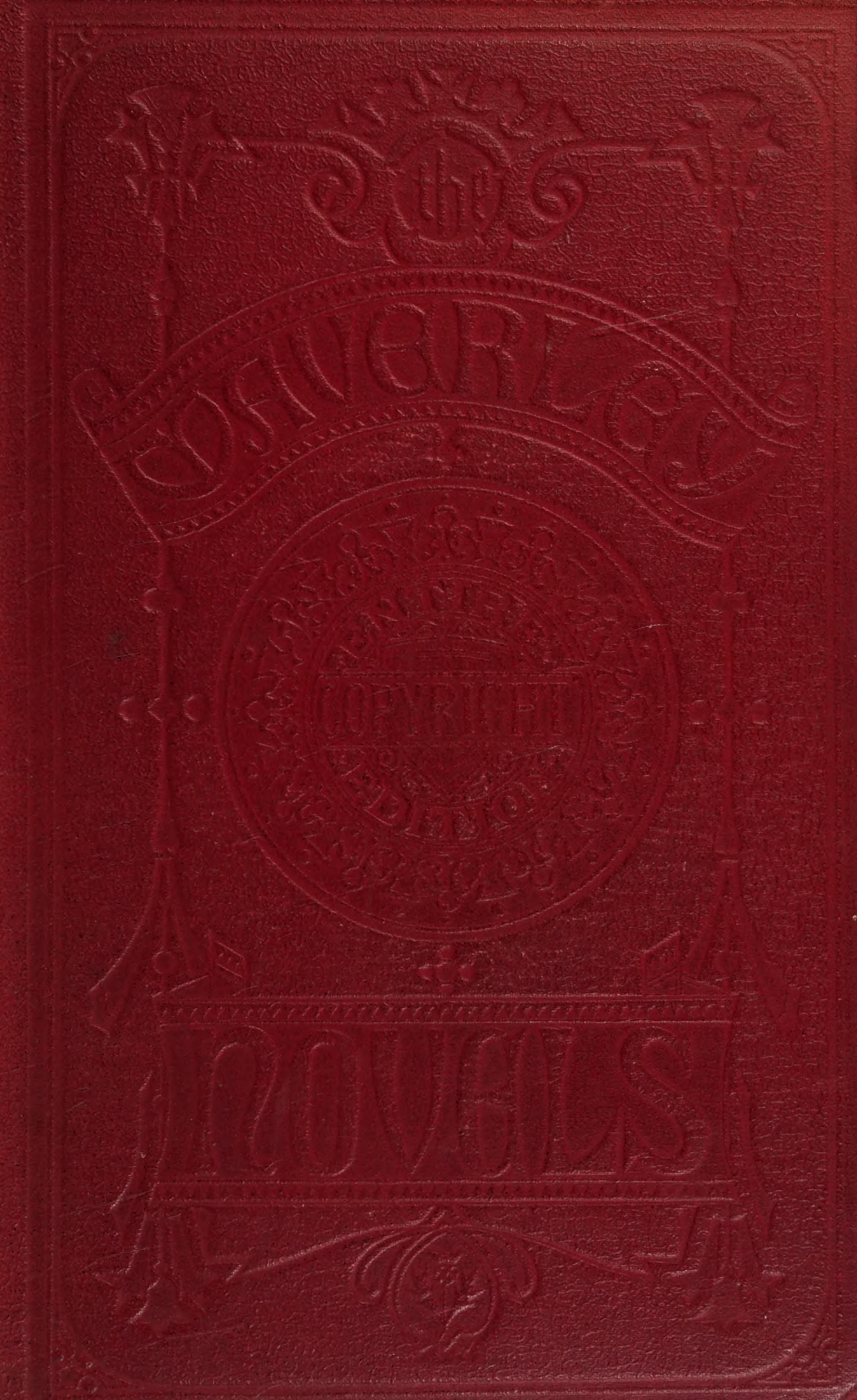
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WAVERLEY NOVELS

VOLUME V.

MORRISON AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH

THE

WAVERLEY NOVELS

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

NEW POPULAR EDITION, COPYRIGHT

VOLUME FIFTH

WOODSTOCK
THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH
ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN
COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS
SURGEON'S DAUGHTER, AND CASTLE DANGEROUS
INDEX

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1892

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WOODSTOCK

OR

THE CAVALIER

A TALE OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

'He was a very perfect gentle Knight.'—CHAUCER

ALICE LEE AT ROSAMOND'S SPRING, *page* 90

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1892

COLONEL EVERARD AND LOUIS KERNEGUY.—PAGE 117.

INTRODUCTION

THE *busy period of the great Civil War was one in which the character and genius of different parties were most brilliantly displayed, and, accordingly, the incidents which took place on either side were of a striking and extraordinary character, and afforded ample foundation for fictitious composition. The Author had in some measure attempted such in Peveril of the Peak; but the scene was in a remote part of the kingdom, and mingled with other national differences, which left him still at liberty to glean another harvest out of so ample a store.*

In these circumstances, some wonderful adventures which happened at Woodstock in the year 1649 occurred to him as something he had long ago read of, although he was unable to tell where, and of which the hint appeared sufficient, although, doubtless, it might have been much better handled if the Author had not, in the lapse of time, lost everything like an accurate recollection of the real story.

It was not until about this period, namely 1831, that the Author, being called upon to write this Introduction, obtained a general account of what really happened upon the marvellous occasion in question, in a work termed 'The Every-day Book,' published by Mr. Hone, and full of curious antiquarian research, the object being to give a variety of original information concerning manners illustrated by curious instances rarely to be found elsewhere. Among other matter, Mr. Hone quotes an article from the British Magazine for 1747, in the following words, and which is probably the document which the Author of Woodstock had formerly perused, although he was unable to refer to the source of his information. The tract is entitled, 'The Genuine History of the Good Devil of Woodstock, famous in the world, in the year 1649, and never accounted for or at all understood to this time.'*

The teller of this 'genuine history' proceeds verbatim as follows:—

Some original papers having lately fallen into my hands, under the name of 'Authentic Memoirs of the Memorable Joseph Collins of Oxford, commonly known by the name of Funny Joe, and now intended for the press,' I was extremely delighted to find in them a circumstantial and unquestionable account of the most famous of all invisible agents, so well known in the year 1649, *under the name of the Good Devil of Woodstock, and even adored by the people of that place, for the vexation and distress it occasioned some people they were not much pleased with. As this famous story, though related by a thousand people, and attested in all its circumstances, beyond all possibility of doubt, by people of rank, learning, and reputation, of Oxford and the adjacent towns, has never yet been generally accounted for, or at all understood, and is perfectly explained, in a manner that can admit of no doubt, in these papers, I could not refuse my readers the pleasure it gave me in reading.*

There is, therefore, no doubt that, in the year 1649, a number of incidents, supposed to be supernatural, took place at the king's palace of Woodstock, which the Commissioners of Parliament were then and there endeavouring to dilapidate and destroy. The account of this by the Commissioners themselves, or under their authority, was repeatedly published, and, in particular, is inserted as relation sixth of 'Satan's Invisible World Discovered,' by George Sinclair, Professor of Philosophy in Glasgow,† an approved collector of such tales.

* [Vol. ii. p. 582, Lond. 1827.]

† [Originally published at Edinburgh, 1685, 12mo.]

It was the object of neither of the great political parties of that day to discredit this narrative, which gave great satisfaction both to the Cavaliers and Roundheads; the former conceiving that the licence given to the demons was in consequence of the impious desecration of the king's furniture and apartments, so that the citizens of Woodstock almost adored the supposed spirits, as avengers of the cause of royalty; while the friends of the Parliament, on the other hand, imputed to the malice of the fiend the obstruction of the pious work, as they judged that which they had in hand.

At the risk of prolonging a curious quotation, I include a page or two from Mr. Hone's 'Every-day Book.'

The honourable the Commissioners arrived at Woodstock manor-house, October 13th, and took up their residence in the King's own rooms. His Majesty's bed-chamber they made their kitchen, the council-hall their pantry, and the presence-chamber was the place where they sat for dispatch of business. His Majesty's dining-room they made their woodyard, and stowed it with no other wood but that of the famous Royal Oak from the High Park, which, that nothing might be left with the name of the King about it, they had dug up by the roots, and bundled up into fagots for their firing.

October 16th.—This day they first sat for the dispatch of business. In the midst of their first debate there entered a large black dog (as they thought), which made a terrible howling, overturned two or three of their chairs, and doing some other damage, went under the bed, and there gnawed the cords. The door this while continued constantly shut, when after some two or three hours, Giles Sharp, their secretary, looking under the bed, perceived that the creature was vanished, and that a plate of meat that the servants had hid there was untouched, and showing them to their honours, they were all convinced there could be no real dog concerned in the case; the said Giles also deposed on oath, that, to his certain knowledge, there was not.

'October 17th.—As they were this day sitting at dinner in a lower room, they heard plainly the noise of persons walking overhead, though they well knew the doors were all locked, and there could be none there. Presently after they heard also all the wood of the King's Oak brought by parcels from the dining-room, and thrown with great violence into the presence-chamber, as also the chairs, stools, tables, and other furniture forcibly hurled about the room, their own papers of the minutes of their transactions torn, and the ink-glass broken. When all this had some time ceased, the said Giles proposed to enter first into these rooms, and, in presence of the Commissioners, of whom he received the key, he opened the door and entered the room, their honours following him. He there found the wood strewed about the room, the chairs tossed about and broken, the papers torn, and the ink-glass broken over them all as they had heard, yet no footsteps appeared of any person whatever being there, nor had the doors ever been opened to admit or let out any persons since their honours were last there. It was therefore voted, nem. con., *that the person who did this mischief could have entered no other way than at the key-hole of the said doors.*

In the night following this same day, the said Giles, and two other of the Commissioners' servants, as they were in bed in the same room with their honours, had their bed's feet lifted up so much higher than their heads, that they expected to have their necks broken, and then they were let fall at once with such violence as shook them up from the bed to a good distance; and this was repeated many times, their honours being amazed spectators of it. In the morning the bedsteads were found cracked and broken, and the said Giles and his fellows declared they were sore to the bones with the tossing and jolting of the beds.

October 19th.—As they were all in bed together, the candles were all blown out together with a sulphurous smell, and instantly many trenchers of wood were hurled about the room; and one of them putting his head above the clothes had not less than six thrown at him, which wounded him very grievously. In the morning the trenchers were all found lying about the room, and were observed to be the same they had eaten on the day before, none being found remaining in the pantry.

October 20th.—This night the candles were put out as before; the curtains of the bed in which their honours lay were drawn to and fro many times with great violence: their honours received many cruel blows, and were much bruised beside, with eight great pewter dishes, and three dozen wooden trenchers, which were thrown on the bed, and afterwards heard rolling about the room.

Many times also this night they heard the forcible falling of many fagots by their bedside, but in the morning no fagots were found there, no dishes or trenchers were there seen either: and the aforesaid Giles attests, that by their different arranging in the pantry, they had assuredly been taken thence, and after put there again.

October 21st.—The keeper of their ordinary and his bitch lay with them: This night they had no disturbance.

October 22.—Candles put out as before. They had the said bitch with them again, but were not by that protected: the bitch set up a very piteous cry; the clothes of their beds were all pulled off, and the bricks, without any wind, were thrown off the chimney tops into the midst.

October 24. — The candles put out as before. They thought all the wood of the King's Oak was violently thrown down by their bedsides; they counted sixty-four fagots that fell with great violence, and some hit and shook the bed,—but in the morning none were found there, nor the door of the room opened in which the said fagots were.

October 25. — The candles put out as before. The curtains of the bed in the drawing-room were many times forcibly drawn; the wood thrown out as before; a terrible crack like thunder was heard; and one of the servants, running to see if his master was not killed, found, at his return, three dozen trenchers laid smoothly upon his bed under the quilt.

October 26. — The beds were shaken as before, the windows seemed all broken to pieces, and glass fell in vast quantities all about the room. In the morning they found the windows all whole, but the floor strewed with broken glass, which they gathered and laid by.

October 29.—At midnight candles went out as before, something walked majestically through the room and opened and shut the window; great stones were thrown violently into the room, some whereof fell on the beds, others on the floor; and about a quarter after one, a noise was heard as of forty cannon discharged together, and again repeated at about eight minutes' distance. This alarmed and raised all the neighbourhood, who, coming into their honours' room, gathered up the great stones, four score in number, many of them like common pebbles and boulters, and laid them by, where they are to be seen to this day, at a corner of the adjoining field. This noise, like the discharge of cannon, was heard throughout the country for sixteen miles round. During these noises, which were heard in both rooms together, both the Commissioners and their servants gave one another over for lost, and cried out for help; and Giles Sharp, snatching up a sword, had well-nigh killed one of their honours, taking him for the spirit as he came in his shirt into the room. While they were together, the noise was continued, and part of the tiling of the house, and all the windows of an upper room, were taken away with it.

October 30. — Something walked into the chamber, treading like a bear: it walked many times about, then threw the warming pan violently upon the floor, and so bruised it, that it was spoiled. Vast quantities of glass were now thrown about the room, and vast numbers of great stones and horses' bones were thrown in; these were all found in the morning, and the floors, beds, and walls were all much damaged by the violence they were thrown in.

November 1.—Candles were placed in all parts of the room, and a great fire made. At midnight, the candles all yet burning, a noise like the burst of a cannon was heard in the room, and the burning billets were tossed all over the room and about the beds; and had not their honours called in Giles and his fellows, the house had assuredly been burnt. An hour after the candles went out, as usual, the clack of many cannon was heard, and many pailfuls of green stinking water were thrown on their honours in bed; great stones were also thrown in as before, the bed curtains and bedsteads torn and broken: the windows were now all really broken, and the whole neighbourhood alarmed with the noises; nay, the very rabbit-stealers that were abroad that night in the warren were so frightened at the dismal thundering, that they fled for fear, and left their ferrets behind them.

One of their honours this night spoke, and in the name of God asked what it was, and why it disturbed them so? No answer was given to this, but the noise ceased for a while, when the spirit came again, and, as they all

agreed, brought with it seven devils worse than itself. One of the servants now lighted a large candle and set it in the doorway between the two chambers, to see what passed; and as he watched it, he plainly saw a hoof striking the candle and candlestick into the middle of the room, and afterwards making three scrapes over the snuff of the candle, to scrape it out. Upon this, the same person was so bold as to draw a sword; but he had scarce got it out, when he perceived another invisible hand had hold of it too, and pulled with him for it, and at last prevailing, struck him so violently on the head with the pommel, that he fell down for dead with the blow. At this instant was heard another burst like the discharge of the broadside of a ship of war, and at about a minute or two's distance each, no less than nineteen more such: these shook the house so violently, that they expected every moment it would fall upon their heads. The neighbours on this were all alarmed, and, running to the house, they all joined in prayer and psalm-singing, during which the noise continued in the other rooms, and the discharge of cannon without, though nobody was there.*

Doctor Plot concludes his relation of this memorable event† with observing that, though tricks have often been played in affairs of this kind, many of these things are not reconcilable with juggling; such as, 1st, The loud noises beyond the power of man to make, without instruments which were not there; 2nd, The tearing and breaking of the beds; 3rd, The throwing about the fire; 4th, The hoof treading out the candle; and 5th, The striving for the sword, and the blow the man received from the pommel of it.

To show how great men are sometimes deceived, we may recur to a tract entitled The Secret History of the Good Devil of Woodstock, *in which we find it, under the author's own hand, that he, Joseph Collins, commonly called Funny Joe, was himself this very devil;—that, under the feigned name of Giles Sharp, he hired himself as a servant to the Commissioners;—that by the help of two friends—an unknown trap-door in the ceiling of the bed-chamber and a pound of common gunpowder—he played all these extraordinary tricks by himself;—that his fellow-servants, whom he had introduced on purpose to assist him, had lifted up their own beds, and that the candles were contrived, by a common trick of gunpowder, to be extinguished at a certain time.*

The dog who began the farce was, as Joe swore, no dog at all, but truly a bitch, who had shortly before whelped in that room, and made all this disturbance in seeking for her puppies; and which, when she had served his purpose, he (Joe Sharp, or Collins) let out, and then looked for. The story of the hoof and sword he himself bore witness to, and was never suspected as to the truth of them, though mere fictions. By the trap-door his friends let down stones, faggots, glass, water, etc., which they either left there, or drew up again, as best suited his purpose; and by this way let themselves in and out, without opening the doors or going through the keyholes: and all the noises described, he declares he made by placing quantities of white gunpowder over pieces of burning charcoal, on plates of tin, which, as they melted, exploded with a violent noise.

I am very happy in having an opportunity of setting history right about these remarkable events, and would not have the reader disbelieve my author's account of them, from his naming either white gunpowder exploding when melted, or his making the earth about the pot take fire of its own accord; since, however improbable these accounts may appear to some readers, and whatever secrets they might be in Joe's time, they are now well known in chemistry. As to the last, there needs only to mix an equal quantity of iron filings, finely powdered, and powder of pure brimstone, and make them into a paste with fair water. This paste, when it hath lain together about twenty-six hours, will of itself take fire, and burn all the sulphur away with a blue flame and a bad smell. For the others, what he calls white gunpowder is plainly the thundering powder called by our chemists pulvis fulminans. *It is composed of three parts of saltpetre, two parts of pearl ashes or salt of tartar, and one part of flour of brimstone, mixed together and beat to a fine powder; a small quantity of this held on the point of a knife over a candle will not go off till it melt, and then it gives a report like that of a pistol; and this he might easily dispose of in larger quantities, so as to make it explode of itself, while he, the said Joe, was with his masters.*

Such is the explanation of the ghostly adventures of Woodstock, as transferred by Mr. Hone from the pages of the old tract, termed the Authentic Memoirs of the memorable Joseph Collins of Oxford, whose courage and loyalty were the only wizards which conjured up those strange and surprising apparitions and works of spirits, which passed as unquestionable in the eyes of the Parliamentary Commissioners, of Doctor Plot, and other authors of credit. The pulvis fulminans, *the secret principle he made use of, is now known to every apothecary's apprentice.*

If my memory be not treacherous, the actor of these wonders made use of his skill in fireworks upon the following remarkable occasion. The Commissioners had not, in their zeal for the public service, overlooked their own private interests, and a deed was drawn up upon parchment, recording the share and nature of the advantages which they privately agreed to concede to each other; at the same time, they were, it seems, loath to entrust to any one of their number the keeping of a document in which all were equally concerned.

They hid the written agreement within a flower-pot, in which a shrub concealed it from the eyes of any chance spectator. But the rumour of the apparitions having gone abroad, curiosity drew many of the neighbours to Woodstock, and some in particular to whom the knowledge of this agreement would have afforded matter of scandal; as the Commissioners received these guests in the saloon where the flower-pot was placed, a match was suddenly set to some fireworks placed there by Sharp the secretary. The flower-pot burst to pieces with the concussion, or was prepared so as to explode of itself, and the contract of the Commissioners, bearing testimony to their private roguery, was thrown into the midst of the visitors assembled. If I have recollected this incident accurately—for it is more than forty years since I perused the tract—it is probable that, in omitting it from the novel, I may also have passed over, from want of memory, other matters which might have made an essential addition to the story. Nothing, indeed, is more

* Probably this part was also played by Sharp, who was the regular ghost-seer of the party.

† In his *Natural History of Oxfordshire.*

certain, than that incidents which are real preserve an infinite advantage in works of this nature over such as are fictitious. The tree, however, must remain where it has fallen.

Having occasion to be in London in October 1831, I made some researches in the British Museum, and in that rich collection, with the kind assistance of the keepers, who manage it with so much credit to themselves and advantage to the public, I recovered two original pamphlets, which contain a full account of the phenomena at Woodstock in 1649. The first is a satirical poem, published in that year, which plainly shows that the legend was current among the people in the very shape in which it was afterwards made public.† I have not found the explanation of Joe Collins, which, as mentioned by Mr. Hone, resolves the whole into confederacy. It might, however, be recovered by a stricter search than I had leisure for. In the meantime, it may be observed that neither the name of Joe Collins, nor Sharp, occurs among the* dramatis personæ *given in these tracts, published when he might have been endangered by anything which directed suspicion towards him, at least in 1649, and perhaps might have exposed him to danger even in 1660, from the malice of a powerful though defeated faction.‡*

1st August 1832.

* See Appendix.

† [This is also referred to in a letter from Liddell to Aubrey, in *Miscellanies on Several Curious Subjects*, 1714, p. 13.]

‡ [NOTE.—It may be unnecessary to remind the reader that Woodstock was written by the Author during his financial difficulties, and under painful embarrassments.

'It is no wonder,' says Mr. Lockhart, 'that the book which it was known he had been writing during this crisis of distress, should have been expected with solicitude. Shall we find him, asked thousands, to have been master truly of his genius in the moment of this ordeal? Shall we trace anything of his own experiences in the construction of his imaginary personages and events?

'I know not how others interpreted various passages in Woodstock, but there were not a few that carried a deep meaning for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortune alone, but the drooping health of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that ascribed in Chapter XIII. to poor Alice Lee: "A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others." In several mottoes, and other scraps of verse, the curious reader will also find similar traces of the facts and feelings recorded in the Author's diary which he kept at this time.

'As to the novel itself, though none can pretend to class it in the very highest rank of his works, since we feel throughout the effects of the fundamental error, likened by Mr. Senior to that of the writer who should lay his scene at Rome immediately after the battle of Philippi, and introduce Brutus as the survivor, with Cicero as his companion in victory. Yet even this censor is forced to allow that Woodstock displays certain excellences, not exemplified in all the Author's fictions, and which attest, more remarkably than any others could have done, the complete self-possession of the mind when composing it.

'Moreover, there is one character of considerable importance which this reviewer does not allude to. If he had happened to have the slightest tincture of Sir Walter's fondness for dogs, he would not have failed to say something of the elaborate and affectionate portraiture of old Maida, under the name of Bevis.']

OLIVER CROMWELL'S SIGNATURE AND SEAL.

PREFACE—(1826).

It is not my purpose to inform my readers how the manuscripts of that eminent antiquary, the Rev. J. A. Rochecliffe, D.D., *came into my possession. There are many ways in which such things happen, and it is enough to say they were rescued from an unworthy fate, and that they were honestly come by. As for the authenticity of the anecdotes which I have gleaned from the writings of this excellent person, and put together with my own unrivalled facility, the name of Doctor Rochecliffe will warrant accuracy, wheresoever that name happens to be known.*

With his history the reading part of the world are well acquainted; and we might refer the tyro to honest Anthony a Wood, who looked up to him as one of the pillars of High Church, and bestows on him an exemplary character in the Athenæ Oxoniensis, *although the doctor was educated at Cambridge, England's other eye.*

It is well known that Doctor Rochecliffe early obtained preferment in the Church, on account of the spirited share which he took in the controversy with the Puritans; and that his work, entitled Malleus Hæresis, *was considered as a knockdown blow by all except those who received it. It was that work which made him, at the early age of thirty, Rector of Woodstock, and which afterwards secured him a place in the Catalogue of the celebrated Century White,*—and, worse than being shown up by that fanatic among the catalogues of scandalous and malignant priests admitted into benefices by the prelates, his opinions occasioned the loss of his living of Woodstock by the ascendancy of Presbytery. He was chaplain, during most part of the Civil War, to Sir Henry Lee's regiment, levied for the service of King Charles; and it was said he engaged more than once personally in the field. At least it is certain that Doctor Rochecliffe was repeatedly in great danger, as will appear from more passages than one in the following history, which speaks of his own exploits, like Cæsar, in the third person. I suspect, however, some Presbyterian commentator has been guilty of interpolating two or three passages. The manuscript was long in possession of the Everards, a distinguished family of that persuasion.†*

During the Usurpation, Doctor Rochecliffe was constantly engaged in one or other of the premature attempts at the restoration of monarchy; and was accounted, for his audacity, presence of mind, and depth of judgment, one of the greatest undertakers for the king in that busy time; with this trifling drawback, that the plots in which he busied himself were almost constantly detected. Nay, it was suspected that Cromwell himself sometimes contrived to suggest to him the intrigues in which he engaged, by which means the wily Protector made experiments on the fidelity of doubtful friends, and became well acquainted with the plots of declared enemies, which he thought it more easy to disconcert and disappoint than to punish severely.

Upon the Restoration, Doctor Rochecliffe regained his living of Woodstock, with other Church preferment, and gave up polemics and political intrigues for philosophy. He was one of the constituent members of the Royal Society, and was the person through whom Charles required of that learned body solution of the curious problem, 'Why, if a vessel is filled brimful of water, and a large live fish plunged into the water, nevertheless it shall not overflow the pitcher?' Doctor Rochecliffe's exposition of this phenomenon was the most ingenious and instructive of four that were given in; and it is certain the doctor must have gained the honour of the day, but for the obstinacy of a plain, dull country gentleman, who insisted that the experiment should be, in the first place, publicly tried. When this was done, the event showed it would have been rather rash to have adopted the facts exclusively on the royal authority, as the fish, however curiously inserted into his native element, splashed the water over the hall, and destroyed the credit of four ingenious essayists, besides a large Turkey carpet.

Doctor Rochecliffe, it would seem, died about 1685, leaving many papers behind him of various kinds, and, above all, many valuable anecdotes of secret history, from which the following Memoirs have been extracted, on which we intend to say only a few words by way of illustration.

The existence of Rosamond's Labyrinth, mentioned in these pages, is attested by Drayton in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

'Rosamond's Labyrinth, whose ruins, together with her Well, being paved with square stones in the bottom, and also her Tower, from which the Labyrinth did run, are yet remaining, being vaults arched and walled with stone and brick, almost inextricably wound within one another, by which, if at any time her lodging were laid about by the Queen, she might easily avoid peril imminent, and, if need be, by secret issues take the air abroad, many furlongs about Woodstock in Oxfordshire.' ‡

* [See footnote to Peveril of the Peak, p. 749.]

† It is hardly necessary to say, unless to some readers of very literal capacity, that Doctor Rochecliffe and his manuscripts are alike apocryphal.

‡ Drayton's *England's Heroical Epistles*, Note A, on the Epistle, Rosamond to King Henry.

It is highly probable that a singular piece of phantasmagoria, which was certainly played off upon the Commissioners of the Long Parliament, who were sent down to dispark and destroy Woodstock, after the death of Charles I., was conducted by means of the secret passages and recesses in the ancient Labyrinth of Rosamond, round which successive monarchs had erected a hunting-seat or lodge.

There is a curious account of the disturbance given to those Honourable Commissioners, inserted by Doctor Plot in his Natural History of Oxfordshire. *But as I have not the book at hand, I can only allude to the work of the celebrated Glanville* upon Witches, who has extracted it as a highly accredited narrative of supernatural dealings. The beds of the Commissioners and their servants were hoisted up till they were almost inverted, and then let down again so suddenly, as to menace them with broken bones. Unusual and horrible noises disturbed those sacrilegious intromitters with royal property. The devil, on one occasion, brought them a warming-pan; on another, pelted them with stones and horses' bones. Tubs of water were emptied on them in their sleep; and so many other pranks of the same nature played at their expense, that they broke up housekeeping, and left their intended spoliation only half completed. The good sense of Doctor Plot suspected that these feats were wrought by conspiracy and confederation, which Glanville of course endeavours to refute with all his might; for it could scarce be expected that he, who believed in so convenient a solution as that of supernatural agency, would consent to relinquish the service of a key which will answer any lock, however intricate.*

Nevertheless, it was afterwards discovered that Doctor Plot was perfectly right; and that the only demon who wrought all these marvels was a disguised Royalist—a fellow called Trusty Joe, or some such name, formerly in the service of the Keeper of the Park, but who engaged in that of the Commissioners on purpose to subject them to his persecution. I think I have seen some account of the real state of the transaction, and of the machinery by which the wizard worked his wonders; but whether in a book, or a pamphlet, I am uncertain. I remember one passage particularly to this purpose. The Commissioners having agreed to retain some articles out of the public account, in order to be divided among themselves, had entered into an indenture for ascertaining their share in the peculation, which they hid in a bow-pot for security. Now, when an assembly of divines, aided by the most strict religious characters in the neighbourhood of Woodstock, were assembled to conjure down the supposed demon, Trusty Joe had contrived a fire-work, which he let off in the midst of the exorcism, and which destroyed the bow-pot; and, to the shame and confusion of the Commissioners, threw their secret indenture into the midst of the assembled ghost-seers, who became thus acquainted with their secret schemes of peculation.

It is, however, to little purpose for me to strain my memory about ancient and imperfect recollections concerning the particulars of these fantastic disturbances at Woodstock, since Doctor Rochecliffe's papers give such a much more accurate narrative than could be obtained from any account in existence before their publication. Indeed, I might have gone much more fully into this part of my subject, for the materials are ample;—but, to tell the reader a secret, some friendly critics were of opinion they made the story hang on hand; and thus I was prevailed on to be more concise on the subject than I might otherwise have been.

The impatient reader, perhaps, is by this time accusing me of keeping the sun from him with a candle. Were the sunshine as bright, however, as it is likely to prove; and the flambeau, or link, a dozen of times as smoky, my friend must remain in the inferior atmosphere a minute longer, while I disclaim the idea of poaching on another's manor. Hawks, we say in Scotland, ought not to pick out hawks' eyes, or tire upon each other's quarry; and, therefore, if I had known that, in its date and its characters, this tale was likely to interfere with that recently published by a distinguished contemporary, I should unquestionably have left Doctor Rochecliffe's manuscript in peace for the present season. But before I was aware of this circumstance, this little book was half through the press; and I had only the alternative of avoiding any intentional imitation, by delaying a perusal of the contemporary work in question. Some accidental collision there must be, when works of a similar character are finished on the same general system of historical manners, and the same historical personages are introduced. Of course, if such have occurred, I shall be probably the sufferer. But my intentions have been at least innocent, since I look on it as one of the advantages attending the conclusion of Woodstock, *that the finishing of my own task will permit me to have the pleasure of reading* Brambletye House, *from which I have hitherto conscientiously abstained.*†

* [Joseph Glanville, an English clergyman of the 17th century, who, although an enemy to dogmatism in religious matters, yet believed in witchcraft.]

† [*Brambletye House, or Cavaliers and Roundheads*, a historical novel by Horace Smith, which appeared in 1826.]

CROMWELL ENTERING THE HALL AT WOODSTOCK.—PAGE 166.

CHAPTER. I.

Some were for gospel ministers,
And some for red-coat seculars.
As men most fit t' hold forth the word,
And wield the one and th' other sword.
BUTLER'S *Hudibras.*

THERE is a handsome parish church in the town of Woodstock,—I am told so, at least, for I never saw it, having scarce time, when at the place, to view the magnificence of Blenheim, its painted halls and tapestried bowers, and then return in due season to dine in hall with my learned friend, the provost of ——, being one of those occasions on which a man wrongs himself extremely, if he lets his curiosity interfere with his punctuality. I had the church accurately described to me, with a view to this work ; but, as I have some reason to doubt whether my informant had ever seen the inside of it himself, I shall be content to say that it is now a handsome edifice, most part of which was rebuilt forty or fifty years since, although it still contains some arches of the old chantry, founded, it is said, by King John. It is to this more ancient part of the building that my story refers.

On a morning in the end of September, or beginning of October, in the year 1652, being a day appointed for a solemn thanksgiving for the decisive victory at Worcester, a respectable audience was assembled in the old chantry, or chapel of King John. The condition of the church and character of the audience both bore witness to the rage of civil war, and the peculiar spirit of the times. The sacred edifice showed many marks of dilapidation. The windows, once filled with stained glass, had been dashed to pieces with pikes and muskets, as matters of and pertaining to idolatry. The carving on the reading-desk was damaged, and two fair screens of beautiful sculptured oak had been destroyed, for the same pithy and conclusive reason. The high altar had been removed, and the gilded railing, which was once around it, was broken down and carried off. The effigies of several tombs were mutilated, and now lay scattered about the church,

> Torn from their destined niche—unworthy meed
> Of knightly counsel or heroic deed!

The autumn wind piped through empty aisles, in which the remains of stakes and trevisses of rough-hewn timber, as well as a quantity of scattered hay and trampled straw, seemed to intimate that the hallowed precincts had been, upon some late emergency, made the quarters of a troop of horse.*

The audience, like the building, was abated in splendour. None of the ancient and habitual worshippers during peaceful times were now to be seen in their carved galleries, with hands shadowing their brows, while composing their minds to pray where their fathers had prayed, and after the same mode of worship. The eye of the yeoman and peasant sought in vain the tall form of old Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, as, wrapped in his laced cloak, and with beard and whiskers duly composed, he moved slowly through the aisles, followed by the faithful mastiff, or

* [Little remains now of this ancient church, it being rebuilt in 1785, except on the southern side, where a portion of the old structure, with a Norman doorway, is still preserved.]

bloodhound, which in old time had saved his master by his fidelity, and which regularly followed him to church. Bevis, indeed, fell under the proverb which avers, 'He is a good dog which goes to church;' for, bating an occasional temptation to warble along with the accord, he behaved himself as decorously as any of the congregation, and returned as much edified, perhaps, as most of them. The damsels of Woodstock looked as vainly for the laced cloaks, jingling spurs, slashed boots, and tall plumes of the young cavaliers of this and other high-born houses, moving through the streets and the churchyard with the careless ease which indicates perhaps rather an overweening degree of self-confidence, yet shows graceful when mingled with good-humour and courtesy. The good old dames, too, in their white hoods and black velvet gowns, — their daughters, 'the cynosure of neighbouring eyes,'—where were they all now, who, when they entered the church, used to divide men's thoughts between them and heaven? 'But ah! Alice Lee—so sweet, so gentle, so condescending in thy loveliness—[thus proceeds a contemporary annalist, whose manuscript we have deciphered]—why is my story to turn upon thy fallen fortunes? and why not rather to the period when, in the very dismounting from your palfrey, you attracted as many eyes as if an angel had descended,—as many blessings as if the benignant being had come fraught with good tidings?—No creature wert thou of an idle romancer's imagination—no being fantastically bedizened with inconsistent perfections;—thy merits made me love thee well—and for thy faults—so well did they show amid thy good qualities, that I think they made me love thee better.'

With the house of Lee had disappeared from the chantry of King John others of gentle blood and honoured lineage — Freemantles, Winklecombs, Drycotts, etc.; for the air that blew over the towers of Oxford was unfavourable to the growth of Puritanism, which was more general in the neighbouring counties. There were among the congregation, however, one or two that, by their habits and demeanour, seemed country gentlemen of consideration, and there were also present some of the notables of the town of Woodstock, cutlers or glovers chiefly, whose skill in steel or leather had raised them to a comfortable livelihood. These dignitaries wore long black cloaks, plaited close at the neck, and, like peaceful citizens, carried their Bibles and memorandum-books at their girdles, instead of knife or sword.* This respectable, but least numerous part of the audience, were such decent persons as had adopted the Presbyterian form of faith, renouncing the liturgy and hierarchy of the Church of England, and living under the tuition of the Rev. Nehemiah Holdenough, much famed for the length and strength of his powers of predication. With these grave seniors sat their goodly dames in ruff and gorget, like the portraits which in catalogues of paintings are designed 'wife of a burgomaster;' and their pretty daughters, whose study, like that of Chaucer's physician, was not always in the Bible, but who were, on the contrary, when a glance could escape the vigilance of their honoured mothers, inattentive themselves, and the cause of inattention in others.

But, besides these dignified persons, there were in the church a numerous collection of the lower orders, some brought thither by curiosity, but many of them unwashed artificers, bewildered in the theological discussions of the time, and of as many various sects as there are colours in the rainbow. The presumption of these learned Thebans† being in exact proportion to their ignorance, the last was total and the first boundless. Their behaviour in the church was anything but reverential or edifying. Most of them affected a cynical contempt for all that was only held sacred by human sanction—the church was to these men but a steeple-house, the clergyman an ordinary person, her ordinances dry bran and sapless pottage,‡ unfitted for the spiritualized palates of the saints, and the prayer an address to Heaven to which each acceded or not as in his too critical judgment he conceived fit.

The elder amongst them sat or lay on the benches, with their high steeple-crowned hats pulled over their severe and knitted brows, waiting for the Presbyterian parson, as mastiffs sit in dumb expectation of the bull that is to be brought to the stake. The younger mixed some of them, a bolder licence of manners with their heresies; they gazed round on the women, yawned, coughed, and whispered, ate apples and cracked nuts, as if in the gallery of a theatre ere the piece commences.

Besides all these, the congregation contained a few soldiers, some in corselets and steel-caps, some in buff, and others in red coats. These men of war had their bandoliers, with ammunition, slung round them, and rested on their pikes and muskets. They, too, had their peculiar doctrines on the most difficult points of religion, and united the extravagances of enthusiasm with the most determined courage and resolution in the field. The burghers of Woodstock looked on these military saints with no small degree of awe; for though not often sullied with deeds of plunder or cruelty, they had the power of both absolutely in their hands, and the peaceful citizen had no alternative, save submission, to whatever the ill-regulated and enthusiastic imaginations of their martial guides might suggest.

After some time spent in waiting for him, Master Holdenough began to walk up the aisles of the chapel, not with the slow and dignified carriage with which the old rector was of yore wont to maintain the dignity of the surplice, but with a hasty step, like one who arrives too late at an appointment, and bustles forward to make the best use of his time. He was a tall thin man, with an adust complexion, and the vivacity of his eye indicated some irascibility of temperament. His dress was brown, not black, and

* This custom among the Puritans is mentioned often in old plays, and among others in the Widow of Watling Street.

† [The inhabitants of ancient Thebes, in Greece, were not remarkable for mental power.]

‡ See a curious vindication of this indecent simile here for the Common Prayer, in Note A.

over his other vestments he wore, in honour of Calvin, a Geneva cloak of a blue colour, which fell backwards from his shoulders as he posted on to the pulpit. His grizzled hair was cut as short as shears could perform the feat, and covered with a black silk skull-cap, which stuck so close to his head, that the two ears expanded from under it as if they had been intended as handles by which to lift the whole person. Moreover, the worthy divine wore spectacles, and a long grizzled peaked beard, and he carried in his hand a small pocket Bible with silver clasps. Upon arriving at the pulpit, he paused a moment to take breath, then began to ascend the steps by two at a time.

But his course was arrested by a strong hand, which seized his cloak. It was that of one who had detached himself from the group of soldiery. He was a stout man of middle stature, with a quick eye, and a countenance which, though plain, had yet an expression that fixed the attention. His dress, though not strictly military, partook of that character. He wore large hose made of calves'-leather, and a tuck, as it was then called, or rapier, of tremendous length, balanced on the other side by a dagger. The belt was morocco, garnished with pistols.

The minister, thus intercepted in his duty, faced round upon the party who had seized him, and demanded, in no gentle tone, the meaning of the interruption.

'Friend,' quoth the intruder, 'is it thy purpose to hold forth to these good people?'

'Ay, marry is it,' said the clergyman, 'and such is my bounden duty. Woe to me if I preach not the gospel—Prithee, friend, let me not in my labour'——

'Nay,' said the man of warlike mien, 'I am myself minded to hold forth; therefore, do thou desist, or if thou wilt do by mine advice, remain and fructify with those poor goslings, to whom I am presently about to shake forth the crumbs of comfortable doctrine.'

'Give place, thou man of Satan,' said the priest, waxing wroth; 'respect mine order—my cloth.'

'I see no more to respect in the cut of thy cloak, or in the cloth of which it is fashioned,' said the other, 'than thou didst in the bishop's rochets—they were black and white, thou art blue and brown. Sleeping dogs every one of you, lying down, loving to slumber—shepherds that starve the flock but will not watch it, each looking to his own gain—hum.'

Scenes of this indecent kind were so common at the time, that no one thought of interfering; the congregation looked on in silence, the better class scandalized, and the lower orders, some laughing, and others backing the soldier or minister as their fancy dictated. Meantime the struggle waxed fiercer; Master Holdenough clamoured for assistance.

'Master Mayor of Woodstock,' he exclaimed, 'wilt thou be among those wicked magistrates who bear the sword in vain?—Citizens, will you not help your pastor?—Worthy aldermen, will you see me strangled on the pulpit stairs by this man of buff and Belial?—But lo, I will overcome him, and cast his cords from me.'

As Holdenough spoke, he struggled to ascend the pulpit stairs, holding hard on the banisters. His tormentor held fast by the skirts of the cloak, which went nigh to the choking of the wearer, until, as he spoke the words last mentioned, in a half-strangled voice, Master Holdenough dexterously slipped the string which tied it round his neck, so that the garment suddenly gave way; the soldier fell backwards down the steps, and the liberated divine skipped into the pulpit, and began to give forth a psalm of triumph over his prostrate adversary. But a great hubbub in the church marred his exultation, and although he and his faithful clerk continued to sing the hymn of victory, their notes were only heard by fits, like the whistle of a curlew during a gale of wind.

The cause of the tumult was as follows:—The mayor was a zealous Presbyterian, and witnessed the intrusion of the soldier with great indignation from the very beginning, though he hesitated to interfere with an armed man while on his legs and capable of resistance. But no sooner did he behold the champion of Independency sprawling on his back, with the divine's Geneva cloak fluttering in his hands, than the magistrate rushed forward, exclaiming that such insolence was not to be endured, and ordered his constables to seize the prostrate champion, proclaiming, in the magnanimity of wrath, 'I will commit every red-coat of them all—I will commit him were he Noll Cromwell himself!'

The worthy mayor's indignation had overmastered his reason when he made this mistimed vaunt; for three soldiers, who had hitherto stood motionless like statues, made each a stride in advance, which placed them betwixt the municipal officers and the soldier, who was in the act of rising; then making at once the movement of resting arms according to the manual as then practised, their musket-butts rang on the church pavement, within an inch of the gouty toes of Master Mayor. The energetic magistrate, whose efforts in favour of order were thus checked, cast one glance on his supporters, but that was enough to show him that force was not on his side. All had shrunk back on hearing that ominous clatter of stone and iron. He was obliged to descend to expostulation.

'What do you mean, my masters?' said he; 'is it like a decent and God-fearing soldiery, who have wrought such things for the land as have never before been heard of, to brawl and riot in the church, or to aid, abet, and comfort a profane fellow, who hath, upon a solemn thanksgiving, excluded the minister from his own pulpit?'

'We have nought to do with thy church, as thou call'st it,' said he who, by a small feather in front of his morion, appeared to be the corporal of the party;—'we see not why men of gifts should not be heard within these citadels of superstition, as well as the voice of the men of crape of old, and the men of cloak now. Wherefore, we will pluck yon Jack Presbyter out of his wooden sentinel-box, and our own watchman shall relieve the guard, and mount thereon, and cry aloud and spare not.'

'Nay, gentlemen,' said the mayor, 'if such be your purpose, we have not the means to with-

stand you, being, as you see, peaceful and quiet men—But let me first speak with this worthy minister, Nehemiah Holdenough, to persuade him to yield up his place for the time without further scandal.'

The peace-making mayor then interrupted the quavering of Holdenough and the clerk, and prayed both to retire, else there would, he said, be certainly strife.

'Strife!' replied the Presbyterian divine, with scorn; 'no fear of strife among men that dare not testify against this open profanation of the church, and daring display of heresy. Would your neighbours of Banbury have brooked such an insult?'

'Come, come, Master Holdenough,' said the mayor, 'put us not to mutiny and cry Clubs. I tell you once more, we are not men of war or blood.'

'Not more than may be drawn by the point of a needle,' said the preacher scornfully.—'Ye tailors of Woodstock!—for what is a glover but a tailor working on kidskin?—I forsake you, in scorn of your faint hearts and feeble hands, and will seek me elsewhere a flock which will not fly from their shepherd at the braying of the first wild ass which cometh from out the great desert.'

So saying, the aggrieved divine departed from his pulpit, and, shaking the dust from his shoes, left the church as hastily as he had entered it, though with a different reason for his speed. The citizens saw his retreat with sorrow, and not without a compunctious feeling, as if conscious that they were not playing the most courageous part in the world. The mayor himself and several others left the church, to follow and appease him.

The Independent orator, late prostrate, was now triumphant, and, inducting himself into the pulpit without further ceremony, he pulled a Bible from his pocket, and selected his text from the forty-fifth Psalm,—'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously.'—Upon this theme, he commenced one of those wild declamations common at the period, in which men were accustomed to wrest and pervert the language of Scripture, by adapting it to modern events.* The language which, in its literal sense, was applied to King David, and typically referred to the coming of the Messiah, was, in the opinion of the military orator, most properly to be interpreted of Oliver Cromwell, the victorious general of the infant Commonwealth, which was never destined to come of age. 'Gird on thy sword!' exclaimed the preacher emphatically; 'and was not that a pretty bit of steel as ever dangled from a corselet, or rung against a steel saddle? Ay, ye prick up your ears now, ye cutlers of Woodstock, as if ye should know something of a good fox broadsword—Did you forge it, I trow?—was the steel quenched with water from Rosamond's well, or the blade blessed by the old cuckoldy priest of Godstow? You would have us think, I warrant me, that you wrought it and welded it, grinded and polished it, and all the while it never came on a Woodstock stithy! You were all too busy making whittles for the lazy crape-men of Oxford, bouncing priests, whose eyes were so closed up with fat, that they could not see Destruction till she had them by the throat. But I can tell you where the sword was forged, and tempered, and welded, and grinded, and polished. When you were, as I said before, making whittles for false priests, and daggers for dissolute G—d d—n me Cavaliers, to cut the people of England's throat with—it was forged at Long Marston Moor, where blows went faster than ever rung hammer on anvil—and it was tempered at Naseby, in the best blood of the Cavaliers—and it was welded in Ireland against the walls of Drogheda—and it was grinded on Scottish lives at Dunbar—and now of late it was polished in Worcester, till it shines as bright as the sun in the middle heaven, and there is no light in England that shall come nigh unto it.'

Here the military part of the congregation raised a hum of approbation, which, being a sound like the 'hear, hear,' of the British House of Commons, was calculated to heighten the enthusiasm of the orator, by intimating the sympathy of the audience. 'And then,' resumed the preacher, rising in energy as he found that his audience partook in these feelings, 'what saith the text?—Ride on prosperously—do not stop—do not call a halt—do not quit the saddle—pursue the scattered fliers—sound the trumpet—not a levant or a flourish, but a point of war—sound, boot and saddle—to horse and away—a charge!—follow after the young Man!—what part have we in him?—Slay, take, destroy, divide the spoil! Blessed art thou, Oliver, on account of thine honour—thy cause is clear, thy call is undoubted—never has defeat come near thy leading-staff, nor disaster attended thy banner. Ride on, flower of England's soldiers! ride on, chosen leader of God's champions! gird up the loins of thy resolution, and be steadfast to the mark of thy high calling!'

Another deep and stern hum, echoed by the ancient embowed arches of the old chantry, gave him an opportunity of an instant's repose; when the people of Woodstock heard him, and not without anxiety, turn the stream of his oratory into another channel.

'But wherefore, ye people of Woodstock, do I say these things to you, who claim no portion in our David, no interest in England's son of Jesse?—You, who were fighting as well as your might could (and it was not very formidable) for the late Man, under that old bloodthirsty Papist, Sir Jacob Aston—are you not now plotting, or ready to plot, for the restoring, as ye call it, of the young Man, the unclean son of the slaughtered tyrant—the fugitive after whom the true hearts of England are now following, that they may take and slay him?—"Why should your rider turn his bridle our way?" say you in your hearts; "we will none of him; if we may help ourselves, we will rather turn us to wallow in the mire of monarchy, with the sow that was washed but newly." Come, men of Woodstock, I will ask, and do you answer me. Hunger ye still after the flesh-pots of the monks of Godstow? and ye will say, Nay;—but wherefore, except that the pots are cracked and broken, and the fire is extinguished wherewith thy oven used to

* Note A. Book of Common Prayer.

boil? And again, I ask, drink ye still of the well of the fornications of the fair Rosamond?—ye will say, Nay;—but wherefore?'——

Here the orator, ere he could answer the question in his own way, was surprised by the following reply, very pithily pronounced by one of the congregation:—'Because you, and the like of you, have left us no brandy to mix with it.'

All eyes turned to the audacious speaker, who stood beside one of the thick sturdy Saxon pillars, which he himself somewhat resembled, being short of stature, but very strongly made, a squat broad Little John sort of figure, leaning on a quarter-staff, and wearing a jerkin, which, though now sorely stained and discoloured, had once been of the Lincoln green, and showed remnants of having been laced. There was an air of careless, good-humoured audacity about the fellow; and, though under military restraint, there were some of the citizens who could not help crying out,—'Well said, Joceline Joliffe!'

'Jolly Joceline, call ye him?' proceeded the preacher, without showing either confusion or displeasure at the interruption,—'I will make him Joceline of the jail, if he interrupts me again. One of your park-keepers, I warrant, that can never forget they have borne C. R.* upon their badges and bugle-horns, even as a dog bears his owner's name on his collar—a pretty emblem for Christian men! But the brute beast hath the better of him,—the brute weareth his own coat, and the caitiff thrall wears his master's. I have seen such a wag make a rope's end wag ere now.—Where was I?—O, rebuking you for your backslidings, men of Woodstock.—Yes, then, ye will say ye have renounced Popery, and ye have renounced Prelacy, and then ye wipe your mouth like Pharisees, as ye are; and who but you for purity of religion? But I tell you, ye are but like Jehu the son of Nimshi, who broke down the house of Baal, yet departed not from the sins of Jeroboam. Even so ye eat not fish on Friday with the blinded Papists, nor minced-pies on the 25th day of December, like the slothful Prelatists; but ye will gorge on sack-posset each night in the year with your blind Presbyterian guide, and ye will speak evil of dignities, and revile the Commonwealth; and ye will glorify yourselves in your Park of Woodstock, and say, "Was it not walled in first of any other in England, and that by Henry, son of William called the Conqueror?" And ye have a princely Lodge therein, and call the same a Royal Lodge; and ye have an oak which ye call the King's Oak; and ye steal and eat the venison of the park, and ye say, "This is the King's venison, we will wash it down with a cup to the King's health—better we eat it than those Roundheaded Commonwealth knaves." But listen unto me and take warning. For these things come we to controversy with you. And our name shall be a cannon-shot, before which your Lodge, in the pleasantness whereof ye take pastime, shall be blown into ruins; and we will be as a wedge to split asunder the King's Oak into billets to heat a brown baker's oven; and we will dispark your park, and slay your deer, and eat them ourselves, neither shall you have any portion thereof, whether in neck or haunch. Ye shall not haft a tenpenny knife with the horns thereof, neither shall ye cut a pair of breeches out of the hide, for all ye be cutlers and glovers; and ye shall have no comfort or support neither from the sequestered traitor Henry Lee, who called himself Ranger of Woodstock, nor from any on his behalf; for they are coming hither who shall be called Maher-shalal-hash-baz,† because he maketh haste to the spoil.'

Here ended this wild effusion, the latter part of which fell heavy on the souls of the poor citizens of Woodstock, as tending to confirm a report of an unpleasing nature which had been lately circulated. The communication with London was indeed slow, and the news which it transmitted were uncertain; no less uncertain were the times themselves, and the rumours which were circulated, exaggerated by the hopes and fears of so many various factions. But the general stream of report, so far as Woodstock was concerned, had of late run uniformly in one direction. Day after day they had been informed that the fatal fiat of Parliament had gone out, for selling the park of Woodstock, destroying its Lodge, disparking its forest, and erasing, as far as they could be erased, all traces of its ancient fame. Many of the citizens were likely to be sufferers on this occasion, as several of them enjoyed, either by sufferance or right, various convenient privileges of pasturage, cutting firewood, and the like, in the royal chase; and all the inhabitants of the little borough were hurt to think that the scenery of the place was to be destroyed, its edifices ruined, and its honours rent away. This is a patriotic sensation often found in such places, which ancient distinctions and long-cherished recollections of former days render so different from towns of recent date. The natives of Woodstock felt it in the fullest force. They had trembled at the anticipated calamity; but now, when it was announced by the appearance of those dark, stern, and at the same time omnipotent soldiers—now that they heard it proclaimed by the mouth of one of their military preachers—they considered their fate as inevitable. The causes of disagreement among themselves were for the time forgotten, as the congregation, dismissed without psalmody or benediction, went slowly and mournfully homeward, each to his own place of abode.

CHAPTER II.

Come forth, old man—Thy daughter's side
Is now the fitting place for thee:
When time hath quell'd the oak's bold pride,
The youthful tendril yet may hide
The ruins of the parent tree.

When the sermon was ended, the military orator wiped his brow; for, notwithstanding the

* [*I.e.* Carolus Rex, or King Charles.]

† [The son of the prophet Isaiah; his name means 'The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth,' and contains an allusion to the plundering of Damascus and Samaria shortly to take place at the hands of the king of Assyria. See Isa. viii. 1–4.]

coolness of the weather, he was heated with the vehemence of his speech and action. He then descended from the pulpit, and spoke a word or two to the corporal who commanded the party of soldiers, who, replying by a sober nod of intelligence, drew his men together, and marched them in order to their quarters in the town.

The preacher himself, as if nothing extraordinary had happened, left the church and sauntered through the streets of Woodstock, with the air of a stranger who was viewing the town, without seeming to observe that he was himself in his turn anxiously surveyed by the citizens, whose furtive yet frequent glances seemed to regard him as something alike suspected and dreadful, yet on no account to be provoked. He heeded them not, but stalked on in the manner affected by the distinguished fanatics of the day ; a stiff, solemn pace, a severe and at the same time a contemplative look, like that of a man discomposed at the interruptions which earthly objects forced upon him, obliging him by their intrusion to withdraw his thoughts for an instant from celestial things. Innocent pleasures of what kind soever they held in suspicion and contempt, and innocent mirth they abominated. It was, however, a cast of mind that formed men for great and manly actions, as it adopted principle, and that of an unselfish character, for the ruling motive, instead of the gratification of passion. Some of these men were indeed hypocrites, using the cloak of religion only as a covering for their ambition ; but many really possessed the devotional character, and the severe republican virtue, which others only affected. By far the greater number hovered between these extremes, felt to a certain extent the power of religion, and complied with the times in affecting a great deal.

The individual whose pretensions to sanctity, written as they were upon his brow and gait, have given rise to the above digression, reached at length the extremity of the principal street, which terminates upon the Park of Woodstock. A battlemented portal of Gothic appearance defended the entrance to the avenue. It was of mixed architecture, but on the whole, though composed of the styles of the different ages when it had received additions, had a striking and imposing effect. An immense gate, composed of rails of hammered iron, with many a flourish and scroll, displaying as its uppermost ornament the ill-fated cipher of C. R., was now decayed, being partly wasted with rust, partly by violence.

The stranger paused, as if uncertain whether he should demand or essay entrance. He looked through the grating down an avenue skirted by majestic oaks, which led onward with a gentle curve, as if into the depths of some ample and ancient forest. The wicket of the large iron gate being left unwittingly open, the soldier was tempted to enter, yet with some hesitation, as he that intrudes upon ground which he conjectures may be prohibited—indeed, his manner showed more reverence for the scene than could have been expected from his condition and character. He slackened his stately and consequential pace, and at length stood still, and looked around him.

Not far from the gate, he saw rising from the trees one or two ancient and venerable turrets, bearing each its own vane of rare device glittering in the autumn sun. These indicated the ancient hunting-seat, or Lodge, as it was called, which had, since the time of Henry II., been occasionally the residence of the English monarchs, when it pleased them to visit the woods of Oxford, which then so abounded with game, that, according to old Fuller,* huntsmen and falconers were nowhere better pleased. The situation which the Lodge occupied was a piece of flat ground, now planted with sycamores, not far from the entrance to that magnificent spot where the spectator first stops to gaze upon Blenheim,† to think of Marlborough's victories, and to applaud or criticise the cumbrous magnificence of Vanbrugh's style.

There, too, paused our military preacher, but with other thoughts, and for other purpose, than to admire the scene around him. It was not long afterwards when he beheld two persons, a male and a female, approaching slowly, and so deeply engaged in their own conversation that they did not raise their eyes to observe that there stood a stranger in the path before them. The soldier took advantage of their state of abstraction, and, desirous at once to watch their motions and avoid their observation, he glided beneath one of the huge trees which skirted the path, and whose boughs, sweeping the ground on every side, insured him against discovery, unless in case of an actual search.

In the meantime, the gentleman and lady continued to advance, directing their course to a rustic seat, which still enjoyed the sunbeams, and was placed adjacent to the tree where the stranger was concealed.

The man was elderly, yet seemed bent more by sorrow and infirmity than by the weight of years. He wore a mourning cloak, over a dress of the same melancholy colour, cut in that picturesque form which Vandyck has rendered immortal. But although the dress was handsome, it was put on and worn with a carelessness which showed the mind of the wearer ill at ease. His aged yet still handsome countenance had the same air of consequence which distinguished his dress and his gait. A striking part of his appearance was a long white beard, which descended far over the breast of his slashed doublet, and looked singular from its contrast in colour with his habit.

The young lady, by whom this venerable gentleman seemed to be in some degree supported as they walked arm in arm, was a slight and sylph-like form, with a person so delicately made, and so beautiful in countenance, that it seemed the earth on which she walked was too grossly massive a support for a creature so aërial. But mortal beauty must share human sorrows. The eyes of the beautiful being showed tokens of tears ; her colour was heightened as she listened to her aged companion ; and it was plain, from his melancholy yet displeased look, that the

* [A shrewd, wise, and kindly English prelate of the 17th century, and author of several books.]

† [This palace, planned by Sir John Vanbrugh, architect and dramatist, was build at the expense of Queen Anne, and given to the great Duke of Marlborough along with the manor of Woodstock.]

conversation was as distressing to himself as to her. When they sat down on the bench we have mentioned, the gentleman's discourse could be distinctly overheard by the eavesdropping soldier, but the answers of the young lady reached his ear rather less distinctly.

'It is not to be endured!' said the old man passionately; 'it would stir up a paralytic wretch to start up a soldier. My people have been thinned, I grant you, or have fallen off from me in these times—I owe them no grudge for it, poor knaves; what should they do waiting on me when the pantry has no bread and the buttery no ale? But we have still about us some rugged foresters of the old Woodstock breed—old as myself most of them—what of that? old wood seldom warps in the wetting;—I will hold out the old house, and it will not be the first time that I have held it against ten times the strength that we hear of now.'

'Alas! my dear father!'—said the young lady, in a tone which seemed to intimate his proposal of defence to be altogether desperate.

'And why alas?' said the gentleman angrily; 'is it because I shut my door against a score or two of these bloodthirsty hypocrites?'

'But their masters can as easily send a regiment or an army, if they will,' replied the lady; 'and what good would your present defence do, excepting to exasperate them to your utter destruction?'

'Be it so, Alice,' replied her father; 'I have lived my time, and beyond it. I have outlived the kindest and most princelike of masters. What do I do on the earth since the dismal thirtieth of January? The parricide of that day was a signal to all true servants of Charles Stuart to avenge his death, or die as soon after as they could find a worthy opportunity.'

'Do not speak thus, sir,' said Alice Lee; 'it does not become your gravity and your worth to throw away that life which may yet be of service to your king and country,—it will not and cannot always be thus. England will not long endure the rulers which these bad times have assigned her. In the meanwhile'—(here a few words escaped the listener's ears)—'and beware of that impatience which makes bad worse.'

'Worse?' exclaimed the impatient old man, '*What* can be worse? Is it not at the worst already? Will not these people expel us from the only shelter we have left—dilapidate what remains of royal property under my charge—make the palace of princes into a den of thieves, and then wipe their mouths and thank God, as if they had done an alms-deed?'

'Still,' said his daughter, 'there is hope behind, and I trust the King is ere this out of their reach—We have reason to think well of my brother Albert's safety.'

'Ay, Albert! there again,' said the old man, in a tone of reproach; 'had it not been for thy entreaties I had gone to Worcester myself; but I must needs lie here like a worthless hound when the hunt is up, when who knows what service I might have shown? An old man's head is sometimes useful when his arm is but little worth. But you and Albert were so desirous that he should go alone—and now, who can say what has become of him?'

'Nay, nay, father,' said Alice, 'we have good hope that Albert escaped from that fatal day; young Abney saw him a mile from the field.'

'Young Abney lied, I believe,' said the father, in the same humour of contradiction—'Young Abney's tongue seems quicker than his hands, but far slower than his horse's heels when he leaves the Roundheads behind him. I would rather Albert's dead body were laid between Charles and Cromwell than hear he fled as early as young Abney.'

'My dearest father,' said the young lady, weeping as she spoke, 'what can I say to comfort you?'

'Comfort me, say'st thou, girl? I am sick of comfort—an honourable death, with the ruins of Woodstock for my monument, were the only comfort to old Henry Lee. Yes, by the memory of my fathers! I will make good the Lodge against these rebellious robbers.'

'Yet be ruled, dearest father,' said the maiden, 'and submit to that which we cannot gainsay. My uncle Everard'——

Here the old man caught at her unfinished words. 'Thy uncle Everard, wench!—Well, get on.—What of thy precious and loving uncle Everard?'

'Nothing, sir,' she said, 'if the subject displeases you.'

'Displeases me?' he replied; 'why should it displease me? or if it did, why shouldst thou, or any one, affect to care about it? What is it that hath happened of late years—what is it can be thought to happen that astrologer can guess at, which can give pleasure to us?'

'Fate,' she replied, 'may have in store the joyful restoration of our banished prince.'

'Too late for my time, Alice,' said the knight; 'if there be such a white page in the heavenly book, it will not be turned until long after my day.—But I see thou wouldst escape me.—In a word, what of thy uncle Everard?'

'Nay, sir,' said Alice, 'God knows I would rather be silent for ever than speak what might, as you would take it, add to your present distemperature.'

'Distemperature!' said her father; 'O, thou art a sweet-lipped physician, and wouldst, I warrant me, drop nought but sweet balm, and honey, and oil, on my distemperature—if that is the phrase for an old man's ailment, when he is well-nigh heart-broken.—Once more, what of thy uncle Everard?'

His last words were uttered in a high and peevish tone of voice; and Alice Lee answered her father in a trembling and submissive tone.

'I only meant to say, sir, that I am well assured that my uncle Everard, when we quit this place'——

'That is to say, when we are kicked out of it by crop-eared canting villains like himself.—But on with thy bountiful uncle—what will he do?—will he give us the remains of his worshipful and economical housekeeping, the fragments of a thrice-sacked capon twice a-week, and a plentiful fast on the other five days?—Will he give us beds beside his half-starved nags, and put them under a short allowance of straw, that his sister's husband—that I should have called my deceased angel by such a name!—and his sister's daughter,

may not sleep on the stones? Or will he send us a noble each, with a warning to make it last, for he had never known the ready-penny so hard to come by? Or what else will your uncle Everard do for us? Get us a furlough to beg? Why, I can do that without him.'

'You misconstrue him much,' answered Alice, with more spirit than she had hitherto displayed; 'and would you but question your own heart, you would acknowledge—I speak with reverence—that your tongue utters what your better judgment would disown. My uncle Everard is neither a miser nor a hypocrite—neither so fond of the goods of this world that he would not supply our distresses amply, nor so wedded to fanatical opinions as to exclude charity for other sects beside his own.'

'Ay, ay, the Church of England is a *sect* with him, I doubt not, and perhaps with thee too, Alice,' said the knight. 'What is a Muggletonian, or a Ranter, or a Brownist, but a sectary? and thy phrase places them all, with Jack Presbyter himself, on the same footing with our learned prelates and religious clergy! Such is the cant of the day thou livest in, and why shouldst thou not talk like one of the wise virgins and psalm-singing sisters, since, though thou hast a profane old Cavalier for a father, thou art own niece to pious uncle Everard?'

'If you speak thus, my dear father,' said Alice, 'what can I answer you? Hear me but one patient word, and I shall have discharged my uncle Everard's commission.'

'O, it is a commission, then? Surely, I suspected so much from the beginning—nay, have some sharp guess touching the ambassador also.—Come, madam the mediator, do your errand, and you shall have no reason to complain of my patience.'

'Then, sir,' replied his daughter, 'my uncle Everard desires you would be courteous to the Commissioners, who come here to sequestrate the parks and the property; or, at least, heedfully to abstain from giving them obstacle or opposition: it can, he says, do no good, even on your own principles, and it will give a pretext for proceeding against you as one in the worst degree of malignity, which he thinks may otherwise be prevented. Nay, he has good hope that, if you follow his counsel, the Committee may, through the interest he possesses, be inclined to remove the sequestration of your estate on a moderate fine. Thus says my uncle; and, having communicated his advice, I have no occasion to urge your patience with further argument.'

'It is well thou dost not, Alice,' answered Sir Henry Lee, in a tone of suppressed anger; 'for, by the blessed Rood, thou hast well-nigh led me into the heresy of thinking thee no daughter of mine.—Ah! my beloved companion, who art now far from the sorrows and cares of this weary world, couldst thou have thought that the daughter thou didst clasp to thy bosom would, like the wicked wife of Job, become a temptress to her father in the hour of affliction, and recommend to him to make his conscience truckle to his interest, and to beg back at the bloody hands of his master's, and perhaps his son's, murderers, a wretched remnant of the royal property he has been robbed of!—Why, wench, if I must beg, think'st thou I will sue to those who have made me a mendicant? No. I will never show my grey beard, worn in sorrow for my sovereign's death, to move the compassion of some proud sequestrator, who perhaps was one of the parricides. No. If Henry Lee must sue for food, it shall be of some sound loyalist like himself, who, having but half a loaf remaining, will not nevertheless refuse to share it with him. For his daughter, she may wander her own way, which leads her to a refuge with her wealthy Roundhead kinsfolk; but let her no more call him father whose honest indigence she has refused to share!'

'You do me injustice, sir,' answered the young lady, with a voice animated yet faltering, 'cruel injustice. God knows, your way is my way, though it lead to ruin and beggary; and while you tread it, my arm shall support you while you will accept an aid so feeble.'

'Thou word'st me, girl,' answered the old Cavalier, 'thou word'st me, as Will Shakespeare says—thou speakest of lending me thy arm; but thy secret thought is thyself to hang upon Markham Everard's.'

'My father, my father,' answered Alice, in a tone of deep grief, 'what can thus have altered your clear judgment and kindly heart?—Accursed be these civil commotions; not only do they destroy men's bodies, but they pervert their souls; and the brave, the noble, the generous, become suspicious, harsh, and mean! Why upbraid me with Markham Everard? Have I seen or spoken to him since you forbid him my company, with terms less kind—I will speak it truly—than was due even to the relationship betwixt you? Why think I would sacrifice to that young man my duty to you? Know that, were I capable of such criminal weakness, Markham Everard were the first to despise me for it.'

She put her handkerchief to her eyes, but she could not hide her sobs, nor conceal the distress they intimated. The old man was moved.

'I cannot tell,' he said, 'what to think of it. Thou seem'st sincere, and wert ever a good and kindly daughter—how thou hast let that rebel youth creep into thy heart I wot not; perhaps it is a punishment on me, who thought the loyalty of my house was like undefiled ermine. Yet here is a damned spot, and on the fairest gem of all—my own dear Alice. But do not weep—we have enough to vex us. Where is it that Shakespeare hath it:—

> Gentle daughter,
> Give even way unto my rough affairs;
> Put you not on the temper of the times,
> Nor be, like them, to Percy troublesome.'

'I am glad,' answered the young lady, 'to hear you quote your favourite again, sir. Our little jars are ever well-nigh ended when Shakespeare comes in play.'

'His book was the closet-companion of my blessed master,' said Sir Henry Lee; 'after the Bible (with reverence for naming them together), he felt more comfort in it than in any other; and as I have shared his disease, why, it is natural I should take his medicine. Albeit I pretend not to my master's art in explaining the dark

passages; for I am but a rude man, and rustically brought up to arms and hunting.'

'You have seen Shakespeare yourself, sir?' said the young lady.

'Silly wench,' replied the knight, 'he died when I was a mere child—thou hast heard me say so twenty times; but thou wouldst lead the old man away from the tender subject. Well, though I am not blind, I can shut my eyes and follow. Ben Jonson I knew, and could tell thee many a tale of our meetings at the Mermaid,* where, if there was much wine, there was much wit also. We did not sit blowing tobacco in each other's faces, and turning up the whites of our eyes as we turned up the bottom of the wine-pot. Old Ben adopted me as one of his sons in the muses. I have shown you, have I not, the verses, "To my much beloved son, the worshipful Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, Knight and Baronet"?'

'I do not remember them at present, sir,' replied Alice.

'I fear ye lie, wench,' said her father; 'but no matter—thou canst not get any more fooling out of me just now. The evil spirit hath left Saul for the present. We are now to think what is to be done about leaving Woodstock—or defending it.'

'My dearest father,' said Alice, 'can you still nourish a moment's hope of making good the place?'

'I know not, wench,' replied Sir Henry; 'I would fain have a parting blow with them, 'tis certain—and who knows where a blessing may alight? But then, my poor knaves that must take part with me in so hopeless a quarrel—that thought hampers me, I confess.'

'O, let it do so, sir,' replied Alice; 'there are soldiers in the town, and there are three regiments at Oxford!'

'Ah, poor Oxford!' exclaimed Sir Henry, whose vacillating state of mind was turned by a word to any new subject that was suggested, —'Seat of learning and loyalty! these rude soldiers are unfit inmates for thy learned halls and poetical bowers; but thy pure and brilliant lamp shall defy the foul breath of a thousand churls, were they to blow at it like Boreas. The burning bush shall not be consumed, even by the heat of this persecution.'

'True, sir,' said Alice; 'and it may not be useless to recollect that any stirring of the Royalists at this unpropitious moment will make them deal yet more harshly with the University, which they consider as being at the bottom of everything which moves for the King in these parts.'

'It is true, wench,' replied the knight; 'and small cause would make the villains sequestrate the poor remains which the Civil Wars have left to the colleges. That, and the risk of my poor fellows—Well! thou hast disarmed me, girl. I will be as patient and calm as a martyr.'

'Pray God you keep your word, sir!' replied his daughter; 'but you are ever so much moved at the sight of any of these men, that'——

'Would you make a child of me, Alice?' said Sir Henry. 'Why, know you not that I can look upon a viper, or a toad, or a bunch of engendering adders, without any worse feeling than a little disgust? and though a Roundhead, and especially a red-coat, are in my opinion more poisonous than vipers, more loathsome than toads, more hateful than knotted adders, yet can I overcome my nature so far, that should one of them appear at this moment, thyself should see how civilly I would entreat him.'

As he spoke, the military preacher abandoned his leafy screen, and, stalking forward, stood unexpectedly before the old Cavalier, who stared at him as if he had thought his expressions had actually raised a devil.

'Who art thou?' at length said Sir Henry in a raised and angry voice, while his daughter clung to his arm in terror, little confident that her father's pacific resolutions would abide the shock of this unwelcome apparition.

'I am one,' replied the soldier, 'who neither fear nor shame to call myself a poor day-labourer in the great work of England—umph!—Ay, a simple and sincere upholder of the good old cause.'

'And what the devil do you seek here?' said the old knight fiercely.

'The welcome due to the steward of the Lords Commissioners,' answered the soldier.

'Welcome art thou as salt would be to sore eyes,' said the Cavalier; 'but who be your Commissioners, man?'

The soldier with little courtesy held out a scroll, which Sir Henry took from him betwixt his finger and thumb, as if it were a letter from a pest-house, and held it at as much distance from his eyes as his purpose of reading it would permit. He then read aloud, and, as he named the parties one by one, he added a short commentary on each name, addressed, indeed, to Alice, but in such a tone that showed he cared not for its being heard by the soldier.

'*Desborough*—the ploughman Desborough—as grovelling a clown as is in England—a fellow that would be best at home, like an ancient Scythian, under the tilt of a waggon—d—n him. *Harrison*—a bloody-minded, ranting enthusiast, who read the Bible to such purpose that he never lacked a text to justify a murder—d—n him too. *Bletson*—a true-blue Commonwealth's man, one of Harrington's Rota Club,† with his noddle full of new-fangled notions about government, the clearest object of which is to establish the tail upon the head; a fellow who leaves you the statutes and law of old England, to prate of Rome and Greece—sees the Areopagus ‡ in Westminster Hall, and takes old Noll for a Roman consul—Adad, he is like to prove a dictator amongst them instead. Never mind—d—n Bletson too.'

* [The Mermaid tavern in Cheapside, the favourite resort of wits and poets, amongst others of the poet Ben Jonson.]

† [Harrington's Rota Club was formed in 1659 to discuss his political theories, laid down in the book he wrote called *Oceana*.]

‡ [The Westminster Assembly met in 1643 for the purpose of deciding what form of church organization should succeed the Episcopal Church of England, which the Long Parliament had abolished the year before. The Areopagus was a high court of ancient Athens, that, amongst other duties, watched over the purity of religious faith.]

'Friend,' said the soldier, 'I would willingly be civil, but it consists not with my duty to hear these godly men, in whose service I am, spoken of after this irreverent and unbecoming fashion. And albeit I know that you malignants think you have a right to make free with that damnation, which you seem to use as your own portion, yet it is superfluous to invoke it against others, who have better hopes in their thoughts and better words in their mouths.'

'Thou art but a canting varlet,' replied the knight; 'and yet thou art right in some sense—for it is superfluous to curse men who already are damned as black as the smoke of hell itself.'

'I prithee forbear,' continued the soldier, 'for manners' sake, if not for conscience—grisly oaths suit ill with grey beards.'

'Nay, that is truth, if the devil spoke it,' said the knight; 'and I thank Heaven I can follow good counsel, though Old Nick gives it. And so, friend, touching these same Commissioners, bear them this message; that Sir Henry Lee is Keeper of Woodstock Park, with right of waif and stray, vert and venison, as complete as any of them have to their estate—that is, if they possess any estate but what they have gained by plundering honest men. Nevertheless, he will give place to those who have made their might their right, and will not expose the lives of good and true men, where the odds are so much against them. And he protests that he makes this surrender, neither as acknowledging of these so-termed Commissioners, nor as for his own individual part fearing their force, but purely to avoid the loss of English blood, of which so much hath been spilt in these late times.'

'It is well spoken,' said the steward of the Commissioners; 'and therefore, I pray you, let us walk together into the house, that thou may'st deliver up unto me the vessels, and gold and silver ornaments, belonging unto the Egyptian Pharaoh, who committed them to thy keeping.'

'What vessels?' exclaimed the fiery old knight; 'and belonging to whom? Unbaptized dog, speak civil of the Martyr in my presence, or I will do a deed misbecoming of me on that caitiff corpse of thine!'—And, shaking his daughter from his right arm, the old man laid his hand on his rapier.

His antagonist, on the contrary, kept his temper completely, and, waving his hand to add impression to his speech, he said, with a calmness which aggravated Sir Henry's wrath, 'Nay, good friend, I prithee be still, and brawl not—it becomes not grey hairs and feeble arms to rail and rant like drunkards. Put me not to use the carnal weapon in mine own defence, but listen to the voice of reason. Seest thou not that the Lord hath decided this great controversy in favour of us and ours, against thee and thine? Wherefore, render up thy stewardship peacefully, and deliver up to me the chattels of the Man, Charles Stuart.'

'Patience is a good nag, but she will bolt,' said the knight, unable longer to rein in his wrath. He plucked his sheathed rapier from his side, struck the soldier a severe blow with it, and instantly drawing it, and throwing the scabbard over the trees, placed himself in a posture of defence, with his sword's point within half a yard of the steward's body. The latter stepped back with activity, threw his long cloak from his shoulders, and, drawing his long tuck, stood upon his guard. The swords clashed smartly together, while Alice, in her terror, screamed wildly for assistance. But the combat was of short duration. The old Cavalier had attacked a man as cunning of fence as he himself, or a little more so, and possessing all the strength and activity of which time had deprived Sir Henry, and the calmness which the other had lost in his passion. They had scarce exchanged three passes ere the sword of the knight flew up in the air, as if it had gone in search of the scabbard; and, burning with shame and anger, Sir Henry stood disarmed, at the mercy of his antagonist. The republican showed no purpose of abusing his victory; nor did he, either during the combat, or after the victory was won, in any respect alter the sour and grave composure which reigned upon his countenance—a combat of life and death seemed to him a thing as familiar, and as little to be feared, as an ordinary bout with foils.

'Thou art delivered into my hands,' he said, 'and by the law of arms I might smite thee under the fifth rib, even as Asahel was struck dead by Abner the son of Ner, as he followed the chase on the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah, in the way of the wilderness of Gibeon; but far be it from me to spill thy remaining drops of blood. True it is, thou art the captive of my sword and of my spear; nevertheless, seeing that there may be a turning from thine evil ways, and a returning to those which are good, if the Lord enlarge thy date for repentance and amendment, wherefore should it be shortened by a poor sinful mortal who is, speaking truly, but thy fellow-worm?'

Sir Henry Lee remained still confused, and unable to answer, when there arrived a fourth person, whom the cries of Alice had summoned to the spot. This was Joceline Joliffe, one of the under-keepers of the walk, who, seeing how matters stood, brandished his quarterstaff, a weapon from which he never parted, and, having made it describe the figure of eight in a flourish through the air, would have brought it down with a vengeance upon the head of the steward, had not Sir Henry interposed.

'We must trail bats now, Joceline—our time of shouldering them is past. It skills not striving against the stream—the devil rules the roast, and makes our slaves our tutors.'

At this moment another auxiliary rushed out of the thicket to the knight's assistance. It was a large wolf-dog, in strength a mastiff, in form and almost in fleetness a greyhound. Bevis was the noblest of the kind which ever pulled down a stag, tawny-coloured like a lion, with a black muzzle and black feet, just edged with a line of white round the toes. He was as tractable as he was strong and bold. Just as he was about to rush upon the soldier, the words, 'Peace, Bevis!' from Sir Henry, converted the lion into a lamb, and, instead of pulling the soldier down, he walked round and round, and snuffed, as if

using all his sagacity to discover who the stranger could be, towards whom, though of so questionable an appearance, he was enjoined forbearance. Apparently he was satisfied, for he laid aside his doubtful and threatening demonstrations, lowered his ears, smoothed down his bristles, and wagged his tail.

Sir Henry, who had great respect for the sagacity of his favourite, said in a low voice to Alice, 'Bevis is of thy opinion, and counsels submission. There is the finger of Heaven in this to punish the pride, ever the fault of our house.—Friend,' he continued, addressing the soldier, 'thou hast given the finishing touch to a lesson which ten years of constant misfortune have been unable fully to teach me. Thou hast distinctly shown me the folly of thinking that a good cause can strengthen a weak arm. God forgive me for the thought, but I could almost turn infidel, and believe that Heaven's blessing goes ever with the longest sword; but it will not be always thus. God knows his time.—Reach me my Toledo, Joceline, yonder it lies; and the scabbard, see where it hangs on the tree.—Do not pull at my cloak, Alice, and look so miserably frightened; I shall be in no hurry to betake me to bright steel again, I promise thee.—For thee, good fellow, I thank thee, and will make way for thy masters without further dispute or ceremony. Joceline Joliffe is nearer thy degree than I am, and will make surrender to thee of the Lodge and household stuff.—Withhold nothing, Joliffe—let them have all. For me, I will never cross the threshold again—but where to rest for a night? I would trouble no one in Woodstock—hum—ay—it shall be so. Alice and I, Joceline, will go down to thy hut by Rosamond's Well; we will borrow the shelter of thy roof for one night at least; thou wilt give us welcome, wilt thou not?—How now—a clouded brow?'

Joceline certainly looked embarrassed, directed first a glance to Alice, then looked to heaven, then to earth, and last to the four quarters of the horizon, and then murmured out, 'Certainly—without question—might he but run down to put the house in order.'

'Order enough—order enough—for those that may soon be glad of clean straw in a barn,' said the knight; 'but if thou hast an ill-will to harbour any obnoxious or malignant persons, as the phrase goes, never shame to speak it out, man. 'Tis true, I took thee up when thou wert but a ragged Robin,* made a keeper of thee, and so forth. What of that? Sailors think no longer of the wind than when it forwards them on the voyage—thy betters turn with the tide, why should not such a poor knave as thou?'

'God pardon your honour for your harsh judgment,' said Joliffe. 'The hut is yours, such as it is, and should be were it a king's palace, as I wish it were even for your honour's sake, and Mistress Alice's—only I could wish your honour would condescend to let me step down before, in case any neighbour be there—or—or—just to put matters something into order for Mistress Alice and your honour—just to make things something seemly and shapely.'

'Not a whit necessary,' said the knight, while Alice had much trouble in concealing her agitation. 'If thy matters are unseemly, they are fitter for a defeated knight—if they are unshapely, why, the liker to the rest of a world, which is all unshaped. Go thou with that man.—What is thy name, friend?'

'Joseph Tomkins is my name in the flesh,' said the steward. 'Men call me Honest Joe, and Trusty Tomkins.'

'If thou hast deserved such names, considering what trade thou hast driven, thou art a jewel indeed,' said the knight; 'yet if thou hast not, never blush for the matter, Joseph, for if thou art not in truth honest, thou hast all the better chance to keep the fame of it—the title and the thing itself have long walked separate ways. Farewell to thee,—and farewell to fair Woodstock!'

So saying, the old knight turned round, and, pulling his daughter's arm through his own, they walked onward into the forest, in the same manner in which they were introduced to the reader.

CHAPTER III.

Now, ye wild blades, that make loose inns your stage,
To vapour forth the acts of this sad age,
Stout Edgehill fight, the Newberries and the West,
And northern clashes, where you still fought best;
Your strange escapes, your dangers void of fear,
When bullets flew between the head and ear,
Whether you fought by Damme or the Spirit,
Of you I speak.

LEGEND OF CAPTAIN JONES.

JOSEPH TOMKINS and Joliffe the keeper remained for some time in silence, as they stood together looking along the path in which the figures of the Knight of Ditchley and pretty Mistress Alice had disappeared behind the trees. They then gazed on each other in doubt, as men who scarce knew whether they stood on hostile or on friendly terms together, and were at a loss how to open a conversation. They heard the knight's whistle summon Bevis; but though the good hound turned his head and pricked his ears at the sound, yet he did not obey the call, but continued to snuff around Joseph Tomkins's cloak.

'Thou art a rare one, I fear me,' said the keeper, looking to his new acquaintance. 'I have heard of men who have charms to steal both dogs and deer.'

'Trouble not thyself about my qualities, friend,' said Joseph Tomkins, 'but bethink thee of doing thy master's bidding.'

Joceline did not immediately answer, but at length, as if in sign of truce, stuck the end of his quarterstaff upright in the ground, and leant upon it as he said gruffly,—'So, my tough old knight and you were at drawn bilbo, by way of afternoon service, Sir Preacher—Well for you I came not up till the blades were done jingling, or I had rung even-song upon your pate.'

The Independent smiled grimly, as he replied, 'Nay, friend, it is well for thyself, for never should sexton have been better paid for the knell he tolled. Nevertheless, why should there be war betwixt us, or my hand be against thine?

* The keeper's followers in the New Forest are called in popular language ragged Robins.

Thou art but a poor knave, doing thy master's order, nor have I any desire that my own blood or thine should be shed touching this matter.—Thou art, I understand, to give me peaceful possession of the Palace of Woodstock, so called—though there is now no palace in England, no, nor shall be in the days that come after, until we shall enter the palace of the New Jerusalem, and the reign of the saints shall commence on earth.'

'Pretty well begun already, friend Tomkins,' said the keeper; 'you are little short of being kings already upon the matter as it now stands; and for your Jerusalem I wot not, but Woodstock is a pretty nest-egg to begin with.—Well, will you shog—will you on—will you take sasine and livery?—You heard my orders.'

'Umph—I know not,' said Tomkins. 'I must beware of ambuscades, and I am alone here. Moreover, it is the High Thanksgiving appointed by Parliament, and owned to by the army—also the old man and the young woman may want to recover some of their clothes and personal property, and I would not that they were baulked on my account. Wherefore, if thou wilt deliver me possession to-morrow morning, it shall be done in personal presence of my own followers, and of the Presbyterian man the Mayor, so that the transfer may be made before witnesses; whereas, were there none with us but thou to deliver and I to take possession, the men of Belial might say, Go to, Trusty Tomkins hath been an Edomite—Honest Joe hath been as an Ishmaelite, rising up early and dividing the spoil with them that served the Man—yea, they that wore beards and green jerkins, as in remembrance of the Man and of his government.'

Joceline fixed his keen dark eyes upon the soldier as he spoke, as if in design to discover whether there was fair play in his mind or not. He then applied his five fingers to scratch a large shock head of hair, as if that operation was necessary to enable him to come to a conclusion. 'This is all fair sounding, brother,' said he; 'but I tell you plainly, there are some silver mugs, and platters, and flagons, and so forth, in yonder house, which have survived the general sweep that sent all our plate to the smelting-pot, to put our knight's troop on horseback. Now, if thou takest not these off my hand, I may come to trouble, since it may be thought I have minished their numbers.—Whereas, I being as honest a fellow'——

'As ever stole venison,' said Tomkins—'nay, I do owe thee an interruption.'

'Go to, then,' replied the keeper; 'if a stag may have come to mischance in my walk, it was no way in the course of dishonesty, but merely to keep my old dame's pan from rusting; but for silver porringers, tankards, and such like, I would as soon have drunk the melted silver as stolen the vessel made out of it. So that I would not wish blame or suspicion fell on me in this matter. And, therefore, if you will have the things rendered even now,—why so—and if not, hold me blameless.'

'Ay, truly?' said Tomkins; 'and who is to hold me blameless, if they should see cause to think anything minished? Not the right worshipful Commissioners, to whom the property of the estate is as their own; therefore, as thou say'st, we must walk warily in the matter. To lock up the house and leave it were but the work of simple ones. What say'st thou to spend the night there, and then nothing can be touched without the knowledge of us both?'

'Why, concerning that,' answered the keeper, 'I should be at my hut to make matters somewhat comfortable for the old knight and Mistress Alice, for my old dame Joan is something dunny, and will scarce know how to manage—and yet, to speak the truth, by the mass I would rather not see Sir Henry to-night, since what has happened to-day hath roused his spleen, and it is a peradventure he may have met something at the hut which will scarce tend to cool it.'

'It is a pity,' said Tomkins, 'that, being a gentleman of such grave and goodly presence, he should be such a malignant Cavalier, and that he should, like the rest of that generation of vipers, have clothed himself with curses as with a garment.'

'Which is as much as to say, the tough old knight hath a habit of swearing,' said the keeper, grinning at a pun which has been repeated since his time; 'but who can help it? it comes of use and wont. Were you now, in your bodily self, to light suddenly on a Maypole, with all the blithe morris-dancers prancing around it to the merry pipe and tabor, with bells jingling, ribands fluttering, lads frisking and laughing, lasses leaping till you might see where the scarlet garter fastened the light blue hose, I think some feeling, resembling either natural sociality, or old use and wont, would get the better, friend, even of thy gravity, and thou wouldst fling thy cuckoldy steeple-hat one way, and that bloodthirsty long sword another, and trip like the noodles of Hogs-Norton, when the pigs play on the organ.'*

The Independent turned fiercely round on the keeper, and replied, 'How now, Master Green Jerkin? what language is this to one whose hand is at the plough? I advise thee to put curb on thy tongue, lest thy ribs pay the forfeit.'

'Nay, do not take the high tone with me, brother,' answered Joceline; 'remember thou hast not the old knight of sixty-five to deal with, but a fellow as bitter and prompt as thyself—it may be a little more so—younger, at all events—and prithee, why shouldst thou take such umbrage at a Maypole? I would thou hadst known one Phil Hazeldine of these parts—He was the best morris-dancer betwixt Oxford and Burford.'

'The more shame to him,' answered the Independent; 'and I trust he has seen the error of his ways, and made himself (as, if a man of action, he easily might) fit for better company than wood-hunters, deer-stealers, Maid Marions, swashbucklers, deboshed revellers, bloody brawlers, maskers and mummers, lewd men and light women, fools and fiddlers, and carnal self-pleasers of every description.'

'Well,' replied the keeper, 'you are out of breath in time; for here we stand before the famous Maypole of Woodstock.'

* [An old English proverb, pointing to boorishness and unmannerliness.]

They paused in an open space of meadow-land, beautifully skirted by large oaks and sycamores, one of which, as king of the forest, stood a little detached from the rest, as if scorning the vicinity of any rival. It was scathed and gnarled in the branches, but the immense trunk still showed to what gigantic size the monarch of the forest can attain in the groves of merry England.

'That is called the King's Oak,' said Joceline; 'the oldest men of Woodstock know not how old it is; they say Henry used to sit under it with fair Rosamond, and see the lasses dance, and the lads of the village run races, and wrestle for belts or bonnets.'

'I nothing doubt it, friend,' said Tomkins; 'a tyrant and a harlot were fitting patron and patroness for such vanities.'

'Thou mayst say thy say, friend,' replied the keeper, 'so thou lettest me say mine. There stands the Maypole, as thou seest, half a flight-shot from the King's Oak, in the midst of the meadow. The King gave ten shillings from the customs of Woodstock to make a new one yearly, besides a tree fitted for the purpose out of the forest. Now it is warped, and withered, and twisted, like a wasted brier-rod. The green, too, used to be close-shaved, and rolled till it was smooth as a velvet mantle—now it is rough and overgrown.'

'Well, well, friend Joceline,' said the Independent, 'but where was the edification of all this?—what use of doctrine could be derived from a pipe and tabor? or was there ever aught like wisdom in a bagpipe?'

'You may ask better scholars that,' said Joceline; 'but methinks men cannot be always grave, and with the hat over their brow. A young maiden will laugh as a tender flower will blow—ay, and a lad will like her the better for it; just as the same blithe spring that makes the young birds whistle bids the blithe fawns skip. There have come worse days since the jolly old times have gone by:—I tell thee, that in the holidays which you, Master Longsword, have put down, I have seen this greensward alive with merry maidens and manly fellows. The good old rector himself thought it was no sin to come for a while and look on, and his goodly cassock and scarf kept us all in good order, and taught us to limit our mirth within the bounds of discretion. We might, it may be, crack a broad jest, or pledge a friendly cup a turn too often, but it was in mirth and good neighbourhood—Ay, and if there was a bout at single-stick, or a bellyful of boxing, it was all for love and kindness; and better a few dry blows in drink than the bloody doings we have had in sober earnest since the presbyter's cap got above the bishop's mitre, and we exchanged our goodly rectors and learned doctors, whose sermons were all bolstered up with as much Greek and Latin as might have confounded the devil himself, for weavers and cobblers, and such other pulpit volunteers, as—as we heard this morning—It will out.'

'Well, friend,' said the Independent, with patience scarcely to have been expected, 'I quarrel not with thee for nauseating my doctrine. If thine ear is so much tickled with tabor tunes and morris tripping, truly it is not likely thou shouldst find pleasant savour in more wholesome and sober food. But let us to the Lodge, that we may go about our business there before the sun sets.'

'Troth, and that may be advisable for more reasons than one,' said the keeper; 'for there have been tales about the Lodge which have made men afeared to harbour there after nightfall.'

'Were not yon old knight and yonder damsel his daughter wont to dwell there?' said the Independent. 'My information said so.'

'Ay, truly did they,' said Joceline; 'and while they kept a jolly household all went well enough; for nothing banishes fear like good ale. But after the best of our men went to the wars, and were slain at Naseby fight, they who were left found the Lodge more lonesome, and the old knight has been much deserted of his servants:—marry, it might be that he has lacked silver of late to pay groom and lackey.'

'A potential reason for the diminution of a household,' said the soldier.

'Right, sir, even so,' replied the keeper. 'They spoke of steps in the great gallery, heard by dead of the night, and voices that whispered at noon in the matted chambers; and the servants pretended that these things scared them away; but, in my poor judgment, when Martinmas and Whitsuntide came round without a penny-fee, the old blue-bottles of serving-men began to think of creeping elsewhere before the frost chilled them.—No devil so frightful as that which dances in the pocket where there is no cross to keep him out.'

'You were reduced, then, to a petty household?' said the Independent.

'Ay, marry were we,' said Joceline; 'but we kept some half-score together, what with blue-bottles in the Lodge, what with green caterpillars of the chase, like him who is yours to command; we stuck together till we found a call to take a morning's ride somewhere or other.'

'To the town of Worcester,' said the soldier, 'where you were crushed like vermin and palmer-worms, as you are.'

'You may say your pleasure,' replied the keeper; 'I'll never contradict a man who has got my head under his belt. Our backs are at the wall, or you would not be here.'

'Nay, friend,' said the Independent, 'thou riskest nothing by thy freedom and trust in me. I can be *bon camarado* to a good soldier, although I have striven with him even to the going down of the sun.—But here we are in front of the Lodge.'

They stood accordingly in front of the old Gothic building, irregularly constructed, and at different times, as the humour of the English monarchs led them to taste the pleasures of Woodstock Chase, and to make such improvements for their own accommodation as the increasing luxury of each age required. The oldest part of the structure had been named by tradition Fair Rosamond's Tower; it was a small turret of great height, with narrow windows, and walls of massive thickness. The tower had no opening to the ground, or means of descending, a great part of the lower portion being solid mason-work. It was traditionally said to have been accessible only by a sort of

small drawbridge, which might be dropped at pleasure from a little portal near the summit of the turret to the battlements of another tower of the same construction, but twenty feet lower, and containing only a winding staircase, called in Woodstock Love's Ladder; because it is said that, by ascending this staircase to the top of the tower, and then making use of the drawbridge, Henry obtained access to the chamber of his paramour.

This tradition had been keenly impugned by Doctor Rochecliffe, the former rector of Woodstock, who insisted that what was called Rosamond's Tower was merely an interior keep, or citadel, to which the lord or warden of the castle might retreat, when other points of safety failed him, and either protract his defence, or, at the worst, stipulate for reasonable terms of surrender. The people of Woodstock, jealous of their ancient traditions, did not relish this new mode of explaining them away; and it is even said that the mayor, whom we have already introduced, became Presbyterian, in revenge of the doubts cast by the rector upon this important subject, rather choosing to give up the Liturgy than his fixed belief in Rosamond's Tower and Love's Ladder.

The rest of the Lodge was of considerable extent, and of different ages; comprehending a nest of little courts, surrounded by buildings which corresponded with each other, sometimes within-doors, sometimes by crossing the courts, and frequently in both ways. The different heights of the buildings announced that they could only be connected by the usual variety of staircases, which exercised the limbs of our ancestors in the sixteenth and earlier centuries, and seem sometimes to have been contrived for no other purpose.

The varied and multiplied fronts of this irregular building were, as Doctor Rochecliffe was wont to say, an absolute banquet to the architectural antiquary, as they certainly contained specimens of every style which existed, from the pure Norman of Henry of Anjou down to the composite, half-Gothic half-classical architecture of Elizabeth and her successor. Accordingly, the rector was himself as much enamoured of Woodstock as ever was Henry of Fair Rosamond; and as his intimacy with Sir Henry Lee permitted him entrance at all times to the Royal Lodge, he used to spend whole days in wandering about the antique apartments, examining, measuring, studying, and finding out excellent reasons for architectural peculiarities, which probably only owed their existence to the freakish fancy of a Gothic artist. But the old antiquary had been expelled from his living by the intolerance and troubles of the times, and his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough, would have considered an elaborate investigation of the profane sculpture and architecture of blinded and bloodthirsty Papists, together with the history of the dissolute amours of old Norman monarchs, as little better than a bowing down before the calves of Bethel, and a drinking of the cup of abominations.—We return to the course of our story.

'There is,' said the Independent Tomkins, after he had carefully perused the front of the building, 'many a rare monument of olden wickedness about this miscalled Royal Lodge; verily, I shall rejoice much to see the same destroyed, yea, burned to ashes, and the ashes thrown into the brook Kedron, or any other brook, that the land may be cleansed from the memory thereof, neither remember the iniquity with which their fathers have sinned.'

The keeper heard him with secret indignation, and began to consider with himself, whether, as they stood but one to one, and without chance of speedy interference, he was not called upon, by his official duty, to castigate the rebel who used language so defamatory. But he fortunately recollected that the strife must be a doubtful one—that the advantage of arms was against him—and that, in especial, even if he should succeed in the combat, it would be at the risk of severe retaliation. It must be owned, too, that there was something about the Independent so dark and mysterious, so grim and grave, that the more open spirit of the keeper felt oppressed, and, if not overawed, at least kept in doubt concerning him; and he thought it wisest, as well as safest, for his master and himself, to avoid all subjects of dispute, and know better with whom he was dealing, before he made either friend or enemy of him.

The great gate of the Lodge was strongly bolted, but the wicket opened on Joceline's raising the latch. There was a short passage of ten feet, which had been formerly closed by a portcullis at the inner end, while three loopholes opened on either side, through which any daring intruder might be annoyed, who, having surprised the first gate, must be thus exposed to a severe fire before he could force the second. But the machinery of the portcullis was damaged, and it now remained a fixture, brandishing its jaw, well furnished with iron fangs, but incapable of dropping it across the path of invasion.

The way, therefore, lay open to the great hall or outer vestibule of the Lodge. One end of this long and dusky apartment was entirely occupied by a gallery, which had in ancient times served to accommodate the musicians and minstrels. There was a clumsy staircase at either side of it, composed of entire logs of a foot square; and in each angle of the ascent was placed, by way of sentinel, the figure of a Norman foot-soldier, having an open casque on his head, which displayed features as stern as the painter's genius could devise. Their arms were buff-jackets, or shirts of mail, round bucklers, with spikes in the centre, and buskins which adorned and defended the feet and ankles, but left the knees bare. These wooden warders held great swords or maces in their hands, like military guards on duty. Many an empty hook and brace, along the walls of the gloomy apartment, marked the spots from which arms, long preserved as trophies, had been, in the pressure of the wars, once more taken down, to do service in the field, like veterans whom extremity of danger recalls to battle. On other rusty fastenings were still displayed the hunting trophies of the monarchs to whom the Lodge belonged, and of the sylvan knights to whose care it had been from time to time confided.

At the nether end of the hall, a huge, heavy, stone-wrought chimney piece projected itself ten

feet from the wall, adorned with many a cipher and many a scutcheon of the Royal House of England. In its present state, it yawned like the arched mouth of a funeral vault, or perhaps might be compared to the crater of an extinguished volcano. But the sable complexion of the massive stone-work, and all around it, showed that the time had been when it sent its huge fires blazing up the huge chimney, besides puffing many a volume of smoke over the heads of the jovial guests, whose royalty or nobility did not render them sensitive enough to quarrel with such slight inconvenience. On these occasions, it was the tradition of the house that two cart-loads of wood was the regular allowance for the fire between noon and curfew, and the andirons, or dogs, as they were termed, constructed for retaining the blazing firewood on the hearth, were wrought in the shape of lions of such gigantic size as might well warrant the legend. There were long seats of stone within the chimney, where, in despite of the tremendous heat, monarchs were sometimes said to have taken their station, and amused themselves with broiling the *umbles*, or *dowsets*, of the deer upon the glowing embers, with their own royal hands, when happy the courtier who was invited to taste the royal cookery. Tradition was here also ready with her record, to show what merry jibes, such as might be exchanged between prince and peer, had flown about at the jolly banquet which followed the Michaelmas hunt. She could tell, too, exactly where King Stephen sat when he darned his own princely hose, and knew most of the odd tricks he had put upon little Winkin, the tailor of Woodstock.

Most of this rude revelry belonged to the Plantagenet times. When the House of Tudor acceded to the throne, they were more chary of their royal presence, and feasted in halls and chambers far within, abandoning the outmost hall to the yeomen of the guard, who mounted their watch there, and passed away the night with wassail and mirth, exchanged sometimes for frightful tales of apparitions and sorceries, which made some of those grow pale in whose ears the trumpet of a French foeman would have sounded as jollily as a summons to the woodland chase.

Joceline pointed out the peculiarities of the place to his gloomy companion more briefly than we have detailed them to the reader. The Independent seemed to listen with some interest at first, but, flinging it suddenly aside, he said in a solemn tone, 'Perish, Babylon, as thy master Nebuchadnezzar hath perished! He is a wanderer, and thou shalt be a waste place—yea, and a wilderness—yea, a desert of salt, in which there shall be thirst and famine.'

'There is like to be enough of both to-night,' said Joceline, 'unless the good knight's larder be somewhat fuller than it is wont.'

'We must care for the creature comforts,' said the Independent, 'but in due season, when our duties are done. Whither lead these entrances?'

'That to the right,' replied the keeper, 'leads to what are called the state-apartments, not used since the year sixteen hundred and thirty-nine, when his blessed Majesty'——

'How, sir!' interrupted the Independent in a voice of thunder, 'dost thou speak of Charles Stuart as blessing or blessed!—beware the proclamation to that effect.'

'I meant no harm,' answered the keeper, suppressing his disposition to make a harsher reply. 'My business is with bolts and bucks, not with titles and State affairs. But yet, whatever may have happened since, that poor King was followed with blessings enough from Woodstock, for he left a glove full of broad pieces for the poor of the place'——

'Peace, friend,' said the Independent; 'I will think thee else one of those besotted and blinded Papists, who hold that bestowing of alms is an atonement and washing away of the wrongs and oppressions which have been wrought by the alms-giver. Thou sayest, then, these were the apartments of Charles Stuart?'

'And of his father, James, before him, and Elizabeth, before *him*, and bluff King Henry, who builded that wing, before them all.'

'And there, I suppose, the knight and his daughter dwelt?'

'No,' replied Joceline; 'Sir Henry Lee had too much reverence for—for things which are now thought worth no reverence at all. Besides, the state-rooms are unaired and in indifferent order since of late years. The Knight Ranger's apartment lies by that passage to the left.'

'And whither goes yonder stair, which seems both to lead upwards and downwards?'

'Upwards,' replied the keeper, 'it leads to many apartments, used for various purposes, of sleeping, and other accommodation. Downwards, to the kitchen, offices, and vaults of the castle, which, at this time of the evening, you cannot see without lights.'

'We will to the apartments of your knight, then,' said the Independent. 'Is there fitting accommodation there?'

'Such as has served a person of condition, whose lodging is now worse appointed,' answered the honest keeper, his bile rising so fast that he added, in a muttering and inaudible tone, 'so it may well serve a crop-eared knave like thee.'

He acted as the usher, however, and led on towards the Ranger's apartments.

This suite opened by a short passage from the hall, secured at time of need by two oaken doors, which could be fastened by large bars of the same, that were drawn out of the wall, and entered into square holes, contrived for their reception on the other side of the portal. At the end of this passage, a small anteroom received them, into which opened the sitting apartment of the good knight—which, in the style of the times, might have been termed a fair summer parlour—lighted by two oriel windows, so placed as to command each of them a separate avenue, leading distant and deep into the forest. The principal ornament of the apartment, besides two or three family portraits of less interest, was a tall full-length picture that hung above the chimney-piece, which, like that in the hall, was of heavy stone-work, ornamented with carved scutcheons, emblazoned with various devices. The portrait was that of a man about fifty years of age, in complete plate armour, and painted in the harsh and dry manner of Holbein—probably, indeed, the work of that artist, as the dates

corresponded. The formal and marked angles, points, and projections of the armour were a good subject for the harsh pencil of that early school. The face of the knight was, from the fading of the colours, pale and dim, like that of some being from the other world, yet the lines expressed forcibly pride and exultation.

He pointed with his leading-staff, or truncheon, to the background, where, in such perspective as the artist possessed, were depicted the remains of a burning church, or monastery, and four or five soldiers, in red cassocks, bearing away in triumph what seemed a brazen font or laver. Above their heads might be traced in scroll, '*Lee Victor sic voluit.*' Right opposite to the picture, hung, in a niche in the wall, a complete set of tilting armour, the black and gold colours and ornaments of which exactly corresponded with those exhibited in the portrait.

The picture was one of those which, from something marked in the features and expression, attract the observation even of those who are ignorant of art. The Independent looked at it until a smile passed transiently over his clouded brow. Whether he smiled to see the grim old cavalier employed in desecrating a religious house —(an occupation much conforming to the practice of his own sect)—whether he smiled in contempt of the old painter's harsh and dry mode of working—or whether the sight of this remarkable portrait revived some other ideas, the under-keeper could not decide.

The smile passed away in an instant, as the soldier looked to the oriel windows. The recesses within them were raised a step or two from the wall. In one was placed a walnut-tree reading desk, and a huge stuffed arm-chair, covered with Spanish leather. A little cabinet stood beside, with some of its shuttles and drawers open, displaying hawks' bells, dog-whistles, instruments for trimming falcons' feathers, bridle-bits of various constructions, and other trifles connected with sylvan sport.

The other little recess was differently furnished. There lay some articles of needlework on a small table, besides a lute, with a book having some airs written down in it, and a frame for working embroidery. Some tapestry was displayed around the recess, with more attention to ornament than was visible in the rest of the apartment; the arrangement of a few bow-pots, with such flowers as the fading season afforded, showed also the superintendence of female taste.

Tomkins cast an eye of careless regard upon these subjects of female occupation, then stepped into the farther window, and began to turn the leaves of a folio which lay open on the reading-desk, apparently with some interest. Joceline, who had determined to watch his motions without interfering with them, was standing at some distance in dejected silence, when a door behind the tapestry suddenly opened, and a pretty village maid tripped out with a napkin in her hand, as if she had been about some household duty.

'How now, Sir Impudence?' she said to Joceline in a smart tone; 'what do you here prowling about the apartments when the master is not at home?'

But instead of the answer which perhaps she expected, Joceline Joliffe cast a mournful glance towards the soldier in the oriel window, as if to make what he said fully intelligible, and replied with a dejected appearance and voice, 'Alack, my pretty Phœbe, there come those here that have more right or might than any of us, and will use little ceremony in coming when they will, and staying while they please.'

He darted another glance at Tomkins, who still seemed busy with the book before him, then sidled close to the astonished girl, who had continued looking alternately at the keeper and at the stranger, as if she had been unable to understand the words of the first, or to comprehend the meaning of the second being present.

'Go,' whispered Joliffe, approaching his mouth so near her cheek, that his breath waved the curls of her hair; 'go, my dearest Phœbe, trip it as fast as a fawn down to my lodge—I will soon be there, and'——

'Your lodge, indeed!' said Phœbe; 'you are very bold, for a poor killbuck that never frightened anything before save a dun deer—*Your* lodge, indeed!—I am like to go there, I think.'

'Hush, hush, Phœbe!—here is no time for jesting. Down to my hut, I say, like a deer, for the knight and Mistress Alice are both there, and I fear will not return hither again.—All's naught, girl—and our evil days are come at last with a vengeance—we are fairly at bay and fairly hunted down.'

'Can this be, Joceline?' said the poor girl, turning to the keeper, with an expression of fright on her countenance, which she had hitherto averted in rural coquetry.

'As sure, my dearest Phœbe, as'——

The rest of the asseveration was lost in Phœbe's ear, so closely did the keeper's lips approach it; and if they approached so very near as to touch her cheek, grief, like impatience, hath its privileges, and poor Phœbe had enough of serious alarm to prevent her from demurring upon such a trifle.

But no trifle was the approach of Joceline's lips to Phœbe's pretty though sunburnt cheek in the estimation of the Independent, who, a little before the object of Joceline's vigilance, had been more lately in his turn the observer of the keeper's demeanour, so soon as the interview betwixt Phœbe and him had become so interesting. And when he remarked the closeness of Joceline's argument, he raised his voice to a pitch of harshness that would have rivalled that of an ungreased and rusty saw, and which at once made Joceline and Phœbe spring six feet apart, each in contrary directions, and if Cupid was of the party must have sent him out at the window like a wild-duck flying from a culverin. Instantly throwing himself into the attitude of a preacher and a reprover of vice, 'How now!' he exclaimed, 'shameless and impudent as you are!—What—chambering and wantoning in our very presence!—How—Would you play your pranks before the steward of the Commissioners of the High Court of Parliament, as ye would in a booth at the fulsome fair, or amidst the trappings and tracings of a profane dancing-school, where the scoundrel minstrels make their ungodly weapons to squeak, "Kiss and be kind, the

fiddler's blind" ?—But here,' he said, dealing a perilous thump upon the volume—'Here is the king and high priest of those vices and follies! —Here is he, whom men of folly profanely call nature's miracle!—Here is he, whom princes chose for their cabinet-keeper, and whom maids of honour take for their bed-fellow!—Here is the prime teacher of fine words, foppery and folly!— —Here!'—(dealing another thump upon the volume—and O! revered of the Roxburghe, it was the first folio—beloved of the Bannatyne, it was Hemmings and Condel*—it was the *editio princeps*)—'On thee,' he continued—'on thee, William Shakespeare, I charge whate'er of such lawless idleness and immodest folly hath defiled the land since thy day!'

'By the mass, a heavy accusation,' said Joceline, the bold recklessness of whose temper could not be long overawed; 'odds pittikins, is our master's old favourite, Will of Stratford, to answer for every buss that has been snatched since James's time?—a perilous reckoning truly —but I wonder who is sponsible for what lads and lasses did before his day!'

'Scoff not,' said the soldier, 'lest I, being called thereto by the voice within me, do deal with thee as a scorner. Verily, I say, that since the devil fell from heaven, he never lacked agents on earth; yet nowhere hath he met with a wizard having such infinite power over men's souls as this pestilent fellow Shakespeare. Seeks a wife a foul example for adultery, here she shall find it—Would a man know how to train his fellow to be a murderer, here shall he find tutoring—Would a lady marry a heathen negro, she shall have chronicled example for it—Would any one scorn at his Maker, he shall be furnished with a jest in this book—Would he defy his brother in the flesh, he shall be accommodated with a challenge—Would you be drunk, Shakespeare will cheer you with a cup—Would you plunge in sensual pleasures, he will soothe you to indulgence, as with the lascivious sounds of a lute. This, I say, this book is the well-head and source of all those evils which have overrun the land like a torrent, making men scoffers, doubters, deniers, murderers, makebates, and lovers of the winepot, haunting unclean places, and sitting long at the evening wine. Away with him, away with him, men of England! to Tophet with his wicked book, and to the Vale of Hinnom with his accursed bones! Verily, but that our march was hasty when we passed Stratford, in the year 1643, with Sir William Waller; but that our march was hasty'——

'Because Prince Rupert was after you with his Cavaliers,' muttered the incorrigible Joceline.

'I say,' continued the zealous trooper, raising his voice and extending his arm—'but that our march was by command hasty, and that we turned not aside in our riding, closing our ranks each one upon the other as becomes men of war, I had torn on that day the bones of that preceptor of vice and debauchery from the grave, and given them to the next dunghill. I would have made his memory a scoff and a hissing!'

'That is the bitterest thing he has said yet,' observed the keeper. 'Poor Will would have liked the hissing worse than all the rest.'

'Will the gentleman say any more?' inquired Phœbe in a whisper. 'Lack-a-day, he talks brave words, if one knew but what they meant. But it is a mercy our good knight did not see him ruffle the book at that rate—Mercy on us, there would certainly have been bloodshed.—But O, the father!—see how he is twisting his face about!—Is he ill of the colic, think'st thou, Joceline? Or may I offer him a glass of strong waters?'

'Hark thee hither, wench!' said the keeper, 'he is but loading his blunderbuss for another volley; and while he turns up his eyes, and twists about his face, and clenches his fist, and shuffles and tramples with his feet in that fashion, he is bound to take no notice of anything. I would be sworn to cut his purse, if he had one, from his side, without his feeling it.'

'La, Joceline!' said Phœbe, 'and if he abides here in this turn of times, I daresay the gentleman will be easily served.'

'Care not thou about that,' said Joliffe; 'but tell me softly and hastily what is in the pantry?'

'Small housekeeping enough,' said Phœbe; 'a cold capon and some comfits, and the great standing venison pasty, with plenty of spice—a manchet or two besides, and that is all.'

'Well, it will serve for a pinch. Wrap thy cloak round thy comely body—get a basket and a brace of trenchers and towels, they are heinously impoverished down yonder—carry down the capon and the manchets—the pasty must abide with this same soldier and me, and the pie-crust will serve us for bread.'

'Rarely,' said Phœbe; 'I made the paste myself—it is as thick as the walls of Fair Rosamond's Tower.'

'Which two pairs of jaws would be long in gnawing through, work hard as they might,' said the keeper. 'But what liquor is there?'

'Only a bottle of Alicant, and one of sack, with the stone jug of strong waters,' answered Phœbe.

'Put the wine-flasks into thy basket,' said Joceline, 'the knight must not lack his evening draught—and down with thee to the hut like a lapwing. There is enough for supper, and to-morrow is a new day.—Ha! by Heaven, I thought yonder man's eye watched us—No—he only rolled it round him in a brown study—Deep enough, doubtless, as they all are.—But d—n him, he must be bottomless if I cannot sound him before the night's out.—Hie thee away, Phœbe.'

But Phœbe was a rural coquette, and, aware that Joceline's situation gave him no advantage of avenging the challenge in a fitting way, she whispered in his ear, 'Do you think our knight's friend Shakespeare really found out all these naughty devices the gentleman spoke of?'

Off she darted while she spoke, while Joliffe menaced future vengeance with his finger, as he muttered, 'Go thy way, Phœbe Mayflower, the lightest-footed and lightest-hearted wench that ever tripped the sod in Woodstock Park!—After her, Bevis, and bring her safe to our master at the hut.'

The large greyhound arose like a human servitor who had received an order, and followed

* Hemming and Condel, 1623.

Phœbe through the hall, first licking her hand to make her sensible of his presence, and then putting himself to a slow trot, so as best to accommodate himself to the light pace of her whom he convoyed, whom Joceline had not extolled for her activity without due reason. While Phœbe and her guardian thread the forest glades, we return to the Lodge.

The Independent now seemed to start as if from a reverie. 'Is the young woman gone?' said he.

'Ay, marry is she,' said the keeper; 'and if your worship hath further commands, you must rest contented with male attendance.'

'Commands — umph — I think the damsel might have tarried for another exhortation,' said the soldier—'truly, I profess my mind was much inclined toward her for her edification.'

'O, sir,' replied Joliffe, 'she will be at church next Sunday, and if your military reverence is pleased again to hold forth amongst us, she will have use of the doctrine with the rest. But young maidens of these parts hear no private homilies. — And what is now your pleasure? Will you look at the other rooms, and at the few plate articles which have been left?'

'Umph—no,' said the Independent—'it wears late, and gets dark—thou hast the means of giving us beds, friend?'

'Better you never slept in,' replied the keeper.

'And wood for a fire, and a light, and some small pittance of creature-comforts for refreshment of the outward man?' continued the soldier.

'Without doubt,' replied the keeper, displaying a prudent anxiety to gratify this important personage.

In a few minutes a great standing candlestick was placed on an oaken table. The mighty venison pasty, adorned with parsley, was placed on the board on a clean napkin; the stone bottle of strong waters, with a black-jack full of ale, formed comfortable appendages; and to this meal sat down in social manner the soldier, occupying a great elbow-chair, and the keeper, at his invitation, using the more lowly accommodation of a stool, at the opposite side of the table. Thus agreeably employed, our history leaves them for the present.

CHAPTER IV.

Yon path of greensward
Winds round by sparry grot and gay pavilion;
There is no flint to gall thy tender foot,
There's ready shelter from each breeze or shower.
But duty guides not that way—see her stand,
With wand entwined with amaranth, near yon cliffs.
Oft where she leads thy blood must mark thy footsteps,
Oft where she leads thy head must bear the storm,
And thy shrunk form endure heat, cold, and hunger;
But she will guide thee up to noble heights,
Which he who gains seems native of the sky,
While earthly things lie stretch'd beneath his feet,
Diminish'd, shrunk, and valueless ——

ANONYMOUS.

THE reader cannot have forgotten that, after his scuffle with the Commonwealth soldier, Sir Henry Lee, with his daughter Alice, had departed to take refuge in the hut of the stout keeper, Joceline Joliffe. They walked slow, as before, for the old knight was at once oppressed by perceiving these last vestiges of royalty fall into the hands of republicans, and by the recollection of his recent defeat. At times he paused, and, with his arms folded on his bosom, recalled all the circumstances attending his expulsion from a house so long his home. It seemed to him that, like the champions of romance of whom he had sometimes read, he himself was retiring from the post which it was his duty to guard, defeated by a Paynim knight, for whom the adventure had been reserved by fate. Alice had her own painful subjects of recollection, nor had the tenor of her last conversation with her father been so pleasant as to make her anxious to renew it until his temper should be more composed; for, with an excellent disposition, and much love to his daughter, age and misfortunes, which of late came thicker and thicker, had given to the good knight's passions a wayward irritability unknown to his better days. His daughter, and one or two attached servants, who still followed his decayed fortunes, soothed his frailty as much as possible, and pitied him even while they suffered under its effects.

It was a long time ere he spoke, and then he referred to an incident already noticed. 'It is strange,' he said, 'that Bevis should have followed Joceline and that fellow rather than me.'

'Assure yourself, sir,' replied Alice, 'that his sagacity saw in this man a stranger whom he thought himself obliged to watch circumspectly, and therefore he remained with Joceline.'

'Not so, Alice,' answered Sir Henry; 'he leaves me because my fortunes have fled from me. There is a feeling in nature, affecting even the instinct, as it is called, of dumb animals, which teaches them to fly from misfortune. The very deer there will butt a sick or wounded buck from the herd; hurt a dog, and the whole kennel will fall on him and worry him; fishes devour their own kind when they are wounded with a spear; cut a crow's wing, or break its leg, the others will buffet it to death.'

'That may be true of the more irrational kinds of animals among each other,' said Alice, 'for their whole life is well-nigh a warfare; but the dog leaves his own race to attach himself to ours; forsakes, for his master, the company, food, and pleasure of his own kind; and surely the fidelity of such a devoted and voluntary servant as Bevis hath been in particular ought not to be lightly suspected.'

'I am not angry with the dog, Alice; I am only sorry,' replied her father. 'I have read in faithful chronicles that, when Richard II. and Henry of Bolingbroke were at Berkeley Castle, a dog of the same kind deserted the King, whom he had always attended upon, and attached himself to Henry, whom he then saw for the first time. Richard foretold, from the desertion of his favourite, his approaching deposition.* The dog was afterwards kept at Woodstock, and Bevis is said to be of his breed, which was heedfully kept up. What I might foretell of mischief from his desertion I cannot guess, but my mind assures me it bodes no good.'

* The story occurs, I think, in Froissart's *Chronicles*.

There was a distant rustling among the withered leaves, a bouncing or galloping sound on the path, and the favourite dog instantly joined his master.

'Come into court, old knave,' said Alice cheerfully, 'and defend thy character, which is well-nigh endangered by this absence.' But the dog only paid her courtesy by gambolling around them, and instantly plunged back again as fast as he could scamper.

'How now, knave?' said the knight; 'thou art too well trained, surely, to take up the chase without orders.' A minute more showed them Phœbe Mayflower approaching, her light pace so little impeded by the burden which she bore, that she joined her master and young mistress just as they arrived at the keeper's hut, which was the boundary of their journey. Bevis, who had shot ahead to pay his compliments to Sir Henry, his master, had returned again to his immediate duty, the escorting Phœbe and her cargo of provisions. The whole party stood presently assembled before the door of the keeper's hut.

In better times a substantial stone habitation, fit for the yeoman-keeper of a royal walk, had adorned this place. A fair spring gushed out near the spot, and once traversed yards and courts, attached to well-built and convenient kennels and mews. But in some of the skirmishes which were common during the Civil Wars, this little sylvan dwelling had been attacked and defended, stormed and burnt. A neighbouring squire, of the Parliament side of the question, took advantage of Sir Henry Lee's absence, who was then in Charles's camp, and of the decay of the royal cause, and had, without scruple, carried off the hewn stones, and such building materials as the fire left unconsumed, and repaired his own manor-house with them. The yeoman-keeper, therefore, our friend Joceline, had constructed for his own accommodation, and that of the old woman he called his dame, a wattled hut, such as his own labour, with that of a neighbour or two, had erected in the course of a few days. The walls were plastered with clay, white-washed, and covered with vines and other creeping plants; the roof was neatly thatched; and the whole, though merely a hut, had, by the neat-handed Joliffe, been so arranged as not to disgrace the condition of the dweller.

The knight advanced to the entrance; but the ingenuity of the architect, for want of a better lock to the door, which itself was but of wattles curiously twisted, had contrived a mode of securing the latch on the inside with a pin, which prevented it from rising; and in this manner it was at present fastened. Conceiving that this was some precaution of Joliffe's old housekeeper, of whose deafness they were all aware, Sir Henry raised his voice to demand admittance, but in vain. Irritated at this delay, he pressed the door at once with foot and hand in a way which the frail barrier was unable to resist; it gave way accordingly, and the knight thus forcibly entered the kitchen, or outward apartment, of his servant. In the midst of the floor, and with a posture which indicated embarrassment, stood a youthful stranger in a riding-suit.

'This may be my last act of authority here,' said the knight, seizing the stranger by the collar, 'but I am still Ranger of Woodstock for this night at least—Who or what art thou?'

The stranger dropped the riding-mantle in which his face was muffled, and at the same time fell on one knee.

'Your poor kinsman, Markham Everard,' he said, 'who came hither for your sake, although he fears you will scarce make him welcome for his own.'

Sir Henry started back, but recovered himself in an instant, as one who recollected that he had a part of dignity to perform. He stood erect, therefore, and replied, with considerable assumption of stately ceremony:

'Fair kinsman, it pleases me that you are come to Woodstock upon the very first night that, for many years which have passed, is likely to promise you a worthy or a welcome reception.'

'Now God grant it be so, that I rightly hear and duly understand you,' said the young man; while Alice, though she was silent, kept her looks fixed on her father's face, as if desirous to know whether his meaning was kind towards his nephew, which her knowledge of his character inclined her greatly to doubt.

The knight meanwhile darted a sardonic look, first on his nephew, then on his daughter, and proceeded—'I need not, I presume, inform Master Markham Everard that it cannot be our purpose to entertain him, or even to offer him a seat, in this poor hut.'

'I will attend you most willingly to the Lodge,' said the young gentleman. 'I had, indeed, judged you were already there for the evening, and feared to intrude upon you. But if you would permit me, my dearest uncle, to escort my kinswoman and you back to the Lodge, believe me, amongst all which you have so often done of good and kind, you never conferred benefit that will be so dearly prized.'

'You mistake me greatly, Master Markham Everard,' replied the knight. 'It is not our purpose to return to the Lodge to-night, nor, by Our Lady, to-morrow neither. I meant but to intimate to you in all courtesy, that at Woodstock Lodge you will find those for whom you are fitting society, and who, doubtless, will afford you a willing welcome; which I, sir, in this my present retreat, do not presume to offer to a person of your consequence.'

'For Heaven's sake,' said the young man, turning to Alice, 'tell me how I am to understand language so mysterious.'

Alice, to prevent his increasing the restrained anger of her father, compelled herself to answer, though it was with difficulty, 'We are expelled from the Lodge by soldiers.'

'Expelled—by soldiers!' exclaimed Everard in surprise—'there is no legal warrant for this.'

'None at all,' answered the knight, in the same tone of cutting irony which he had all along used, 'and yet as lawful a warrant as for aught that has been wrought in England this twelvemonth and more. You are, I think, or were, an Inns-of-Court man—marry, sir, your enjoyment of your profession is like that lease

which a prodigal wishes to have of a wealthy widow. You have already survived the law which you studied, and its expiry doubtless has not been without a legacy—some decent pickings, some merciful increases, as the phrase goes. You have deserved it two ways—you wore buff and bandolier, as well as wielded pen and ink—I have not heard if you held forth too.'

'Think of me and speak of me as harshly as you will, sir,' said Everard submissively. 'I have but, in this evil time, guided myself by my conscience and my father's commands.'

'O, an you talk of conscience,' said the old knight, 'I must have mine eye upon you, as Hamlet says. Never yet did Puritan cheat so grossly as when he was appealing to his conscience; and as for thy *father*'——

He was about to proceed in a tone of the same invective, when the young man interrupted him, by saying in a firm tone, 'Sir Henry Lee, you have ever been thought noble—Say of me what you will, but speak not of my father what the ear of a son should not endure, and which yet his arm cannot resent. To do me such wrong is to insult an unarmed man, or to beat a captive.'

Sir Henry paused, as if struck by the remark. 'Thou hast spoken truth in that, Mark, wert thou the blackest Puritan whom hell ever vomited, to distract an unhappy country.'

'Be that as you will to think it,' replied Everard; 'but let me not leave you to the shelter of this wretched hovel. The night is drawing to storm—let me but conduct you to the Lodge, and expel those intruders, who can, as yet at least, have no warrant for what they do. I will not linger a moment behind them, save just to deliver my father's message.—Grant me but this much, for the love you once bore me!'

'Yes, Mark,' answered his uncle firmly, but sorrowfully, 'thou speakest truth—I did love thee once. The bright-haired boy whom I taught to ride, to shoot, to hunt—whose hours of happiness were spent with me, wherever those of graver labours were employed—I did love that boy—ay, and I am weak enough to love even the memory of what he was.—But he is gone, Mark—he is gone; and in his room I only behold an avowed and determined rebel to his religion and to his king—a rebel more detestable on account of his success, the more infamous through the plundered wealth with which he hopes to gild his villany.—But I am poor, thou think'st, and should hold my peace, lest men say, "Speak, sirrah, when you should."—Know, however, that, indigent and plundered as I am, I feel myself dishonoured in holding even but this much talk with the tool of usurping rebels.—Go to the Lodge, if thou wilt—yonder lies the way—but think not that, to regain my dwelling there, or all the wealth I ever possessed in my wealthiest days, I would willingly accompany thee three steps on the greensward. If I must be thy companion, it shall be only when thy red-coats have tied my hands behind me, and bound my legs beneath my horse's belly. Thou mayst be my fellow-traveller then, I grant thee, if thou wilt, but not sooner.'

Alice, who suffered cruelly during this dialogue, and was well aware that further argument would only kindle the knight's resentment still more highly, ventured at last, in her anxiety, to make a sign to her cousin to break off the interview, and to retire, since her father commanded his absence in a manner so peremptory. Unhappily, she was observed by Sir Henry, who, concluding that what he saw was evidence of a private understanding betwixt the cousins, his wrath acquired new fuel, and it required the utmost exertion of self-command, and recollection of all that was due to his own dignity, to enable him to veil his real fury under the same ironical manner which he had adopted at the beginning of this angry interview.

'If thou art afraid,' he said, 'to trace our forest glades by night, respected stranger, to whom I am perhaps bound to do honour as my successor in the charge of these walks, here seems to be a modest damsel, who will be most willing to wait on thee, and be thy bow-bearer.—Only, for her mother's sake, let there pass some slight form of marriage between you—Ye need no licence or priest in these happy days, but may be buckled like beggars in a ditch, with a hedge for a church-roof and a tinker for a priest. I crave pardon of you for making such an officious and simple request—perhaps you are a Ranter—or one of the family of Love, or hold marriage rites as unnecessary as Knipperdoling or Jack of Leyden?' *

'For mercy's sake, forbear such dreadful jesting, my father! and do you, Markham, begone, in God's name, and leave us to our fate—your presence makes my father rave.'

'Jesting!' said Sir Henry, 'I was never more serious—Raving!—I was never more composed—I could never brook that falsehood should approach me—I would no more bear by my side a dishonoured daughter than a dishonoured sword; and this unhappy day hath shown that both can fail.'

'Sir Henry,' said young Everard, 'load not your soul with a heavy crime, which be assured you do, in treating your daughter thus unjustly. It is long now since you denied her to me, when we were poor and you were powerful. I acquiesced in your prohibition of all suit and intercourse. God knoweth what I suffered—but I acquiesced. Neither is it to renew my suit that I now come hither, and have, I do acknowledge, sought speech of her—not for her own sake only, but for yours also. Destruction hovers over you, ready to close her pinions to stoop and her talons to clutch—Yes, sir, look contemptuous as you will, such is the case; and it is to protect both you and her that I am here.'

'You refuse then my free gift,' said Sir Henry Lee; 'or perhaps you think it loaded with too hard conditions?'

'Shame, shame on you, Sir Henry,' said Everard, waxing warm in his turn; 'have your political prejudices so utterly warped every

* [Leaders of the fanatical Anabaptists, who at Münster in Westphalia in 1534–35 committed the wildest orgies of excess. John of Leyden was the title assumed by one Bockhold, who had himself crowned king of the 'New Zion.']

feeling of a father, that you can speak with bitter mockery and scorn of what concerns your own daughter's honour?—Hold up your head, fair Alice, and tell your father he has forgotten nature in his fantastic spirit of loyalty.—Know, Sir Henry, that though I would prefer your daughter's hand to every blessing which Heaven could bestow on me, I would not accept it—my conscience would not permit me to do so—when I knew it must withdraw her from her duty to you.'

'Your conscience is over scrupulous, young man;—carry it to some dissenting rabbi, and he who takes all that comes to net will teach thee it is sinning against our mercies to refuse any good thing that is freely offered to us.'

'When it is freely offered and kindly offered—not when the offer is made in irony and insult—Fare thee well, Alice—if aught could make me desire to profit by thy father's wild wish to cast thee from him in a moment of unworthy suspicion, it would be that, while indulging in such sentiments, Sir Henry Lee is tyrannically oppressing the creature who of all others is most dependent on his kindness—who of all others will most feel his severity, and whom of all others he is most bound to cherish and support.'

'Do not fear for me, Master Everard,' exclaimed Alice, aroused from her timidity by a dread of the consequences not unlikely to ensue, where civil war sets relations as well as fellow-citizens in opposition to each other.—'O, begone, I conjure you, begone! Nothing stands betwixt me and my father's kindness but these unhappy family divisions—but your ill-timed presence here—for Heaven's sake, leave us!'

'Soh, mistress!' answered the hot old Cavalier, 'you play lady paramount already; and who but you!—you would dictate to our train, I warrant, like Goneril and Regan! But I tell thee, no man shall leave my house—and, humble as it is, *this* is now my house—while he has aught to say to me that is to be spoken, as this young man now speaks, with a bent brow and a lofty tone—Speak out, sir, and say your worst!'

'Fear not my temper, Mistress Alice,' said Everard, with equal firmness and placidity of manner;—'and you, Sir Henry, do not think that, if I speak firmly, I mean therefore to speak in anger, or officiously. You have taxed me with much,—and, were I guided by the wild spirit of romantic chivalry,—much which, even from so near a relative, I ought not, as being by birth and in the world's estimation a gentleman, to pass over without reply. Is it your pleasure to give me patient hearing?'

'If you stand on your defence,' answered the stout old knight, 'God forbid that you should not challenge a patient hearing—ay, though your pleading were two parts disloyalty and one blasphemy—Only, be brief—this has already lasted but too long.'

'I will, Sir Henry,' replied the young man; 'yet it is hard to crowd into a few sentences the defence of a life which, though short, has been a busy one—too busy, your indignant gesture would assert. But I deny it; I have drawn my sword neither hastily nor without due consideration, for a people whose rights have been trampled on and whose consciences have been oppressed—Frown not, sir—such is not your view of the contest, but such is mine. For my religious principles, at which you have scoffed, believe me, that, though they depend not on set forms, they are no less sincere than your own, and thus far purer—excuse the word—that they are unmingled with the bloodthirsty dictates of a barbarous age, which you and others have called the code of chivalrous honour. Not my own natural disposition, but the better doctrine which my creed has taught, enables me to bear your harsh revilings without answering in a similar tone of wrath and reproach. You may carry insult to extremity against me at your pleasure—not on account of our relationship alone, but because I am bound in charity to endure it. This, Sir Henry, is much from one of our house. But, with forbearance far more than this requires, I can refuse at your hands the gift which, most of all things under heaven, I should desire to obtain, because duty calls upon her to sustain and comfort you, and because it were sin to permit you, in your blindness, to spurn your comforter from your side.—Farewell, sir—not in anger, but in pity. We may meet in a better time, when your heart and your principles shall master the unhappy prejudices by which they are now overclouded.—Farewell—farewell, Alice!'

The last words were repeated twice, and in a tone of feeling and passionate grief which differed utterly from the steady and almost severe tone in which he had addressed Sir Henry Lee. He turned and left the hut so soon as he had uttered these last words; and, as if ashamed of the tenderness which had mingled with his accents, the young Commonwealth's-man turned and walked sternly and resolvedly forth into the moonlight, which now was spreading its broad light and autumnal shadows over the woodland.

So soon as he departed, Alice, who had been during the whole scene in the utmost terror that her father might have been hurried by his natural heat of temper, from violence of language into violence of action, sunk down upon a settle twisted out of willow boughs, like most of Joceline's few moveables, and endeavoured to conceal the tears which accompanied the thanks she rendered in broken accents to Heaven, that, notwithstanding the near alliance and relationship of the parties, some fatal deed had not closed an interview so perilous and so angry. Phœbe Mayflower blubbered heartily for company, though she understood but little of what had passed; just, indeed, enough to enable her afterwards to report to some half-dozen particular friends that her old master, Sir Henry, had been perilous angry, and almost fought with young Master Everard, because he had well-nigh carried away her young mistress.—'And what could he have done better?' said Phœbe, 'seeing the old man had nothing left either for Mistress Alice or himself; and as for Master Mark Everard and our young lady, O! they had spoken such loving things to each other as are not to be found in the history of

Argalus and Parthenia,* who, as the story-book tells, were the truest pair of lovers in all Arcadia, and Oxfordshire to boot.'

Old Goody Jellycot had popped her scarlet hood into the kitchen more than once while the scene was proceeding; but, as the worthy dame was parcel blind and more than parcel deaf, knowledge was excluded by two principal entrances; and though she comprehended, by a sort of general instinct, that the gentlefolk were at high words, yet why they chose Joceline's hut for the scene of their dispute was as great a mystery as the subject of the quarrel.

But what was the state of the old Cavalier's mood, thus contradicted, as his most darling principles had been, by the last words of his departing nephew? The truth is, that he was less thoroughly moved than his daughter expected; and in all probability his nephew's bold defence of his religious and political opinions rather pacified than aggravated his displeasure. Although sufficiently impatient of contradiction, still evasion and subterfuge were more alien to the blunt old Ranger's nature than manly vindication and direct opposition; and he was wont to say that he ever loved the buck best who stood boldest at bay. He graced his nephew's departure, however, with a quotation from Shakespeare, whom, as many others do, he was wont to quote from a sort of habit and respect, as a favourite of his unfortunate master, without having either much real taste for his works, or great skill in applying the passages which he retained on his memory.

'Mark,' he said, 'mark this, Alice—the devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. Why, this young fanatic cousin of thine, with no more beard than I have seen on a clown playing Maid Marion on May-day, when the village barber had shaved him in too great a hurry, shall match any bearded Presbyterian or Independent of them all, in laying down his doctrines and his uses, and bethumping us with his texts and his homilies. I would worthy and learned Doctor Rochecliffe had been here, with his battery ready mounted from the Vulgate, and the Septuagint, and what not—he would have battered the Presbyterian spirit out of him with a wanion. However, I am glad the young man is no sneaker; for, were a man of the devil's opinion in religion and of old Noll's in politics, he were better open on it full cry than deceive you by hunting counter, or running a false scent. Come—wipe thine eyes—the fray is over, and not like to be stirred again soon, I trust.'

Encouraged by these words, Alice rose, and, bewildered as she was, endeavoured to superintend the arrangements for their meal and their repose in their new habitation. But her tears fell so fast, they marred her counterfeited diligence; and it was well for her that Phœbe, though too ignorant and too simple to comprehend the extent of her distress, could afford her material assistance, in lack of mere sympathy.

With great readiness and address, the damsel set about everything that was requisite for preparing the supper and the beds; now screaming into Dame Jellycot's ear, now whispering into her mistress's, and artfully managing as if she was merely the agent under Alice's orders. When the cold viands were set forth, Sir Henry Lee kindly pressed his daughter to take refreshment, as if to make up, indirectly, for his previous harshness towards her; while he himself, like an experienced campaigner, showed that neither the mortifications nor brawls of the day, nor the thoughts of what was to come to-morrow, could diminish his appetite for supper, which was his favourite meal. He ate up two-thirds of the capon, and, devoting the first bumper to the happy restoration of Charles, second of the name, he finished a quart of wine; for he belonged to a school accustomed to feed the flame of their loyalty with copious brimmers. He even sang a verse of 'The King shall enjoy his own again,' in which Phœbe, half-sobbing, and Dame Jellycot, screaming against time and tune, were contented to lend their aid, to cover Mistress Alice's silence.

At length the jovial knight betook himself to his rest on the keeper's straw pallet, in a recess adjoining to the kitchen, and, unaffected by his change of dwelling, slept fast and deep. Alice had less quiet rest in old Goody Jellycot's wicker couch, in the inner apartment; while the dame and Phœbe slept on a mattress, stuffed with dry leaves, in the same chamber, soundly as those whose daily toil gains their daily bread, and whom morning calls up only to renew the toils of yesterday.

CHAPTER V.

My tongue pads slowly under this new language,
And starts and stumbles at these uncouth phrases.
They may be great in worth and weight, but hang
Upon the native glibness of my language
Like Saul's plate-armour on the shepherd boy,
Encumbering and not arming him.

J. B.

As Markham Everard pursued his way towards the Lodge, through one of the long sweeping glades which traversed the forest, varying in breadth, till the trees were now so close that the boughs made darkness over his head, then receding farther to let in glimpses of the moon, and anon opening yet wider into little meadows, or savannas, on which the moonbeams lay in silvery silence; as he thus proceeded on his lonely course, the various effects produced by that delicious light on the oaks, whose dark leaves, gnarled branches, and massive trunks it gilded, more or less partially, might have drawn the attention of a poet or a painter.

But if Everard thought of anything saving the painful scene in which he had just played his part, and of which the result seemed the destruction of all his hopes, it was of the necessary guard to be observed in his night-walk. The times were dangerous and unsettled, the roads full of disbanded soldiers, and especially of Royalists, who made their political

* ['The most pleasant and delightful history of Argalus and Parthenia' was a chap-book, very popular in the seventeenth century.]

opinions a pretext for disturbing the country with marauding parties and robberies. Deer-stealers also, who are ever a desperate banditti, had of late infested Woodstock Chase. In short, the dangers of the place and period were such that Markham Everard wore his loaded pistols at his belt, and carried his drawn sword under his arm, that he might be prepared for whatever peril should cross his path.

He heard the bells of Woodstock church ring curfew, just as he was crossing one of the little meadows we have described, and they ceased as he entered an overshadowed and twilight part of the path beyond. It was there that he heard some one whistling; and, as the sound became clearer, it was plain the person was advancing towards him. This could hardly be a friend; for the party to which he belonged rejected, generally speaking, all music, unless psalmody. 'If a man is merry, let him sing psalms,' was a text which they were pleased to interpret as literally and to as little purpose as they did some others; yet it was too continued a sound to be a signal amongst night-walkers, and too light and cheerful to argue any purpose of concealment on the part of the traveller, who presently exchanged his whistling for singing, and trolled forth the following stanza to a jolly tune, with which the old Cavaliers were wont to wake the night-owl:—

'Hey for Cavaliers!—ho for Cavaliers!
Pray for Cavaliers!
Rub-a-dub—rub-a-dub!
Have at old Beelzebub—
Oliver smokes for fear.'

'I should know that voice,' said Everard, uncocking the pistol which he had drawn from his belt, but continuing to hold it in his hand. Then came another fragment:—

'Hash them—slash them—
All to pieces dash them.'

'So ho!' cried Markham, 'who goes there, and for whom?'

'For Church and King,' answered a voice, which presently added, 'No, d—n me—I mean *against* Church and King, and for the people that are uppermost—I forget which they are.'

'Roger Wildrake, as I guess?' said Everard.

'The same—Gentleman; of Squattlesea-mere, in the moist county of Lincoln.'

'Wildrake!' said Markham—'Wildgoose you should be called. You have been moistening your own throat to some purpose, and using it to gabble tunes very suitable to the times, to be sure!'

'Faith, the tune's a pretty tune enough, Mark, only out of fashion a little—the more's the pity.'

'What could I expect,' said Everard, 'but to meet some ranting, drunken Cavalier, as desperate and dangerous as night and sack usually make them? What if I had rewarded your melody by a ball in the gullet?'

'Why, there would have been a piper paid—that's all,' said Wildrake. 'But wherefore come you this way now? I was about to seek you at the hut.'

'I have been obliged to leave it—I will tell you the cause hereafter,' replied Markham.

'What! the old play-hunting Cavalier was cross, or Chloe was unkind?'

'Jest not, Wildrake—it is all over with me,' said Everard.

'The devil it is!' exclaimed Wildrake; 'and you take it thus quietly!—Zounds! let us back together—I'll plead your cause for you—I know how to tickle up an old knight and a pretty maiden—Let me alone for putting you *rectus in curia*, you canting rogue.—D—n me, Sir Henry Lee, says I, your nephew is a piece of a Puritan—it won't deny—but I'll uphold him a gentleman and a pretty fellow, for all that.—Madam, says I, you may think your cousin looks like a psalm-singing weaver, in that bare felt and with that rascally brown cloak, that band, which looks like a baby's clout, and those loose boots, which have a whole calf-skin in each of them—But let him wear on the one side of his head a castor, with a plume befitting his quality; give him a good Toledo by his side, with a broidered belt and an inlaid hilt, instead of the ton of iron contained in that basket-hilted black Andrew Ferrara; put a few smart words in his mouth — and, blood and wounds! madam, says I'——

'Prithee, truce with this nonsense, Wildrake,' said Everard, 'and tell me if you are sober enough to hear a few words of sober reason?'

'Pshaw! man, I did but crack a brace of quarts with yonder Puritanic, Roundheaded soldiers, up yonder at the town; and rat me but I passed myself for the best man of the party; twanged my nose and turned up my eyes, as I took my can—Pah! the very wine tasted of hypocrisy. I think the rogue corporal smoked something at last—as for the common fellows, never stir, but *they* asked me to say grace over another quart!'

'This is just what I wished to speak with you about, Wildrake,' said Markham. 'You hold me, I am sure, for your friend?'

'True as steel.—Chums at college and at Lincoln's Inn—we have been Nisus and Euryalus, Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades; and, to sum up the whole with a Puritanic touch, David and Jonathan,* all in one breath. Not even politics, the wedge that rends families and friendships asunder, as iron rives oak, have been able to split us.'

'True,' answered Markham; 'and when you followed the King to Nottingham, and I enrolled under Essex, we swore at our parting that, whichever side was victorious, he of us who adhered to it should protect his less fortunate comrade?'

'Surely, man, surely; and have you not protected me accordingly? Did you not save me from hanging? and am I not indebted to you for the bread I eat?'

'I have but done that which, had the times been otherwise, you, my dear Wildrake, would, I am sure, have done for me. But, as I said, that is just what I wished to speak to you about. Why render the task of protecting you more difficult than it must necessarily be at any rate? Why thrust thyself into the company of soldiers, or such like, where thou art sure to

* [All proverbial instances of friendship.]

be warmed into betraying thyself? Why come hollowing and whooping out Cavalier ditties, like a drunken trooper of Prince Rupert, or one of Wilmot's * swaggering body-guards?'

'Because I may have been both one and t'other in my day, for aught that you know,' replied Wildrake. 'But, oddsfish! is it necessary I should always be reminding you, that our obligation of mutual protection, our league of offensive and defensive, as I may call it, was to be carried into effect without reference to the politics or religion of the party protected, or the least obligation on him to conform to those of his friend?'

'True,' said Everard; 'but with this most necessary qualification, that the party should submit to such outward conformity to the times as should make it more easy and safe for his friend to be of service to him. Now, you are perpetually breaking forth, to the hazard of your own safety and my credit.'

'I tell you, Mark, and I would tell your namesake the apostle, that you are hard on me. You have practised sobriety and hypocrisy from your hanging sleeves till your Geneva cassock—from the cradle to this day,—and it is a thing of nature to you; and you are surprised that a rough, rattling, honest fellow, accustomed to speak truth all his life, and especially when he found it at the bottom of a flask, cannot be so perfect a prig as thyself—Zooks! there is no equality betwixt us—A trained diver might as well, because he can retain his breath for ten minutes without inconvenience, upbraid a poor devil for being like to burst in twenty seconds at the bottom of ten fathoms water—And, after all, considering the guise is so new to me, I think I bear myself indifferently well—try me!'

'Are there any more news from Worcester fight?' asked Everard, in a tone so serious that it imposed on his companion, who replied in his genuine character—

'Worse!—d—n me, worse an hundred times than reported—totally broken. Noll hath certainly sold himself to the devil, and his lease will have an end one day—that is all our present comfort.'

'What! and would this be your answer to the first red-coat who asked the question?' said Everard. 'Methinks you would find a speedy passport to the next *corps de garde*.'

'Nay, nay,' answered Wildrake, 'I thought you asked me in your own person.—Lack-a-day! a great mercy—a glorifying mercy—a crowning mercy—a vouchsafing—an uplifting—I profess the malignants are scattered from Dan to Beersheba—smitten hip and thigh, even until the going down of the sun!'

'Hear you aught of Colonel Thornhaugh's wounds?'

'He is dead,' answered Wildrake, 'that's one comfort—the Roundheaded rascal!—Nay, hold! it was but a trip of the tongue—I meant, the sweet godly youth.'

'And hear you aught of the young man, King of Scotland, as they call him?' said Everard.

'Nothing, but that he is hunted like a partridge on the mountains. May God deliver him, and confound his enemies!—Zoons, Mark Everard, I can fool it no longer. Do you not remember, that at the Lincoln's Inn gambols—though you did not mingle much in them, I think—I used always to play as well as any of them when it came to the action, but they could never get me to rehearse conformably. It's the same at this day. I hear your voice, and I answer to it in the true tone of my heart; but when I am in the company of your snuffling friends, you have seen me act my part indifferent well.'

'But indifferent, indeed,' replied Everard; 'however, there is little call on you to do aught save to be modest and silent. Speak little, and lay aside, if you can, your big oaths and swaggering looks—set your hat even on your brows.'

'Ay, that is the curse! I have been always noted for the jaunty manner in which I wear my castor—Hard when a man's merits become his enemies!'

'You must remember you are my clerk.'

'Secretary,' answered Wildrake; 'let it be secretary if you love me.'

'It must be clerk, and nothing else—plain clerk—and remember to be civil and obedient,' replied Everard.

'But you should not lay on your commands with so much ostentatious superiority, Master Markham Everard. Remember I am your senior of three years' standing. Confound me, if I know how to take it!'

'Was ever such a fantastic wronghead?—For my sake, if not for thine own, bend thy freakish folly to listen to reason. Think that I have incurred both risk and shame on thy account.'

'Nay, thou art a right good fellow, Mark,' replied the Cavalier; 'and for thy sake I will do much—but remember to cough and cry hem! when thou seest me like to break bounds. And now, tell me whither we are bound for the night.'

'To Woodstock Lodge, to look after my uncle's property,' answered Markham Everard; 'I am informed that soldiers have taken possession—Yet how could that be if thou foundest the party drinking in Woodstock?'

'There was a kind of commissary or steward, or some such rogue, had gone down to the Lodge,' replied Wildrake; 'I had a peep at him.'

'Indeed!' replied Everard.

'Ay, verily,' said Wildrake, 'to speak your own language. Why, as I passed through the park in quest of you, scarce half-an-hour since, I saw a light in the Lodge—Step this way, you will see it yourself.'

'In the north-west angle?' returned Everard. 'It is from a window in what they call Victor Lee's apartment.'

'Well,' resumed Wildrake, 'I had been long one of Lunsford's † lads, and well used to patrolling duty—So, rat me, says I, if I leave a light in my rear without knowing what it means.

* [Henry Wilmot, created Earl of Rochester, father of the witty reprobate of Charles II.'s reign, John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester.]

† [Sir Thomas Lunsford, a Royalist commander. See Note D at end.]

Besides, Mark, thou hadst said so much to me of thy pretty cousin, I thought I might as well have a peep, if I could.'

'Thoughtless, incorrigible man! to what dangers do you expose yourself and your friends, in mere wantonness! But go on.'

'By this fair moonshine, I believe thou art jealous, Mark Everard!' replied his gay companion; 'there is no occasion; for, in any case, I, who was to see the lady, was steeled by honour against the charms of my friend's Chloe—Then the lady was not to see me, so could make no comparisons to thy disadvantage, thou knowest—Lastly, as it fell out, neither of us saw the other at all.'

'Of that I am well aware. Mistress Alice left the Lodge long before sunset, and never returned. What didst thou see to introduce with such preface?'

'Nay, no great matter,' replied Wildrake; 'only, getting upon a sort of buttress (for I can climb like any cat that ever mewed in any gutter), and holding on by the vines and creepers which grew around, I obtained a station where I could see into the inside of that same parlour thou spokest of just now.'

'And what saw'st thou there?' once more demanded Everard.

'Nay, no great matter, as I said before,' replied the Cavalier; 'for in these times it is no new thing to see churls carousing in royal or noble chambers. I saw two rascallions engaged in emptying a solemn stoup of strong waters, and despatching a huge venison pasty, which greasy mess, for their convenience, they had placed on a lady's work-table—One of them was trying an air on a lute.'

'The profane villains!' exclaimed Everard; 'it was Alice's.'

'Well said, comrade—I am glad your phlegm can be moved. I did but throw in these incidents of the lute and the table, to try if it was possible to get a spark of human spirit out of you, besanctified as you are.'

'What like were the men?' said young Everard.

'The one a slouch-hatted, long-cloaked, sour-faced fanatic, like the rest of you, whom I took to be the steward or commissary I heard spoken of in the town; the other was a short sturdy fellow, with a wood-knife at his girdle and a long quarterstaff lying beside him—a black-haired knave, with white teeth and a merry countenance—one of the under-rangers or bow-bearers of these walks, I fancy.'

'They must have been Desborough's favourite, Trusty Tomkins,' said Everard, 'and Joceline Joliffe, the keeper. Tomkins is Desborough's right hand—an Independent, and hath pourings forth, as he calls them. Some think that his gifts have the better of his grace. I have heard of his abusing opportunities.'

'They were improving them when I saw them,' replied Wildrake, 'and made the bottle smoke for it—when, as the devil would have it, a stone, which had been dislodged from the crumbling buttress, gave way under my weight. A clumsy fellow like thee would have been so long thinking what was to be done, that he must needs have followed it before he could make up his mind; but I, Mark, I hopped like a squirrel to an ivy twig, and stood fast—was well-nigh shot, though, for the noise alarmed them both. They looked to the oriel, and saw me on the outside; the fanatic fellow took out a pistol—as they have always such texts in readiness hanging beside the little clasped Bible, thou know'st—the keeper seized his hunting-pole—I treated them both to a roar and a grin—thou must know I can grimace like a baboon—I learned the trick from a French player, who could twist his jaws into a pair of nut-crackers—and therewithal I dropped myself sweetly on the grass, and ran off so trippingly, keeping the dark side of the wall as long as I could, that I am well-nigh persuaded they thought I was their kinsman, the devil, come among them uncalled. They were abominably startled.'

'Thou art most fearfully rash, Wildrake,' said his companion; 'we are now bound for the house—what if they should remember thee?'

'Why, it is no treason, is it? No one has paid for peeping since Tom of Coventry's days; and if he came in for a reckoning, belike it was for a better treat than mine. But trust me, they will no more know me than a man who had only seen your friend Noll at a conventicle of saints would know the same Oliver on horseback, and charging with his lobster-tailed squadron; or the same Noll cracking a jest and a bottle with wicked Waller the poet.'

'Hush! not a word of Oliver, as thou dost value thyself and me. It is ill jesting with the rock you may split on.—But here is the gate—we will disturb these honest gentlemen's recreations.'

As he spoke, he applied the large and ponderous knocker to the hall-door.

'Rat-tat-tat-too!' said Wildrake; 'there is a fine alarm to you cuckolds and Roundheads.' He then half-mimicked, half-sung, the march so called:—

> 'Cuckolds, come dig—cuckolds, come dig;
> Round about cuckolds, come dance to my jig!'

By Heaven! this passes midsummer frenzy,' said Everard, turning angrily to him.

'Not a bit, not a bit,' replied Wildrake; 'it is but a slight expectoration, just like what one makes before beginning a long speech. I will be grave for an hour together, now I have got that point of war out of my head.'

As he spoke, steps were heard in the hall, and the wicket of the great door was partly opened, but secured with a chain in case of accidents. The visage of Tomkins, and that of Joceline beneath it, appeared at the chink, illuminated by the lamp which the latter held in his hand, and Tomkins demanded the meaning of this alarm.

'I demand instant admittance!' said Everard. 'Joliffe, you know me well?'

'I do, sir,' replied Joceline, 'and could admit you with all my heart; but alas! sir, you see I am not key-keeper—Here is the gentleman whose warrant I must walk by—The Lord help me, seeing times are such as they be!'

'And when that gentleman, who I think may be Master Desborough's valet'——

'His honour's unworthy secretary, an it please

you,' interposed Tomkins; while Wildrake whispered in Everard's ear, 'I will be no longer secretary. Mark, thou wert quite right—the clerk must be the more gentlemanly calling.'

'And if you are Master Desborough's secretary, I presume you know me and my condition well enough,' said Everard, addressing the Independent, 'not to hesitate to admit me and my attendant to a night's quarters in the Lodge?'

'Surely not, surely not,' said the Independent—'that is, if your worship thinks you would be better accommodated here than up at the house of entertainment in the town which men unprofitably call Saint George's Inn. There is but confined accommodation here, your honour—and we have been frayed out of our lives already by the visitation of Satan—albeit his fiery dart is now quenched.'

'This may be all well in its place, Sir Secretary,' said Everard; 'and you may find a corner for it when you are next tempted to play the preacher. But I will take it for no apology for keeping me here in the cold harvest wind; and if not presently received, and suitably too, I will report you to your master for insolence in your office.'

The secretary of Desborough did not dare offer further opposition: for it is well known that Desborough himself only held his consequence as a kinsman of Cromwell;* and the Lord General, who was well-nigh paramount already, was known to be strongly favourable both to the elder and younger Everard. It is true, they were Presbyterians and he an Independent; and that, though sharing those feelings of correct morality and more devoted religious feeling by which, with few exceptions, the Parliamentary party were distinguished, the Everards were not disposed to carry these attributes to the extreme of enthusiasm practised by so many others at the time. Yet it was well known that whatever might be Cromwell's own religious creed, he was not uniformly bounded by it in the choice of his favourites, but extended his countenance to those who could serve him, even although, according to the phrase of the time, they came out of the darkness of Egypt. The character of the elder Everard stood very high for wisdom and sagacity; besides, being of a good family and competent fortune, his adherence would lend a dignity to any side he might espouse. Then his son had been a distinguished and successful soldier, remarkable for the discipline he maintained among his men, the bravery which he showed in the time of action, and the humanity with which he was always ready to qualify the consequences of victory. Such men were not to be neglected, when many signs combined to show that the parties in the State, who had successfully accomplished the deposition and death of the king, were speedily to quarrel among themselves about the division of the spoils. The two Everards were therefore much courted by Cromwell, and their influence with him was supposed to be so great that trusty Master Secretary Tomkins cared not to expose himself to risk, by contending with Colonel Everard for such a trifle as a night's lodging.

Joceline was active on his side—more lights were obtained—more wood thrown on the fire—and the two newly-arrived strangers were introduced into Victor Lee's parlour, as it was called, from the picture over the chimney-piece, which we have already described. It was several minutes ere Colonel Everard could recover his general stoicism of deportment, so strongly was he impressed by finding himself in the apartment under whose roof he had passed so many of the happiest hours of his life. There was the cabinet, which he had seen opened with such feelings of delight when Sir Henry Lee deigned to give him instructions in fishing, and to exhibit hooks and lines, together with all the materials for making the artificial fly, then little known. There hung the ancient family picture, which, from some odd mysterious expressions of his uncle relating to it, had become to his boyhood, nay, his early youth, a subject of curiosity and of fear. He remembered how, when left alone in the apartment, the searching eye of the old warrior seemed always bent upon his, in whatever part of the room he placed himself, and how his childish imagination was perturbed at a phenomenon for which he could not account.

With these came a thousand dearer and warmer recollections of his early attachment to his pretty cousin Alice, when he assisted her at her lessons, brought water for her flowers, or accompanied her while she sang; and he remembered that, while her father looked at them with a good-humoured and careless smile, he had once heard him mutter, 'And if it should turn out so—why, it might be best for both,' and the theories of happiness he had reared on these words. All these visions had been dispelled by the trumpet of war, which called Sir Henry Lee and himself to opposite sides; and the transactions of this very day had shown that even Everard's success as a soldier and a statesman seemed absolutely to prohibit the chance of their being revived.

He was waked out of this unpleasing reverie by the approach of Joceline, who, being possibly a seasoned toper, had made the additional arrangements with more expedition and accuracy than could have been expected from a person engaged as he had been since nightfall.

He now wished to know the colonel's directions for the night.

'Would he eat anything?'

'No.'

'Did his honour choose to accept Sir Henry Lee's bed, which was ready prepared?'

'Yes.'

'That of Mistress Alice Lee should be prepared for the secretary.'

'On pain of thine ears—No,' replied Everard.

'Where then was the worthy secretary to be quartered?'

'In the dog-kennel, if you list,' replied Colonel Everard; 'but,' added he, stepping to the sleeping apartment of Alice, which opened from the parlour, locking it and taking out the key, 'no one shall profane this chamber.'

'Had his honour any other commands for the night?'

'None, save to clear the apartment of yonder

* [Desborough had married Cromwell's sister.]

man. My clerk will remain with me—I have orders which must be written out.—Yet stay—Thou gavest my letter this morning to Mistress Alice?'

'I did.'

'Tell me, good Joceline, what she said when she received it?'

'She seemed much concerned, sir; and indeed I think that she wept a little—but indeed she seemed very much distressed.'

'And what message did she send to me?'

'None, may it please your honour—She began to say, "Tell my cousin Everard that I will communicate my uncle's kind purpose to my father, if I can get fitting opportunity—but that I greatly fear"—and there checked herself, as it were, and said, "I will write to my cousin; and as it may be late ere I have an opportunity of speaking with my father, do thou come for my answer after service."—So I went to church myself, to while away the time; but when I returned to the Chase, I found this man had summoned my master to surrender, and, right or wrong, I must put him in possession of the Lodge. I would fain have given your honour a hint that the old knight and my young mistress were like to take you on the form, but I could not mend the matter.'

'Thou hast done well, good fellow, and I will remember thee.—And now, my masters,' he said, advancing to the brace of clerks or secretaries, who had in the meanwhile sat quietly down beside the stone bottle, and made up acquaintance over a glass of its contents—'let me remind you that the night wears late.'

'There is something cries tinkle, tinkle, in the bottle yet,' said Wildrake in reply.

'Hem! hem! hem!' coughed the colonel of the Parliament service; and if his lips did not curse his companion's imprudence, I will not answer for what arose in his heart.—'Well!' he said, observing that Wildrake had filled his own glass and Tomkins's, 'take that parting glass and begone.'

'Would you not be pleased to hear first,' said Wildrake, 'how this honest gentleman saw the devil to-night look through a pane of yonder window, and how he thinks he had a mighty strong resemblance to your worship's humble slave and varlet scribbler? Would you but hear this, sir, and just sip a glass of this very recommendable strong waters?'

'I will drink none, sir,' said Colonel Everard sternly; 'and I have to tell *you*, that you have drunken a glass too much already.—Master Tomkins, sir, I wish you good-night.'

'A word in season at parting,' said Tomkins, standing up behind the long leathern back of a chair, hemming and snuffling as if preparing for an exhortation.

'Excuse me, sir,' replied Markham Everard sternly; 'you are not now sufficiently yourself to guide the devotion of others.'

'Woe be to them that reject!' said the secretary of the Commissioners, stalking out of the room—the rest was lost in shutting the door, or suppressed for fear of offence.

'And now, fool Wildrake, begone to thy bed—yonder it lies,' pointing to the knight's apartment.

'What, thou hast secured the lady's for thyself? I saw thee put the key in thy pocket.'

'I would not—indeed, I could not sleep in that apartment—I can sleep nowhere—but I will watch in this arm-chair.—I have made him place wood for repairing the fire.—Good now, go to bed thyself, and sleep off thy liquor.'

'Liquor!—I laugh thee to scorn, Mark—thou art a milksop, and the son of a milksop, and know'st not what a good fellow can do in the way of crushing an honest cup.'

'The whole vices of his faction are in this poor fellow individually,' said the colonel to himself, eyeing his *protégé* askance, as the other retreated into the bedroom with no very steady pace—'He is reckless, intemperate, dissolute;—and if I cannot get him safely shipped for France, he will certainly be both his own ruin and mine.—Yet withal he is kind, brave, and generous, and would have kept the faith with me which he now expects from me; and in what consists the merit of our truth, if we observe not our plighted word when we have promised, to our hurt? I will take the liberty, however, to secure myself against further interruption on his part.'

So saying, he locked the door of communication betwixt the sleeping-room, to which the Cavalier had retreated, and the parlour;—and then, after pacing the floor thoughtfully, returned to his seat, trimmed the lamp, and drew out a number of letters.—'I will read these over once more,' he said, 'that, if possible, the thought of public affairs may expel the keen sense of personal sorrow. Gracious Providence, where is this to end? We have sacrificed the peace of our families, the warmest wishes of our young hearts, to right the country in which we were born, and to free her from oppression; yet it appears that every step we have made towards liberty has but brought us in view of new and more terrific perils, as he who travels in a mountainous region is, by every step which elevates him higher, placed in a situation of more imminent hazard.'

He read long and attentively various tedious and embarrassed letters, in which the writers, placing before him the glory of God, and the freedom and liberties of England, as their supreme ends, could not, by all the ambagitory expressions they made use of, prevent the shrewd eye of Markham Everard from seeing that self-interest and views of ambition were the principal moving springs at the bottom of their plots.

CHAPTER VI.

Sleep steals on us even like his brother Death—
We know not when it comes—we know it must come—
We may affect to scorn and to contemn it,
For 'tis the highest pride of human misery
To say it knows not of an opiate;
Yet the reft parent, the despairing lover,
Even the poor wretch who waits for execution,
Feels this oblivion, against which he thought
His woes had arm'd his senses, steal upon him,
And through the fenceless citadel—the body—
Surprise that haughty garrison—the mind.

HERBERT.

COLONEL EVERARD experienced the truth contained in the verses of the quaint old bard

whom we have quoted above. Amid private grief and anxiety for a country long a prey to civil war, and not likely to fall soon under any fixed or well-established form of government, Everard and his father had, like many others, turned their eyes to General Cromwell, as the person whose valour had made him the darling of the army, whose strong sagacity had hitherto predominated over the high talents by which he had been assailed in Parliament, as well as over his enemies in the field, and who was alone in the situation to *settle the nation*, as the phrase then went; or, in other words, to dictate the mode of government. The father and son were both reputed to stand high in the General's favour. But Markham Everard was conscious of some particulars, which induced him to doubt whether Cromwell actually, and at heart, bore either to his father or to himself that good-will which was generally believed. He knew him for a profound politician, who could veil for any length of time his real sentiments of men and things, until they could be displayed without prejudice to his interest. And he moreover knew that the General was not likely to forget the opposition which the Presbyterian party had offered to what Oliver called the Great Matter—the trial, namely, and execution of the king. In this opposition, his father and he had anxiously concurred, nor had the arguments, nor even the half-expressed threats of Cromwell, induced them to flinch from that course, far less to permit their names to be introduced into the commission nominated to sit in judgment on that memorable occasion.

This hesitation had occasioned some temporary coldness between the General and the Everards, father and son. But as the latter remained in the army, and bore arms under Cromwell, both in Scotland and finally at Worcester, his services very frequently called forth the approbation of his commander. After the fight at Worcester, in particular, he was among the number of those officers on whom Oliver, rather considering the actual and practical extent of his own power than the name under which he exercised it, was with difficulty withheld from imposing the dignity of knights-bannerets at his own will and pleasure. It therefore seemed that all recollection of former disagreement was obliterated, and that the Everards had regained their former stronghold in the General's affections. There were, indeed, several who doubted this, and who endeavoured to bring over this distinguished young officer to some other of the parties which divided the infant Commonwealth. But to these proposals he turned a deaf ear. Enough of blood, he said, had been spilled—it was time that the nation should have repose under a firmly-established government, of strength sufficient to protect property, and of lenity enough to encourage the return of tranquillity. This, he thought, could only be accomplished by means of Cromwell, and the greater part of England was of the same opinion. It is true that, in thus submitting to the domination of a successful soldier, those who did so forgot the principles upon which they had drawn the sword against the late king. But in revolutions, stern and high principles are often obliged to give way to the current of existing circumstances; and in many a case, where wars have been waged for points of metaphysical right, they have been at last gladly terminated upon the mere hope of obtaining general tranquillity, as, after many a long siege, a garrison is often glad to submit on mere security for life and limb.

Colonel Everard, therefore, felt that the support which he afforded Cromwell was only under the idea that amid a choice of evils the least was likely to ensue from a man of the General's wisdom and valour being placed at the head of the State; and he was sensible that Oliver himself was likely to consider his attachment as lukewarm and imperfect, and measure his gratitude for it upon the same limited scale.

In the meanwhile, however, circumstances compelled him to make trial of the General's friendship. The sequestration of Woodstock, and the warrant to the Commissioners to dispose of it as national property, had been long granted, but the interest of the elder Everard had for weeks and months deferred its execution. The hour was now approaching when the blow could be no longer parried, especially as Sir Henry Lee, on his side, resisted every proposal of submitting himself to the existing government, and was therefore, now that his hour of grace was past, enrolled in the list of stubborn and irreclaimable malignants, with whom the Council of State was determined no longer to keep terms. The only mode of protecting the old knight and his daughter was to interest, if possible, the General himself in the matter; and, revolving all the circumstances connected with their intercourse, Colonel Everard felt that a request, which would so immediately interfere with the interests of Desborough, the brother-in-law of Cromwell, and one of the present Commissioners, was putting to a very severe trial the friendship of the latter. Yet no alternative remained.

With this view, and agreeably to a request from Cromwell, who at parting had been very urgent to have his written opinion upon public affairs, Colonel Everard passed the earlier part of the night in arranging his ideas upon the state of the Commonwealth, in a plan which he thought likely to be acceptable to Cromwell, as it exhorted him, under the aid of Providence, to become the saviour of the State, by convoking a free Parliament, and by their aid placing himself at the head of some form of liberal and established government, which might supersede the state of anarchy in which the nation was otherwise likely to be merged. Taking a general view of the totally broken condition of the Royalists, and of the various factions which now convulsed the State, he showed how this might be done without bloodshed or violence. From this topic he descended to the propriety of keeping up the becoming state of the executive government, in whose hands soever it should be lodged, and thus showed Cromwell, as the future Stadtholder, or Consul, or Lieutenant-General of Great Britain and Ireland, a prospect of demesne and residences becoming his dignity. Then he naturally passed to the disparking and destroying of the royal residences of England, made a woeful picture of the demolition which impended over Woodstock, and interceded for the preservation of that

beautiful seat, as a matter of personal favour, in which he found himself deeply interested.

Colonel Everard, when he had finished his letter, did not find himself greatly risen in his own opinion. In the course of his political conduct, he had till this hour avoided mixing up personal motives with his public grounds of action, and yet he now felt himself making such a composition. But he comforted himself, or at least silenced this unpleasing recollection, with the consideration that the weal of Britain, studied under the aspect of the times, absolutely required that Cromwell should be at the head of the government; and that the interest of Sir Henry Lee, or rather his safety and his existence, no less emphatically demanded the preservation of Woodstock, and his residence there. Was it a fault of his, that the same road should lead to both these ends, or that his private interest and that of the country should happen to mix in the same letter? He hardened himself, therefore, to the act, made up and addressed his packet to the Lord-General, and then sealed it with his seal of arms. This done, he lay back in the chair; and, in spite of his expectations to the contrary, fell asleep in the course of his reflections, anxious and harassing as they were, and did not awaken until the cold grey light of dawn was peeping through the eastern oriel.

He started at first, rousing himself with the sensation of one who awakes in a place unknown to him; but the localities instantly forced themselves on his recollection. The lamp burning dimly in the socket, the wood fire almost extinguished in its own white embers, the gloomy picture over the chimney-piece, the sealed packet on the table—all reminded him of the events of yesterday, and his deliberations of the succeeding night.

'There is no help for it,' he said; 'it must be Cromwell or anarchy. And probably the sense that his title, as head of the executive government, is derived merely from popular consent, may check the too natural proneness of power to render itself arbitrary. If he govern by parliaments and with regard to the privileges of the subject, wherefore not Oliver as well as Charles? But I must take measures for having this conveyed safely to the hands of this future sovereign prince. It will be well to take the first word of influence with him, since there must be many who will not hesitate to recommend counsels more violent and precipitate.'

He determined to entrust the important packet to the charge of Wildrake, whose rashness was never so distinguished as when by any chance he was left idle and unemployed; besides, even if his faith had not been otherwise unimpeachable, the obligations which he owed to his friend Everard must have rendered it such.

These conclusions passed through Colonel Everard's mind, as, collecting the remains of wood in the chimney, he gathered them into a hearty blaze, to remove the uncomfortable feeling of chilliness which pervaded his limbs; and, by the time he was a little more warm, again sunk into a slumber, which was only dispelled by the beams of morning peeping into his apartment.

He arose, roused himself, walked up and down the room, and looked from the large oriel window on the nearest objects, which were the untrimmed hedges and neglected walks of a certain Wilderness, as it is called in ancient treatises on gardening, which, kept of yore well ordered, and in all the pride of the topiary art, presented a succession of yew-trees cut into fantastic forms, of close alleys, and of open walks, filling about two or three acres of ground on that side of the Lodge, and forming a boundary between its immediate precincts and the open park. Its enclosure was now broken down in many places, and the hinds with their fawns fed free and unstartled up to the very windows of the sylvan palace.

This had been a favourite scene of Markham's sports when a boy. He could still distinguish, though now grown out of shape, the verdant battlements of a Gothic castle, all created by the gardener's shears, at which he was accustomed to shoot his arrows; or, stalking before it like the knight-errants of whom he read, was wont to blow his horn and bid defiance to the supposed giant or Paynim knight by whom it was garrisoned. He remembered how he used to train his cousin, though several years younger than himself, to bear a part in these revels of his boyish fancy, and to play the character of an elfin page, or a fairy, or an enchanted princess. He remembered, too, many particulars of their later acquaintance, from which he had been almost necessarily led to the conclusion that from an early period their parents had entertained some idea that there might be a well-fitted match betwixt his fair cousin and himself. A thousand visions, formed in so bright a prospect, had vanished along with it, but now returned like shadows, to remind him of all he had lost—and for what?—'For the sake of England,' his proud consciousness replied,—'Of England, in danger of becoming the prey at once of bigotry and tyranny.' And he strengthened himself with the recollection, 'If I have sacrificed my private happiness, it is that my country may enjoy liberty of conscience and personal freedom, which under a weak prince and usurping statesman she was but too likely to have lost.'

But the busy fiend in his breast would not be repulsed by the bold answer. 'Has thy resistance,' it demanded, 'availed thy country, Markham Everard? Lies not England, after so much bloodshed and so much misery, as low beneath the sword of a fortunate soldier as formerly under the sceptre of an encroaching prince? Are Parliament, or what remains of them, fitted to contend with a leader, master of his soldiers' hearts, as bold and subtle as he is impenetrable in his designs? This General who holds the army, and by that the fate of the nation in his hand, will he lay down his power because philosophy would pronounce it his duty to become a subject?'

He dared not answer that his knowledge of Cromwell authorized him to expect any such act of self-denial. Yet still he considered that in times of such infinite difficulty, that must be the best government, however little desirable in itself, which should most speedily restore peace to the land, and stop the wounds which the

contending parties were daily inflicting on each other. He imagined that Cromwell was the only authority under which a steady government could be formed, and therefore had attached himself to his fortune, though not without considerable and recurring doubts, how far serving the views of this impenetrable and mysterious General was consistent with the principles under which he had assumed arms.

While these things passed in his mind, Everard looked upon the packet which lay on the table addressed to the Lord-General, and which he had made up before sleep. He hesitated several times, when he remembered its purport, and in what degree he must stand committed with that personage, and bound to support his plans of aggrandizement, when once that communication was in Oliver Cromwell's possession.

'Yet it must be so,' he said at last, with a deep sigh. 'Among the contending parties, he is the strongest—the wisest and most moderate—and, ambitious though he be, perhaps not the most dangerous. Some one must be trusted with power to preserve and enforce general order, and who can possess or wield such power like him that is head of the victorious armies of England? Come what will in future, peace and the restoration of law ought to be our first and most pressing object. This remnant of a Parliament cannot keep their ground against the army by mere appeal to the sanction of opinion. If they design to reduce the soldiery, it must be by actual warfare, and the land has been too long steeped in blood. But Cromwell may, and I trust will, make a moderate accommodation with them, on grounds by which peace may be preserved; and it is to this which we must look and trust for a settlement of the kingdom, alas! and for the chance of protecting my obstinate kinsman from the consequences of his honest though absurd pertinacity.'

Silencing some internal feelings of doubt and reluctance by such reasoning as this, Markham Everard continued in his resolution to unite himself with Cromwell in the struggle which was evidently approaching betwixt the civil and military authorities; not as the course which, if at perfect liberty, he would have preferred adopting, but as the best choice between two dangerous extremities to which the times had reduced him. He could not help trembling, however, when he recollected that his father, though hitherto the admirer of Cromwell, as the implement by whom so many marvels had been wrought in England, might not be disposed to unite with his interest against that of the Long Parliament, of which he had been, till partly laid aside by continued indisposition, an active and leading member. This doubt also he was obliged to swallow, or strangle, as he might; but consoled himself with the ready argument, that it was impossible his father could see matters in another light than that in which they occurred to himself.

CHAPTER VII.

Determined at length to despatch his packet to the General without delay, Colonel Everard approached the door of the apartment in which, as was evident from the heavy breathing within, the prisoner Wildrake enjoyed a deep slumber, under the influence of liquor at once and of fatigue. In turning the key, the bolt, which was rather rusty, made a resistance so noisy as partly to attract the sleeper's attention, though not to awake him. Everard stood by his bedside, as he heard him mutter, 'Is it morning already, jailor?—Why, you dog, an you had but a cast of humanity in you, you would qualify your vile news with a cup of sack;—hanging is sorry work, my masters—and sorrow's dry.'

'Up, Wildrake—up, thou ill-omened dreamer,' said his friend, shaking him by the collar.

'Hands off!' answered the sleeper.—'I can climb a ladder without help, I trow.'—He then sat up in the bed, and, opening his eyes, stared around him, and exclaimed, 'Zounds! Mark, is it only thou? I thought it was all over with me—fetters were struck from my legs—rope drawn round my gullet—irons knocked off my hands—hempen cravat tucked on—all ready for a dance in the open element upon slight footing.'

'Truce with thy folly, Wildrake; sure the devil of drink, to whom thou hast, I think, sold thyself'——

'For a hogshead of sack,' interrupted Wildrake; 'the bargain was made in a cellar in the Vintry.'

'I am as mad as thou art, to trust anything to thee,' said Markham; 'I scarce believe thou hast thy senses yet.'

'What should ail me?' said Wildrake—'I trust I have not tasted liquor in my sleep, saving that I dreamed of drinking small-beer with old Noll of his own brewing. But do not look so glum, man—I am the same Roger Wildrake that I ever was; as wild as a mallard, but as true as a game-cock. I am thine own chum, man—bound to thee by thy kind deeds—*devinctus beneficio*—there is Latin for it; and where is the thing thou wilt charge me with, that I will not, or dare not, execute, were it to pick the devil's teeth with my rapier, after he had breakfasted upon Roundheads?'

'You will drive me mad,' said Everard.—'When I am about to entrust all I have most valuable on earth to your management, your conduct and language are those of a mere Bedlamite. Last night I made allowance for thy drunken fury; but who can endure thy morning madness?—it is unsafe for thyself and me, Wildrake—it is unkind—I might say ungrateful.'

'Nay, do not say *that*, my friend,' said the Cavalier, with some show of feeling; 'and do not judge of me with a severity that cannot apply to such as I am. We who have lost our all in these sad jars, who are compelled to shift for our living, not from day to day, but from meal to meal—we whose only hiding-place is the jail, whose prospect of final repose is the gallows,—what canst thou expect from us, but to bear such

lot with a light heart, since we should break down under it with a heavy one?'

This was spoken in a tone of feeling which found a responding string in Everard's bosom. He took his friend's hand, and pressed it kindly.

'Nay, if I seemed harsh to thee, Wildrake, I profess it was for thine own sake more than mine. I know thou hast at the bottom of thy levity as deep a principle of honour and feeling as ever governed a human heart. But thou art thoughtless—thou art rash—and I protest to thee, that wert thou to betray thyself in this matter, in which I trust thee, the evil consequences to myself would not afflict me more than the thought of putting thee into such danger.'

'Nay, if you take it on that tone, Mark,' said the Cavalier, making an effort to laugh, evidently that he might conceal a tendency to a different emotion, 'thou wilt make children of us both—babes and sucklings, by the hilt of this bilbo.—Come, trust me; I can be cautious when time requires it—no man ever saw me drink when an alerte was expected—and not one poor pint of wine will I taste until I have managed this matter for thee. Well, I am thy secretary—clerk—I had forgot—and carry thy despatches to Cromwell, taking good heed not to be surprised or choused out of my lump of loyalty' (striking his finger on the packet), 'and I am to deliver it to the most loyal hands to which it is most humbly addressed—Adzooks, Mark, think of it a moment longer—Surely thou wilt not carry thy perverseness so far as to strike in with this bloody-minded rebel?—Bid me give him three inches of my dudgeon-dagger, and I will do it much more willingly than present him with thy packet.'

'Go to,' replied Everard, 'this is beyond our bargain. If you will help me, it is well; if not, let me lose no time in debating with thee, since I think every moment an age till the packet is in the General's possession. It is the only way left me to obtain some protection, and a place of refuge, for my uncle and his daughter.'

'That being the case,' said the Cavalier, 'I will not spare the spur. My nag up yonder at the town will be ready for the road in a trice, and thou may'st reckon on my being with old Noll—thy General, I mean—in as short time as man and horse may consume betwixt Woodstock and Windsor, where I think I shall for the present find thy friend keeping possession where he has slain.'

'Hush! not a word of that. Since we parted last night, I have shaped thee a path which will suit thee better than to assume the decency of language and of outward manner of which thou hast so little. I have acquainted the General that thou hast been by bad example and bad education'——

'Which is to be interpreted by contraries, I hope,' said Wildrake; 'for sure I have been as well born and bred up as any lad of Lincolnshire might desire.'

'Now, I prithee, hush—thou hast, I say, by bad example become at one time a malignant, and mixed in the party of the late King. But seeing what things were wrought in the nation by the General, thou hast come to a clearness touching his calling to be a great implement in the settlement of these distracted kingdoms. This account of thee will not only lead him to pass over some of thy eccentricities, should they break out in spite of thee, but will also give thee an interest with him as being more especially attached to his own person.'

'Doubtless,' said Wildrake, 'as every fisher loves best the trouts that are of his own tickling.'

'It is likely, I think, he will send thee hither with letters to me,' said the colonel, 'enabling me to put a stop to the proceedings of these sequestrators, and to give poor old Sir Henry Lee permission to linger out his days among the oaks he loves to look upon. I have made this my request to General Cromwell, and I think my father's friendship and my own may stretch so far on his regard without risk of cracking, especially standing matters as they now do—thou dost understand?'

'Entirely well,' said the Cavalier; 'stretch, quotha!—I would rather stretch a rope than hold commerce with the old king-killing ruffian. But I have said I will be guided by thee, Markham, and rat me but I will.'

'Be cautious, then,' said Everard; 'mark well what he does and says—more especially what he does; for Oliver is one of those whose mind is better known by his actions than by his words; and stay—I warrant thee thou wert setting off without a cross in thy purse?'

'Too true, Mark,' said Wildrake; 'the last noble melted last night among yonder blackguard troopers of yours.'

'Well, Roger,' replied the colonel, 'that is easily mended.' So saying, he slipped his purse into his friend's hand. 'But art thou not an inconsiderate weather-brained fellow, to set forth, as thou wert about to do, without anything to bear thy charges; what couldst thou have done?'

'Faith, I never thought of that; I must have cried *Stand*, I suppose, to the first pursy townsman or greasy grazier that I met o' the heath—it is many a good fellow's shift in these bad times.'

'Go to,' said Everard; 'be cautious—use none of your loose acquaintance—rule your tongue—beware of the wine-pot—for there is little danger if thou couldst only but keep thyself sober—Be moderate in speech, and forbear oaths or vaunting.'

'In short, metamorphose myself into such a prig as thou art, Mark.—Well,' said Wildrake, 'so far as outside will go, I think I can make a *Hope-on-High-Bomby** as well as thou canst. Ah! those were merry days when we saw Mills† present Bomby at the Fortune playhouse, Mark, ere I had lost my laced cloak and the jewel in my ear, or thou hadst gotten the wrinkle on thy brow, and the Puritanic twist of thy moustache!'

'They were like most worldly pleasures, Wildrake,' replied Everard, 'sweet in the mouth and bitter in digestion.—But away with thee; and when thou bring'st back my answer, thou wilt find me either here or at Saint George's Inn, at the little borough.—Good luck to thee—Be but cautious how thou bearest thyself.'

* A Puritanic character in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays.

† [A conventional tragedian of this name acted in London in the days before Garrick.]

The colonel remained in deep meditation.—'I think,' he said, 'I have not pledged myself too far to the General. A breach between him and the Parliament seems inevitable, and would throw England back into civil war, of which all men are wearied. He may dislike my messenger—yet that I do not greatly fear. He knows I would choose such as I can myself depend on, and hath dealt enough with the stricter sort to be aware that there are among them, as well as elsewhere, men who can hide two faces under one hood.'

CHAPTER VIII.

For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The stern Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the house of every knave and drone,
Forced—though it grieved his soul—to rule alone.
THE FRANK COURTSHIP.—CRABBE.

LEAVING Colonel Everard to his meditations, we follow the jolly Cavalier, his companion, who, before mounting at the George, did not fail to treat himself to his morning draught of eggs and muscadine, to enable him to face the harvest wind.

Although he had suffered himself to be sunk in the extravagant licence which was practised by the Cavaliers, as if to oppose their conduct in every point to the preciseness of their enemies, yet Wildrake, well born and well educated, and endowed with good natural parts, and a heart which even debauchery, and the wild life of a roaring Cavalier, had not been able entirely to corrupt, moved on his present embassy with a strange mixture of feelings, such as perhaps he had never in his life before experienced.

His feelings as a loyalist led him to detest Cromwell, whom in other circumstances he would scarce have wished to see, except in a field of battle, where he could have had the pleasure to exchange pistol-shots with him. But with this hatred there was mixed a certain degree of fear. Always victorious wherever he fought, the remarkable person whom Wildrake was now approaching had acquired that influence over the minds of his enemies, which constant success is so apt to inspire—they dreaded while they hated him—and joined to these feelings was a restless, meddling curiosity, which made a particular feature in Wildrake's character, who, having long had little business of his own, and caring nothing about that which he had, was easily attracted by the desire of seeing whatever was curious or interesting around him.

'I should like to see the old rascal after all,' he said, 'were it but to say that I *had* seen him.'

He reached Windsor in the afternoon, and felt on his arrival the strongest inclination to take up his residence at some of his old haunts, when he had occasionally frequented that fair town in gayer days. But, resisting all temptations of this kind, he went courageously to the principal inn, from which its ancient emblem, the Garter, had long disappeared. The master, too, whom Wildrake, experienced in his knowledge of landlords and hostelries, had remembered a dashing mine host of Queen Bess's school, had now sobered down to the temper of the times, shook his head when he spoke of the Parliament, wielded his spigot with the gravity of a priest conducting a sacrifice, wished England a happy issue out of all her afflictions, and greatly lauded his Excellency the Lord-General. Wildrake also remarked that his wine was better than it was wont to be, the Puritans having an excellent gift at detecting every fallacy in that matter; and that his measures were less and his charges larger—circumstances which he was induced to attend to, by mine host talking a good deal about his conscience.

He was told by this important personage that the Lord-General received frankly all sorts of persons; and that he might obtain access to him next morning, at eight o'clock, for the trouble of presenting himself at the castle gate, and announcing himself as the bearer of despatches to his Excellency.

To the castle the disguised Cavalier repaired at the hour appointed. Admittance was freely permitted to him by the red-coated soldier, who, with austere looks, and his musket on his shoulder, mounted guard at the external gate of that noble building. Wildrake passed through the underward or court, gazing as he passed upon the beautiful chapel, which had but lately received, in darkness and silence, the unhonoured remains of the slaughtered King of England. Rough as Wildrake was, the recollection of this circumstance affected him so strongly that he had nearly turned back in a sort of horror, rather than face the dark and daring man to whom, amongst all the actors in that melancholy affair, its tragic conclusion was chiefly to be imputed. But he felt the necessity of subduing all sentiments of this nature, and compelled himself to proceed in a negotiation entrusted to his conduct by one to whom he was so much obliged as Colonel Everard. At the ascent, which passed by the Round Tower, he looked to the ensign staff, from which the banner of England was wont to float. It was gone, with all its rich emblazonry, its gorgeous quarterings, and splendid embroidery; and in its room waved that of the Commonwealth, the cross of Saint George, in its colours of blue and red, not yet intersected by the diagonal cross of Scotland, which was soon after assumed, as if in evidence of England's conquest over her ancient enemy. This change of ensigns increased the train of his gloomy reflections, in which, although contrary to his wont, he became so deeply wrapped that the first thing which recalled him to himself was the challenge from the sentinel, accompanied with a stroke of the butt of his musket on the pavement with an emphasis which made Wildrake start.

'Whither away, and who are you?'

'The bearer of a packet,' answered Wildrake, 'to the worshipful the Lord-General.'

'Stand till I call the officer of the guard.'

The corporal made his appearance, distinguished above those of his command by a double quantity of band round his neck, a double height of steeple-crowned hat, a larger allowance of cloak, and a treble proportion of sour gravity of

aspect. It might be read on his countenance that he was one of those resolute enthusiasts to whom Oliver owed his conquests, whose religious zeal made them even more than a match for the high-spirited and high-born Cavaliers, that exhausted their valour in vain defence of their sovereign's person and crown. He looked with grave solemnity at Wildrake, as if he was making in his own mind an inventory of his features and dress; and, having fully perused them, he required 'to know his business.'

'My business,' said Wildrake, as firmly as he could—for the close investigation of this man had given him some unpleasant nervous sensations—'my business is with your General.'

'With his Excellency the Lord-General, thou wouldst say?' replied the corporal. 'Thy speech, my friend, savours too little of the reverence due to his Excellency.'

'D—n his Excellency!' was at the lips of the Cavalier; but prudence kept guard, and permitted not the offensive words to escape the barrier. He only bowed, and was silent.

'Follow me,' said the starched figure whom he addressed; and Wildrake followed him accordingly into the guard-house, which exhibited an interior characteristic of the times, and very different from what such military stations present at the present day.

By the fire sat two or three musketeers, listening to one who was expounding some religious mystery to them. He began half beneath his breath, but in tones of great volubility, which tones, as he approached the conclusion, became sharp and eager, as challenging either instant answer or silent acquiescence. The audience seemed to listen to the speaker with immoveable features, only answering him with clouds of tobacco-smoke, which they rolled from under their thick moustaches. On a bench lay a soldier on his face; whether asleep, or in a fit of contemplation, it was impossible to decide. In the midst of the floor stood an officer, as he seemed by his embroidered shoulder-belt and scarf round his waist, otherwise very plainly attired, who was engaged in drilling a stout bumpkin, lately enlisted, to the manual, as it was then used. The motions and words of command were twenty at the very least; and until they were regularly brought to an end, the corporal did not permit Wildrake either to sit down or move forward beyond the threshold of the guard-house. So he had to listen in succession to—Poise your musket—Rest your musket—Cock your musket—Handle your primers—and many other forgotten words of discipline, until at length the words, 'Order your musket,' ended the drill for the time.

'Thy name, friend?' said the officer to the recruit, when the lesson was over.

'Ephraim,' answered the fellow, with an affected twang through the nose.

'And what besides Ephraim?'

'Ephraim Cobb, from the godly city of Gloucester, where I have dwelt for seven years, serving apprentice to a praiseworthy cordwainer.'

'It is a goodly craft,' answered the officer; 'but, casting in thy lot with ours, doubt not that thou shalt be set beyond thine awl, and thy last to boot.'

A grim smile of the speaker accompanied this poor attempt at a pun; and then turning round to the corporal, who stood two paces off, with the face of one who seemed desirous of speaking, said, 'How now, corporal, what tidings?'

'Here is one with a packet, an it please your Excellency,' said the corporal—'Surely my spirit doth not rejoice in him, seeing I esteem him as a wolf in sheep's clothing.'

By these words Wildrake learned that he was in the actual presence of the remarkable person to whom he was commissioned; and he paused to consider in what manner he ought to address him.

The figure of Oliver Cromwell was, as is generally known, in no way prepossessing. He was of middle stature, strong and coarsely made, with harsh and severe features, indicative, however, of much natural sagacity and depth of thought. His eyes were grey and piercing; his nose too large in proportion to his other features, and of a reddish hue.

His manner of speaking, when he had the purpose to make himself distinctly understood, was energetic and forcible, though neither graceful nor eloquent. No man could on such occasion put his meaning into fewer and more decisive words. But when, as it often happened, he had a mind to play the orator, for the benefit of people's ears, without enlightening their understanding, Cromwell was wont to invest his meaning, or that which seemed to be his meaning, in such a mist of words, surrounding it with so many exclusions and exceptions, and fortifying it with such a labyrinth of parentheses, that, though one of the most shrewd men in England, he was, perhaps, the most unintelligible speaker that ever perplexed an audience. It has been long since said by the historian that a collection of the Protector's speeches would make, with a few exceptions, the most nonsensical book in the world; but he ought to have added that nothing could be more nervous, concise, and intelligible than what he really intended should be understood.

It was also remarked of Cromwell, that, though born of a good family, both by father and mother, and although he had the usual opportunities of education and breeding connected with such an advantage, the fanatic democratic ruler could never acquire, or else disdained to practise, the courtesies usually exercised among the higher classes in their intercourse with each other. His demeanour was so blunt as sometimes might be termed clownish, yet there was in his language and manner a force and energy corresponding to his character, which impressed awe, if it did not impose respect; and there were even times when that dark and subtle spirit expanded itself, so as almost to conciliate affection. The turn for humour, which displayed itself by fits, was broad, and of a low and sometimes practical character. Something there was in his disposition congenial to that of his countrymen; a contempt of folly, a hatred of affectation, and a dislike of ceremony, which, joined to the strong intrinsic qualities of sense and courage, made him in many respects not an unfit representative of the democracy of England.

His religion must always be a subject of much

doubt, and probably of doubt which he himself could hardly have cleared up. Unquestionably there was a time in his life when he was sincerely enthusiastic, and when his natural temper, slightly subject to hypochondria, was strongly agitated by the same fanaticism which influenced so many persons of the time. On the other hand, there were periods during his political career when we certainly do him no injustice in charging him with a hypocritical affectation. We shall probably judge him, and others of the same age, most truly, if we suppose that their religious professions were partly influential in their own breast, partly assumed in compliance with their own interest. And so ingenious is the human heart in deceiving itself as well as others, that it is probable neither Cromwell himself, nor those making similar pretensions to distinguished piety, could exactly have fixed the point at which their enthusiasm terminated and their hypocrisy commenced; or rather, it was a point not fixed in itself, but fluctuating with the state of health, of good or bad fortune, of high or low spirits, affecting the individual at the period.

Such was the celebrated person who, turning round on Wildrake and scanning his countenance closely, seemed so little satisfied with what he beheld that he instinctively hitched forward his belt so as to bring the handle of his tuck-sword within his reach. But yet, folding his arms in his cloak, as if upon second thoughts laying aside suspicion, or thinking precaution beneath him, he asked the Cavalier what he was and whence he came.

'A poor gentleman, sir,—that is, my lord,'—answered Wildrake; 'last from Woodstock.'

'And what may your tidings be, Sir *Gentleman?*' said Cromwell, with an emphasis. 'Truly I have seen those most willing to take upon them that title bear themselves somewhat short of wise men, and good men, and true men, with all their gentility; yet gentleman was a good title in old England, when men remembered what it was construed to mean.'

'You say truly, sir,' replied Wildrake, suppressing, with difficulty, some of his usual wild expletives; 'formerly gentlemen were found in gentlemen's places, but now the world is so changed that you shall find the broidered belt has changed place with the under spur-leather.'

'Say'st thou me?' said the General; 'I profess thou art a bold companion, that can bandy words so wantonly;—thou ring'st somewhat too loud to be good metal, methinks. And, once again, what are thy tidings with me?'

'This packet,' said Wildrake, 'commended to your hands by Colonel Markham Everard.'

'Alas, I must have mistaken thee,' answered Cromwell, mollified at the mention of a man's name whom he had great desire to make his own; 'forgive us, good friend, for such, we doubt not, thou art. Sit thee down, and commune with thyself, as thou may'st, until we have examined the contents of thy packet. Let him be looked to, and have what he lacks.' So saying, the General left the guard-house, where Wildrake took his seat in the corner, and awaited with patience the issue of his mission.

The soldiers now thought themselves obliged to treat him with more consideration, and offered him a pipe of Trinidado, and a black jack filled with October. But the look of Cromwell, and the dangerous situation in which he might be placed by the least chance of detection, induced Wildrake to decline these hospitable offers, and, stretching back in his chair and affecting slumber, he escaped notice or conversation, until a sort of aide-de-camp, or military officer in attendance, came to summon him to Cromwell's presence.

By this person he was guided to a posterngate, through which he entered the body of the castle, and, penetrating through many private passages and staircases, he at length was introduced into a small cabinet, or parlour, in which was much rich furniture, some bearing the royal cipher displayed, but all confused and disarranged, together with several paintings in massive frames, having their faces turned towards the wall, as if they had been taken down for the purpose of being removed.

In this scene of disorder, the victorious General of the Commonwealth was seated in a large easy-chair, covered with damask, and deeply embroidered, the splendour of which made a strong contrast with the plain and even homely character of his apparel; although in look and action he seemed like one who felt that the seat which might have in former days held a prince, was not too much distinguished for his own fortunes and ambition. Wildrake stood before him, nor did he ask him to sit down.

'Pearson,' said Cromwell, addressing himself to the officer in attendance, 'wait in the gallery, but be within call.' Pearson bowed, and was retiring. 'Who are in the gallery besides?'

'Worthy Master Gordon, the chaplain, was holding forth but now to Colonel Overton, and four captains of your Excellency's regiment.'

'We would have it so,' said the General; 'we would not there were any corner in our dwelling where the hungry soul might not meet with manna. Was the good man carried onward in his discourse?'

'Mightily borne through,' said Pearson; 'and he was touching the rightful claims which the army, and especially your Excellency, hath acquired by becoming the instruments in the Great Work;—not instruments to be broken asunder and cast away when the day of their service is over, but to be preserved, and held precious, and prized for their honourable and faithful labours, for which they have fought and marched, and fasted and prayed, and suffered cold and sorrow; while others, who would now gladly see them disbanded, and broken, and cashiered, eat of the fat and drink of the strong.'

'Ah, good man!' said Cromwell, 'and did he touch upon this so feelingly? I could say something—but not now. Begone, Pearson, to the gallery. Let not our friends lay aside their swords, but watch as well as pray.'

Pearson retired; and the General, holding the letter of Everard in his hand, looked again for a long while fixedly at Wildrake, as if considering in what strain he should address him.

When he did speak, it was, at first, in one of those ambiguous discourses which we have already described, and by which it was very difficult for any one to understand his meaning,

f, indeed, he knew it himself. We shall be as concise in our statement as our desire to give the very words of a man so extraordinary will permit.

'This letter,' he said, 'you have brought us from your master, or patron, Markham Everard; truly an excellent and honourable gentleman as ever bore a sword upon his thigh, and one who hath ever distinguished himself in the great work of delivering these three poor and unhappy nations. Answer me not—I know what thou wouldst say.—And this letter he hath sent to me by thee, his clerk, or secretary, in whom he hath confidence, and in whom he prays me to have trust, that there may be a careful messenger between us. And lastly, he hath sent thee to me—Do not answer—I know what thou wouldst say,—to me, who, albeit I am of that small consideration that it would be too much honour for me even to bear a halberd in this great and victorious army of England, am nevertheless exalted to the rank of holding the guidance and the leading-staff thereof.—Nay, do not answer, my friend—I know what thou wouldst say.—Now, when communing thus together, our discourse taketh, in respect to what I have said, a threefold argument or division: First, as it concerneth thy master; secondly, as it concerneth us and our office; thirdly and lastly, as it toucheth thyself.—Now, as concerning this good and worthy gentleman, Colonel Markham Everard, truly he hath played the man from the beginning of these unhappy buffetings, not turning to the right or to the left, but holding ever in his eye the mark at which he aimed. Ay, truly, a faithful, honourable gentleman, and one who may well call me friend; and truly I am pleased to think that he doth so. Nevertheless, in this vale of tears, we must be governed less by our private respects and partialities than by those higher principles and points of duty whereupon the good Colonel Markham Everard hath ever framed his purposes, as, truly, I have endeavoured to form mine, that we may all act as becometh good Englishmen and worthy patriots. Then, as for Woodstock, it is a great thing which the good Colonel asks, that it should be taken from the spoil of the godly and left in keeping of the men of Moab, and especially of the malignant, Henry Lee, whose hand hath been ever against us when he might find room to raise it; I say, he hath asked a great thing, both in respect of himself and me. For we of this poor but godly army of England are holden, by those of the Parliament, as men who should render in spoil for them, but be no sharer of it ourselves; even as the buck, which the hounds pull to earth, furnisheth no part of their own food, but they are lashed off from the carcass with whips, like those which require punishment for their forwardness, not reward for their services. Yet I speak not this so much in respect of this grant of Woodstock, in regard that, perhaps, their lordships of the Council, and also the Committeemen of this Parliament, may graciously think they have given me a portion in the matter, in relation that my kinsman Desborough hath an interest allowed him therein; which interest, as he hath well deserved it for his true and faithful service to these unhappy and devoted countries, so it would ill become me to diminish the same to his prejudice, unless it were upon great and public respects. Thus thou seest how it stands with me, my honest friend, and in what mind I stand touching thy master's request to me; which yet I do not say that I can altogether or unconditionally grant or refuse, but only tell my simple thoughts with regard thereto. Thou understandest me, I doubt not?'

Now, Roger Wildrake, with all the attention he had been able to pay to the Lord-General's speech, had got so much confused among the various clauses of the harangue, that his brain was bewildered, like that of a country clown when he chances to get himself involved among a crowd of carriages, and cannot stir a step to get out of the way of one of them, without being in danger of being ridden over by the others.

The General saw his look of perplexity, and began a new oration, to the same purpose as before; spoke of his love for his kind friend the colonel—his regard for his pious and godly kinsman, Master Desborough—the great importance of the Palace and Park of Woodstock—the determination of the Parliament that it should be confiscated, and the produce brought into the coffers of the State—his own deep veneration for the authority of Parliament, and his no less deep sense of the injustice done to the army—how it was his wish and will that all matters should be settled in an amicable and friendly manner, without self-seeking, debate, or strife, betwixt those who had been the hands acting and such as had been the heads governing, in that great national cause—how he was willing, truly willing, to contribute to this work, by laying down, not his commission only, but his life also, if it were requested of him, or could be granted with safety to the poor soldiers, to whom, silly poor men, he was bound to be as a father, seeing that they had followed him with the duty and affection of children.

And here he arrived at another dead pause, leaving Wildrake as uncertain as before, whether it was or was not his purpose to grant Colonel Everard the powers he had asked for the protection of Woodstock against the parliamentary Commissioners. Internally he began to entertain hopes that the justice of Heaven, or the effects of remorse, had confounded the regicide's understanding. But no—he could see nothing but sagacity in that steady, stern eye, which, while the tongue poured forth its periphrastic language in such profusion, seemed to watch with severe accuracy the effect which his oratory produced on the listener.

'Egad,' thought the Cavalier to himself, becoming a little familiar with the situation in which he was placed, and rather impatient of a conversation which led to no visible conclusion or termination, 'if Noll were the devil himself, as he is the devil's darling, I will not be thus nose-led by him. I'll e'en brusque it a little, if he goes on at this rate, and try if I can bring him to a more intelligible mode of speaking.'

Entertaining this bold purpose, but half afraid to execute it, Wildrake lay by for an opportunity

of making the attempt, while Cromwell was apparently unable to express his own meaning. He was already beginning a third panegyric upon Colonel Everard, with sundry varied expressions of his own wish to oblige him, when Wildrake took the opportunity to strike in, on the General's making one of his oratorical pauses.

'So please you,' he said bluntly, 'your worship has already spoken on two topics of your discourse, your own worthiness, and that of my master, Colonel Everard. But, to enable me to do mine errand, it would be necessary to bestow a few words on the third head.'

'The third?' said Cromwell.

'Ay,' said Wildrake, 'which, in your honour's subdivision of your discourse, touched on my unworthy self. What am I to do—what portion am I to have in this matter?'

Oliver started at once from the tone of voice he had hitherto used, and which somewhat resembled the purring of a domestic cat, into the growl of the tiger when about to spring. '*Thy* portion, jail-bird!' he exclaimed, 'the gallows—thou shalt hang as high as Haman, if thou betray counsel!—But,' he added, softening his voice, 'keep it like a true man, and my favour will be the making of thee. Come hither—thou art bold, I see, though somewhat saucy. Thou hast been a malignant—so writes my worthy friend, Colonel Everard; but thou hast now given up that falling cause. I tell thee, friend, not all that the Parliament or the army could do would have pulled down the Stuarts out of their high places, saving that Heaven had a controversy with them. Well, it is a sweet and comely thing to buckle on one's armour in behalf of Heaven's cause; otherwise truly, for mine own part, these men might have remained upon the throne even unto this day. Neither do I blame any for aiding them, until these successive great judgments have overwhelmed them and their house. I am not a bloody man, having in me the feeling of human frailty; but, friend, whosoever putteth his hand to the plough, in the great actings which are now on foot in these nations, had best beware that he do not look back; for, rely upon my simple word, that, if you fail me, I will not spare on you one foot's length of the gallows of Haman. Let me therefore know, at a word, if the leaven of thy malignity is altogether drubbed out of thee?'

'Your honourable lordship,' said the Cavalier, shrugging up his shoulders, 'has done that for most of us, so far as cudgelling to some tune can perform it.'

'Say'st thou?' said the General, with a grim smile on his lip, which seemed to intimate that he was not quite inaccessible to flattery; 'yea, truly, thou dost not lie in that—we have been an instrument. Neither are we, as I have already hinted, so severely bent against those who have striven against us as malignants as others may be. The Parliament-men best know their own interest and their own pleasure; but, to my poor thinking, it is full time to close these jars, and to allow men of all kinds the means of doing service to their country; and we think it will be thy fault if thou art not employed to good purpose for the State and thyself, on condition thou puttest away the old man entirely from thee, and givest thy earnest attention to what I have to tell thee.'

'Your lordship need not doubt my attention,' said the Cavalier.

And the republican General, after another pause, as one who gave his confidence not without hesitation, proceeded to explain his views with a distinctness which he seldom used, yet not without his being a little biassed now and then by his long habits of circumlocution, which indeed he never laid entirely aside, save in the field of battle.

'Thou seest,' he said, 'my friend, how things stand with me. The Parliament, I care not who knows it, love me not—still less do the Council of State, by whom they manage the executive government of the kingdom. I cannot tell why they nourish suspicion against me, unless it is because I will not deliver this poor innocent army, which has followed me in so many military actions, to be now pulled asunder, broken piecemeal and reduced, so that they who have protected the State at the expense of their blood, will not have, perchance, the means of feeding themselves by their labour; which, methinks, were hard measure, since it is taking from Esau his birthright, even without giving him a poor mess of pottage.'

'Esau is likely to help himself, I think,' replied Wildrake.

'Truly thou say'st wisely,' replied the General; 'it is ill starving an armed man if there is food to be had for taking—nevertheless, far be it from me to encourage rebellion, or want of due subordination to these our rulers. I would only petition, in a due and becoming, a sweet and harmonious manner, that they would listen to our conditions and consider our necessities. But, sir, looking on me, and estimating me so little as they do, you must think that it would be a provocation in me towards the Council of State, as well as the Parliament, if, simply to gratify your worthy master, I were to act contrary to their purposes, or deny currency to the commission under their authority, which is as yet the highest in the State,—and long may it be so for me!—to carry on the sequestration which they intend. And would it not also be said that I was lending myself to the malignant interest, affording this den of the bloodthirsty and lascivious tyrants of yore to be in this our day a place of refuge to that old and inveterate Amalekite, Sir Henry Lee, to keep possession of the place in which he hath so long glorified himself? Truly it would be a perilous matter.'

'Am I then to report,' said Wildrake, 'an it please you, that you cannot stead Colonel Everard in this matter?'

'Unconditionally, ay—but, taken conditionally, the answer may be otherwise,' answered Cromwell. 'I see thou art not able to fathom my purpose, and therefore I will partly unfold it to thee.—But take notice that, should thy tongue betray my counsel, save in so far as carrying it to thy master, by all the blood which has been shed in these wild times, thou shalt die a thousand deaths in one.'

'Do not fear me, sir,' said Wildrake, whose

natural boldness and carelessness of character was for the present time borne down and quelled, like that of falcons in the presence of the eagle.

'Hear me, then,' said Cromwell, 'and let no syllable escape thee. Knowest thou not the young Lee, whom they call Albert, a malignant like his father, and one who went up with the young Man to that last ruffle which we had with him at Worcester—May we be grateful for the victory!'

'I know there is such a young gentleman as Albert Lee,' said Wildrake.

'And knowest thou not—I speak not by way of prying into the good Colonel's secrets, but only as it behoves me to know something of the matter, that I may best judge how I am to serve him—Knowest thou not that thy master, Markham Everard, is a suitor after the sister of this same malignant, a daughter of the old Keeper, called Sir Henry Lee?'

'All this I have heard,' said Wildrake, 'nor can I deny that I believe in it.'

'Well, then, go to.—When the young man Charles Stuart fled from the field of Worcester, and was by sharp chase and pursuit compelled to separate himself from his followers, I know by sure intelligence that this Albert Lee was one of the last who remained with him, if not indeed the very last.'

'It was devilish like him,' said the Cavalier, without sufficiently weighing his expressions, considering in what presence they were to be uttered—'And I'll uphold him with my rapier to be a true chip of the old block!'

'Ha, swearest thou?' said the General. 'Is this thy reformation?'

'I never swear, so please you,' replied Wildrake, recollecting himself, 'except there is some mention of malignants and Cavaliers in my hearing; and then the old habit returns, and I swear like one of Goring's * troopers.'

'Out upon thee,' said the general; 'what can it avail thee to practise a profanity so horrible to the ears of others, and which brings no emolument to him who uses it?'

'There are, doubtless, more profitable sins in the world than the barren and unprofitable vice of swearing,' was the answer which rose to the lips of the Cavalier; but that was exchanged for a profession of regret for having given offence. The truth was, the discourse began to take a turn which rendered it more interesting than ever to Wildrake, who therefore determined not to lose the opportunity for obtaining possession of the secret that seemed to be suspended on Cromwell's lips; and that could only be through means of keeping guard upon his own.

'What sort of a house is Woodstock?' said the General abruptly.

'An old mansion,' said Wildrake in reply; 'and, so far as I could judge by a single night's lodgings, having abundance of back stairs, also subterranean passages, and all the communications under ground which are common in old raven-nests of the sort.'

'And places for concealing priests, unquestionably,' said Cromwell. 'It is seldom that such ancient houses lack secret stalls wherein to mew up these calves of Bethel.'

'Your honour's Excellency,' said Wildrake, 'may swear to that.'

'I swear not at all,' replied the General dryly.—'But what think'st thou, good fellow?—I will ask thee a blunt question—Where will those two Worcester fugitives that thou wottest of be more likely to take shelter—and that they must be sheltered somewhere I well know—than in this same old palace, with all the corners and concealment whereof young Albert hath been acquainted ever since his earliest infancy?'

'Truly,' said Wildrake, making an effort to answer the question with seeming indifference, while the possibility of such an event and its consequences flashed fearfully upon his mind,—'Truly I should be of your honour's opinion, but that I think the company, who, by the commission of Parliament, have occupied Woodstock, are likely to fright them thence, as a cat scares doves from a pigeon-house. The neighbourhood, with reverence, of Generals Desborough and Harrison will suit ill with fugitives from Worcester field.'

'I thought as much, and so, indeed, would I have it,' answered the General. 'Long may it be ere our names shall be aught but a terror to our enemies. But in this matter, if thou art an active plotter for thy master's interest, thou might'st, I should think, work out something favourable to his present object.'

'My brain is too poor to reach the depth of your honourable purpose,' said Wildrake.

'Listen, then, and let it be to profit,' answered Cromwell. 'Assuredly the conquest at Worcester was a great and crowning mercy; yet might we seem to be but small in our thankfulness for the same, did we not do what in us lies towards the ultimate improvement and final conclusion of the great work which has been thus prosperous in our hands, professing, in pure humility and singleness of heart, that we do not, in any way, deserve our instrumentality to be remembered, nay, would rather pray and entreat that our name and fortunes were forgotten, than that the great work were in itself incomplete. Nevertheless, truly, placed as we now are, it concerns us more nearly than others,—that is, if so poor creatures should at all speak of themselves as concerned, whether more or less, with these changes which have been wrought around,—not, I say, by ourselves, or our own power, but by the destiny to which we were called, fulfilling the same with all meekness and humility,—I say it concerns us nearly that all things should be done in conformity with the great work which hath been wrought, and is yet working, in these lands. Such is my plain and simple meaning. Nevertheless, it is much to be desired that this young man, this King of Scots, as he called himself—this Charles Stuart—should not escape forth from the nation, where his arrival has wrought so much disturbance and bloodshed.'

'I have no doubt,' said the Cavalier, looking down, 'that your lordship's wisdom hath directed all things as they may best lead towards such a consummation; and I pray your pains may be paid as they deserve.'

* [George Goring, Earl of Norwich, a noted courtier and humorist, and a faithful adherent of Charles I.]

'I thank thee, friend,' said Cromwell, with much humility; 'doubtless we shall meet our reward, being in the hands of a good Paymaster, who never passeth Saturday night. But understand me, friend—I desire no more than my own share in the good work. I would heartily do what poor kindness I can to your worthy master, and even to you in your degree—for such as I do not converse with ordinary men, that our presence may be forgotten like an every-day's occurrence. We speak to men like thee for their reward or their punishment; and I trust it will be the former which thou in thine office wilt merit at my hand.'

'Your honour,' said Wildrake, 'speaks like one accustomed to command.'

'True; men's minds are likened to those of my degree by fear and reverence,' said the General; 'but enough of that, desiring, as I do, no other dependency on my special person than is alike to us all upon that which is above us. But I would desire to cast this golden ball into your master's lap. He hath served against this Charles Stuart and his father. But he is a kinsman near to the old knight Lee, and stands well affected towards his daughter. *Thou* also wilt keep a watch, my friend—that ruffling look of thine will procure thee the confidence of every malignant, and the prey cannot approach this cover, as though to shelter, like a coney in the rocks, but thou wilt be sensible of his presence.'

'I make a shift to comprehend your Excellency,' said the Cavalier; 'and I thank you heartily for the good opinion you have put upon me, and which, I pray, I may have some handsome opportunity of deserving, that I may show my gratitude by the event. But still, with reverence, your Excellency's scheme seems unlikely, while Woodstock remains in possession of the sequestrators. Both the old knight and his son, and far more such a fugitive as your honour hinted at, will take special care not to approach it till they are removed.'

'It is for that I have been dealing with thee thus long,' said the General.—'I told thee that I was something unwilling, upon slight occasion, to dispossess the sequestrators by my own proper warrant, although having, perhaps, sufficient authority in the State both to do so and to despise the murmurs of those who blame me. In brief, I would be loath to tamper with my privileges, and make experiments between their strength and the powers of the commission granted by others without pressing need, or at least great prospect of advantage. So, if thy Colonel will undertake, for his love of the republic, to find the means of preventing its worst and nearest danger, which must needs occur from the escape of this young Man, and will do his endeavour to stay him, in case his flight should lead him to Woodstock, which I hold very likely, I will give thee an order to these sequestrators to evacuate the palace instantly; and to the next troop of my regiment, which lies at Oxford, to turn them out by the shoulders, if they make any scruples—ay, even, for example's sake, if they drag Desborough out foremost, though he be wedded to my sister.'

'So please you, sir,' said Wildrake, 'and with your most powerful warrant, I trust I might expel the Commissioners, even without the aid of your most warlike and devout troopers.'

'That is what I am least anxious about,' replied the General. 'I should like to see the best of them sit after I had nodded to them to begone—always excepting the worshipful House, in whose name our commissions run, but who, as some think, will be done with politics ere it be time to renew them. Therefore, what chiefly concerns me to know, is, whether thy master will embrace a traffic which hath such a fair promise of profit with it. I am well convinced that, with a scout like thee, who hast been in the Cavaliers' quarters, and canst, I should guess, resume thy drinking, ruffianly, health-quaffing manners whenever thou hast a mind, he must discover where this Stuart hath ensconced himself. Either the young Lee will visit the old one in person, or he will write to him, or hold communication with him by letter. At all events, Markham Everard and thou must have an eye in every hair of your head.' While he spoke, a flush passed over his brow, he rose from his chair, and paced the apartment in agitation. 'Woe to you, if you suffer the young adventurer to escape me!—you had better be in the deepest dungeon in Europe than breathe the air of England, should you but dream of playing me false. I have spoken freely to thee, fellow—more freely than is my wont—the time required it. But, to share my confidence is like keeping a watch over a powder magazine, the least and most insignificant spark blows thee to ashes. Tell your master what I said—but not how I said it—Fie, that I should have been betrayed into this distemperature of passion!—Begone, sirrah. Pearson shall bring thee sealed orders—Yet stay—thou hast something to ask.'

'I would know,' said Wildrake, to whom the visible anxiety of the General gave some confidence, 'what is the figure of this young gallant, in case I should find him?'

'A tall, raw-boned, swarthy lad they say he has shot up into. Here is his picture by a good hand, some time since.' He turned round one of the portraits which stood with its face against the wall, but it proved not to be that of Charles the Second, but of his unhappy father.

The first motion of Cromwell indicated a purpose of hastily replacing the picture, and it seemed as if an effort was necessary to repress his disinclination to look upon it. But he did repress it, and, placing the picture against the wall, withdrew slowly and sternly, as if, in defiance of his own feelings, he was determined to gain a place from which to see it to advantage. It was well for Wildrake that his dangerous companion had not turned an eye on him, for *his* blood also kindled when he saw the portrait of his master in the hands of the chief author of his death. Being a fierce and desperate man, he commanded his passion with great difficulty; and if, on its first violence, he had been provided with a suitable weapon, it is possible Cromwell would never have ascended higher in his bold ascent towards supreme power.

But this natural and sudden flash of indignation, which rushed through the veins of an ordinary man like Wildrake, was presently sub-

dued, when confronted with the strong yet stifled emotion displayed by so powerful a character as Cromwell. As the Cavalier looked on his dark and bold countenance, agitated by inward and indescribable feelings, he found his own violence of spirit die away and lose itself in fear and wonder. So true it is, that as greater lights swallow up and extinguish the display of those which are less, so men of great, capacious, and overruling minds bear aside and subdue, in their climax of passion, the more feeble wills and passions of others; as when a river joins a brook, the fiercer torrent shoulders aside the smaller stream.

Wildrake stood a silent, inactive, and almost a terrified spectator, while Cromwell, assuming a firm sternness of eye and manner, as one who compels himself to look on what some strong internal feeling renders painful and disgustful to him, proceeded, in brief and interrupted expressions, but yet with a firm voice, to comment on the portrait of the late king. His words seemed less addressed to Wildrake than to be the spontaneous unburdening of his own bosom, swelling under recollection of the past and anticipation of the future.

'That Flemish painter,' he said—'that Antonio Vandyck—what a power he has! Steel may mutilate, warriors may waste and destroy—still the King stands uninjured by time; and our grandchildren, while they read his history, may look on his image, and compare the melancholy features with the woeful tale.—It was a stern necessity—it was an awful deed! The calm pride of that eye might have ruled worlds of crouching Frenchmen, or supple Italians, or formal Spaniards; but its glances only roused the native courage of the stern Englishman.—Lay not on poor sinful man, whose breath is in his nostrils, the blame that he falls, when Heaven never gave him strength of nerves to stand! The weak rider is thrown by his unruly horse and trampled to death—the strongest man, the best cavalier, springs to the empty saddle, and uses bit and spur till the fiery steed knows its master. Who blames him, who, mounted aloft, rides triumphantly amongst the people, for having succeeded where the unskilful and feeble fell and died? Verily he hath his reward. Then, what is that piece of painted canvas to me more than others? No; let him show to others the reproaches of that cold, calm face, that proud yet complaining eye. Those who have acted on higher respects have no cause to start at painted shadows. Not wealth nor power brought me from my obscurity. The oppressed consciences, the injured liberties of England, were the banner that I followed.'

He raised his voice so high, as if pleading in his own defence before some tribunal, that Pearson, the officer in attendance, looked into the apartment; and observing his master, with his eyes kindling, his arm extended, his foot advanced, and his voice raised, like a general in the act of commanding the advance of his army, he instantly withdrew.

'It was other than selfish regards that drew me forth to action,' continued Cromwell, 'and I dare the world—ay, living or dead I challenge—to assert that I armed for a private cause, or as a means of enlarging my fortunes. Neither was there a trooper in the regiment who came there with less of personal evil will to yonder unhappy'——

At this moment the door of the apartment opened, and a gentlewoman entered, who, from her resemblance to the General, although her features were soft and feminine, might be immediately recognised as his daughter. She walked up to Cromwell, gently but firmly passed her arm through his, and said to him in a persuasive tone, 'Father, this is not well—you have promised me this should not happen.'

The General hung down his head, like one who was either ashamed of the passion to which he had given way or of the influence which was exercised over him. He yielded, however, to the affectionate impulse, and left the apartment, without again turning his head towards the portrait which had so much affected him, or looking towards Wildrake, who remained fixed in astonishment.

CHAPTER IX.

Doctor. Go to, go to,—You have known what you should not. MACBETH.

WILDRAKE was left in the cabinet, as we have said, astonished and alone. It was often noised about that Cromwell, the deep and sagacious statesman, the calm and intrepid commander, he who had overcome such difficulties and ascended to such heights, that he seemed already to bestride the land which he had conquered, had, like many other men of great genius, a constitutional taint of melancholy, which sometimes displayed itself both in words and actions, and had been first observed in that sudden and striking change, when, abandoning entirely the dissolute freaks of his youth, he embraced a very strict course of religious observances, which, upon some occasions, he seemed to consider as bringing him into more near and close contact with the spiritual world. This extraordinary man is said sometimes, during that period of his life, to have given way to spiritual delusions, or, as he himself conceived them, prophetic inspirations of approaching grandeur, and of strange, deep, and mysterious agencies, in which he was in future to be engaged, in the same manner as his younger years had been marked by fits of exuberant and excessive frolic and debaucheries. Something of this kind seemed to explain the ebullition of passion which he had now manifested.

With wonder at what he had witnessed, Wildrake felt some anxiety on his own account. Though not the most reflecting of mortals, he had sense enough to know that it is dangerous to be a witness of the infirmities of men high in power; and he was left so long by himself as induced him to entertain some secret doubts whether the General might not be tempted to take means of confining or removing a witness who had seen him lowered, as it seemed, by the suggestions of his own conscience, beneath that lofty flight which, in general, he affected to sustain above the rest of the sublunary world.

In this, however, he wronged Cromwell, who was free either from an extreme degree of jealous suspicion, or from anything which approached towards bloodthirstiness. Pearson appeared, after a lapse of about an hour, and, intimating to Wildrake that he was to follow, conducted him into a distant apartment, in which he found the General seated on a low couch. His daughter was in the apartment, but remained at some distance, apparently busied with some female needlework, and scarce turned her head as Pearson and Wildrake entered.

At a sign from the Lord-General, Wildrake approached him as before. 'Comrade,' he said, 'your old friends the Cavaliers look on me as their enemy, and conduct themselves towards me as if they desired to make me such. I profess they are labouring to their own prejudice; for I regard and have ever regarded them as honest and honourable fools, who were silly enough to run their necks into nooses and their heads against stone walls, that a man called Stuart, and no other, should be king over them. Fools! are there no words made of letters that would sound as well as Charles Stuart, with that magic title beside them? Why, the word King is like a lighted lamp, that throws the same bright gilding upon any combination of the alphabet, and yet you must shed your blood for a name! But thou, for thy part, shalt have no wrong from me. Here is an order, well warranted, to clear the Lodge at Woodstock, and abandon it to thy master's keeping or those whom he shall appoint. He will have his uncle and pretty cousin with him, doubtless. Fare thee well—think on what I told thee. They say beauty is a loadstone to yonder long lad thou dost wot of; but I reckon he has other stars at present to direct his course than bright eyes and fair hair. Be it as it may, thou knowest my purpose—peer out, peer out; keep a constant and careful look-out on every ragged patch that wanders by hedgerow or lane — these are days when a beggar's cloak may cover a king's ransom. There are some broad Portugal pieces for thee—something strange to thy pouch, I ween. Once more, think on what thou hast heard, and,' he added in a lower and more impressive tone of voice, 'forget what thou hast seen. My service to thy master;—and yet once again, *remember*—and *forget*.'—Wildrake made his obeisance, and, returning to his inn, left Windsor with all possible speed.

It was afternoon in the same day when the Cavalier rejoined his Roundhead friend, who was anxiously expecting him at the inn in Woodstock appointed for their rendezvous.

'Where hast thou been?—what hast thou seen?—what strange uncertainty is in thy looks?—and why dost thou not answer me?'

'Because,' said Wildrake, laying aside his riding-cloak and rapier, 'you ask so many questions at once. A man has but one tongue to answer with, and mine is well-nigh glued to the roof of my mouth.'

'Will drink unloosen it?' said the colonel; 'though, I daresay, thou hast tried that spell at every alehouse on the road. Call for what thou wouldst have, man, only be quick.'

'Colonel Everard,' answered Wildrake, 'I have not tasted so much as a cup of cold water this day.'

'Then thou art out of humour for that reason,' said the colonel; 'salve thy sore with brandy, if thou wilt, but leave being so fantastic and unlike to thyself as thou showest in this silent mood.'

'Colonel Everard,' replied the Cavalier very gravely, 'I am an altered man.'

'I think thou dost alter,' said Everard, 'every day in the year and every hour of the day. Come, good now, tell me, hast thou seen the General, and got his warrant for clearing out the sequestrators from Woodstock?'

'I have seen the devil,' said Wildrake, 'and have, as thou say'st, got a warrant from him.'

'Give it me hastily,' said Everard, catching at the packet.

'Forgive me, Mark,' said Wildrake; 'if thou knewest the purpose with which this deed is granted—if thou knewest—what it is not my purpose to tell thee—what manner of hopes are founded on thy accepting it, I have that opinion of thee, Mark Everard, that thou wouldst as soon take a red-hot horse-shoe from the anvil with thy bare hand as receive into it this slip of paper.'

'Come, come,' said Everard, 'this comes of some of your exalted ideas of loyalty, which, excellent within certain bounds, drive us mad when encouraged up to some heights. Do not think, since I must needs speak plainly with thee, that I see without sorrow the downfall of our ancient monarchy and the substitution of another form of government in its stead; but ought my regret for the past to prevent my acquiescing and aiding in such measures as are likely to settle the future? The royal cause is ruined, hadst thou and every Cavalier in England sworn the contrary; ruined, not to rise again, for many a day at least. The Parliament, so often draughted and drained of those who were courageous enough to maintain their own freedom of opinion, is now reduced to a handful of statesmen, who have lost the respect of the people from the length of time during which they have held the supreme management of affairs. They cannot stand long unless they were to reduce the army; and the army, late servants, are now masters, and will refuse to be reduced. They know their strength, and that they may be an army subsisting on pay and free quarters throughout England as long as they will. I tell thee, Wildrake, unless we look to the only man who can rule and manage them, we may expect military law throughout the land; and I, for mine own part, look for any preservation of our privileges that may be vouchsafed to us only through the wisdom and forbearance of Cromwell. Now, you have my secret. You are aware that I am not doing the best I would, but the best I can. I wish—not so ardently as thou, perhaps—yet I *do* wish that the King could have been restored on good terms of composition, safe for us and for himself. And now, good Wildrake, rebel as thou thinkest me, make me no worse a rebel than an unwilling one. God knows, I never laid aside love and reverence to the King, even in drawing my sword against his ill advisers.'

'Ah, plague on you,' said Wildrake, 'that is e very cant of it—that's what you all say. l of you fought against the King in pure love d loyalty, and not otherwise. However, I see ur drift, and I own that I like it better than xpected. The army is your bear now, and old ll is your bearward; and you are like a untry constable, who makes interest with the arward that he may prevent him from letting uin loose. Well, there may come a day when e sun will shine on our side of the fence, and ereon shall you, and all the good fairweather lks who love the stronger party, come and ake common cause with us.'

Without much attending to what his friend id, Colonel Everard carefully studied the arrant of Cromwell. 'It is bolder and more eremptory than I expected,' he said. 'The eneral must feel himself strong, when he pposes his own authority so directly to that of ie Council of State and the Parliament.'

'You will not hesitate to act upon it?' said Vildrake.

'That I certainly will not,' answered Everard; ut I must wait till I have the assistance of ie mayor, who, I think, will gladly see these llows ejected from the Lodge. I must not go together upon military authority, if possible.' hen, stepping to the door of the apartment, he espatched a servant of the house in quest of the iief magistrate, desiring he should be made equainted that Colonel Everard desired to see im with as little loss of time as possible.

'You are sure he will come, like a dog at whistle,' said Wildrake. 'The word captain colonel makes the fat citizen trot in these ays, when one sword is worth fifty corporation iarters. But there are dragoons yonder, as ell as the grim-faced knave whom I frightened ie other evening when I showed my face in at ie window. Think'st thou the knaves will iow no rough play?'

'The General's warrant will weigh more with iem than a dozen Acts of Parliament,' said verard.—'But it is time thou eatest, if thou ast in truth ridden from Windsor hither with- ut baiting.'

'I care not about it,' said Wildrake: 'I tell iee, your General gave me a breakfast which, I iink, will serve me one while, if I am ever able digest it. By the mass, it lay so heavy on my onscience, that I carried it to church to see if I ould digest it there with my other sins. But ot a whit.'

'To church!—to the door of the church, thou ieanest,' said Everard. 'I know thy way— hou art ever wont to pull thy hat off reverently t the threshold; but for crossing it, that day eldom comes.'

'Well, replied Wildrake, 'and if I do pull off ıy castor and kneel, is it not seemly to show ie same respects in a church which we offer in palace? It is a dainty matter, is it not, to see our Anabaptists, and Brownists, and the rest of ou, gather to a sermon with as little ceremony s hogs to a trough! But here comes food, and ow for a grace, if I can remember one.'

Everard was too much interested about the ate of his uncle and his fair cousin, and the rospect of restoring them to their quiet home, under the protection of that formidable truncheon which was already regarded as the leading-staff of England, to remark that certainly a great alteration had taken place in the manners and outward behaviour at least of his companion. His demeanour frequently evinced a sort of struggle betwixt old habits of indulgence and some newly-formed resolutions of abstinence; and it was almost ludicrous to see how often the hand of the neophyte directed itself naturally to a large black leathern jack, which contained two double flagons of strong ale, and how often, diverted from its purpose by the better reflections of the reformed toper, it seized, instead upon a large ewer of salubrious and pure water.

It was not difficult to see that the task of sobriety was not yet become easy, and that, if it had the recommendation of the intellectual portion of the party who had resolved upon it, the outward man yielded a reluctant and restive compliance. But honest Wildrake had been dreadfully frightened at the course proposed to him by Cromwell, and, with a feeling not peculiar to the Catholic religion, had formed a solemn resolution within his own mind, that, if he came off safe and with honour from this dangerous interview, he would show his sense of Heaven's favour, by renouncing some of the sins which most easily beset him, and especially that of intemperance, to which, like many of his wild compeers, he was too much addicted.

This resolution, or vow, was partly prudential as well as religious; for it occurred to him as very possible that some matters of a difficult and delicate nature might be thrown into his hands at the present emergency, during the conduct of which it would be fitting for him to act by some better oracle than that of the Bottle, celebrated by Rabelais.* In full compliance with this prudent determination, he touched neither the ale nor the brandy which were placed before him, and declined peremptorily the sack with which his friend would have garnished the board. Nevertheless, just as the boy removed the trenchers and napkins, together with the large black-jack which we have already mentioned, and was one or two steps on his way to the door, the sinewy arm of the Cavalier, which seemed to elongate itself on purpose (as it extended far beyond the folds of the threadbare jacket), arrested the progress of the retiring Ganymede,† and, seizing on the black-jack, conveyed it to the lips, which were gently breathing forth the aspiration, 'D—n—I mean, Heaven forgive me—we are poor creatures of clay—one modest sip must be permitted to our frailty.'

So murmuring, he glued the huge flagon to his lips, and as the head was slowly and gradually inclined backwards, in proportion as the right hand elevated the bottom of the pitcher, Everard had great doubts whether the drinker and the cup were likely to part until the whole contents of the latter had been transferred to the person of the former. Roger Wildrake stinted,

* [Books IV. and V. of *Pantagruel*, Rabelais' great satirical romance, are occupied with searching for the oracle of the Holy Bottle in India.]

† [In ancient Greek mythology, the cup-bearer of the gods.]

however, when, by a moderate computation, he had swallowed at one draught about a quart and a half.

He then replaced it on the salver, fetched a long breath to refresh his lungs, bade the boy get him gone with the rest of the liquors, in a tone which inferred some dread of his constancy, and then, turning to his friend Everard, he expatiated in praise of moderation, observing that the mouthful which he had just taken had been of more service to him than if he had remained quaffing healths at table for four hours together.

His friend made no reply, but could not help being privately of opinion that Wildrake's temperance had done as much execution on the tankard in his single draught as some more moderate topers might have effected if they had sat sipping for an evening. But the subject was changed by the entrance of the landlord, who came to announce to his honour Colonel Everard, that the worshipful Mayor of Woodstock, with the Reverend Master Holdenough, was come to wait upon him.

CHAPTER X.

Here we have one head
Upon two bodies—your two-headed bullock
Is but an ass to such a prodigy.
These two have but one meaning, thought, and counsel;
And, when the single noddle has spoke out,
The four legs scrape assent to it.
OLD PLAY.

IN the goodly form of the honest mayor there was a bustling mixture of importance and embarrassment, like the deportment of a man who was conscious that he had an important part to act, if he could but exactly discover what that part was. But both were mingled with much pleasure at seeing Everard, and he frequently repeated his welcomes and all-hails before he could be brought to attend to what that gentleman said in reply.

'Good, worthy Colonel, you are indeed a desirable sight to Woodstock at all times, being, as I may say, almost our townsman, as you have dwelt so much and so long at the palace. Truly, the matter begins almost to pass my wit, though I have transacted the affairs of this borough for many a long day; and you are come to my assistance like—like'——

'*Tanquam Deus ex machina*, as the Ethnic poet hath it,' said Master Holdenough, 'although I do not often quote from such books.—Indeed, Master Markham Everard,—or worthy Colonel, as I ought rather to say,—you are simply the most welcome man who has come to Woodstock since the days of old King Harry.'

'I had some business with you, my good friend,' said the colonel, addressing the mayor; 'I shall be glad if it should so happen at the same time that I may find occasion to pleasure you or your worthy pastor.'

'No question you can do so, good sir,' interposed Master Holdenough; 'you have the heart, sir, and you have the hand; and we are much in want of good counsel, and that from a man of action. I am aware, worthy Colonel, that you and your worthy father have ever borne yourselves in these turmoils like men of a truly Christian and moderate spirit, striving to pour oil into the wounds of the land, which some would rub with vitriol and pepper; and we know you are faithful children of that Church which we have reformed from its papistical and prelatical tenets.'

'My good and reverend friend,' said Everard, 'I respect the piety and learning of many of your teachers; but I am also for liberty of conscience to all men. I neither side with sectaries, nor do I desire to see them the object of suppression by violence.'

'Sir, sir,' said the Presbyterian hastily, 'all this hath a fair sound; but I would you should think what a fine country and Church we are like to have of it amidst the errors, blasphemies, and schisms which are daily introduced into the Church and kingdom of England, so that worthy Master Edwards,* in his Gangrena, declareth that our native country is about to become the very sink and cesspool of all schisms, heresies, blasphemies, and confusions, as the army of Hannibal was said to be the refuse of all nations —*colluvies omnium gentium.*— Believe me, worthy Colonel, that they of the Honourable House view all this over lightly, and with the winking connivance of old Eli. These instructors, the schismatics, shoulder the orthodox ministers out of their pulpits, thrust themselves into families, and break up the peace thereof, stealing away men's hearts from the established faith.'

'My good Master Holdenough,' replied the colonel, interrupting the zealous preacher, 'there is ground of sorrow for all these unhappy discords; and I hold with you, that the fiery spirits of the present time have raised men's minds at once above sober-minded and sincere religion, and above decorum and common sense. But there is no help save patience. Enthusiasm is a stream that may foam off in its own time, whereas it is sure to bear down every barrier which is directly opposed to it.—But what are these schismatical proceedings to our present purpose?'

'Why, partly this, sir,' said Holdenough, 'although perhaps you may make less of it than I should have thought before we met.—I was myself—I, Nehemiah Holdenough' (he added consequentially), 'was forcibly expelled from my own pulpit, even as a man should have been thrust out of his own house, by an alien and an intruder—a wolf, who was not at the trouble even to put on sheep's clothing, but came in his native wolfish attire of buff and bandolier, and held forth in my stead to the people, who are to me as a flock to the lawful shepherd. It is too true, sir—Master Mayor saw it, and strove to take such order to prevent it as man might, though,' turning to the mayor, 'I think still you might have striven a little more.'

'Good now, good Master Holdenough, do not let us go back on that question,' said the mayor. 'Guy of Warwick or Bevis of Hampton† might

* [Thomas Edwards, a fanatical Puritan divine; the work quoted in the text was a fierce attack upon the numerous sectaries of the time.]

† [The valorous heroes of two popular mediæval romances.]

do something with this generation; but truly, they are too many and too strong for the Mayor of Woodstock.'

'I think Master Mayor speaks very good sense,' said the colonel; 'if the Independents are not allowed to preach, I fear me they will not fight;—and then if you were to have another rising of Cavaliers?'

'There are worse folks may rise than Cavaliers,' said Holdenough.

'How, sir!' replied Colonel Everard. 'Let me remind you, Master Holdenough, that is no safe language in the present state of the nation.'

'I say,' said the Presbyterian, 'there are worse folk may rise than Cavaliers; and I will prove what I say. The devil is worse than the worst Cavalier that ever drank a health or swore an oath—and the devil has arisen at Woodstock Lodge!'

'Ay, truly hath he,' said the mayor, 'bodily and visibly, in figure and form—An awful time we live in!'

'Gentlemen, I really know not how I am to understand you,' said Everard.

'Why, it was even about the devil we came to speak with you,' said the mayor; 'but the worthy minister is always so hot upon the sectaries'——

'Which are the devil's brats, and nearly akin to him,' said Master Holdenough. 'But true it is, that the growth of these sects has brought up the Evil One even upon the face of the earth, to look after his own interest, where he finds it most thriving.'

'Master Holdenough,' said the colonel, 'if you speak figuratively, I have already told you that I have neither the means nor the skill sufficient to temper these religious heats. But if you design to say that there has been an actual apparition of the devil, I presume to think that you, with your doctrine and your learning, would be a fitter match for him than a soldier like me.'

'True, sir; and I have that confidence in the commission which I hold, that I would take the field against the foul fiend without a moment's delay,' said Holdenough; 'but the place in which he hath of late appeared, being Woodstock, is filled with those dangerous and impious persons of whom I have been but now complaining; and though, confident in my own resources, I dare venture in disputation with their Great Master himself; yet, without your protection, most worthy Colonel, I see not that I may with prudence trust myself with the tossing and goring ox Desborough, or the bloody and devouring bear Harrison, or the cold and poisonous snake Bletson—all of whom are now at the Lodge, doing licence and taking spoil as they think meet; and, as all men say, the devil has come to make a fourth with them.'

'In good truth, worthy and noble sir,' said the mayor, 'it is even as Master Holdenough says—our privileges are declared void, our cattle seized in the very pastures. They talk of cutting down and disparking the fair Chase, which has been so long the pleasure of so many kings, and making Woodstock of as little note as any paltry village. I assure you we heard of your arrival with joy, and wondered at your keeping yourself so close in your lodgings. We know no one save your father or you, that are like to stand the poor burgesses' friend in this extremity, since almost all the gentry around are malignants, and under sequestration. We trust, therefore, you will make strong intercession in our behalf.'

'Certainly, Master Mayor,' said the colonel, who saw himself with pleasure anticipated; 'it was my very purpose to have interfered in this matter; and I did but keep myself alone until I should be furnished with some authority from the Lord-General.'

'Powers from the Lord-General!' said the mayor, thrusting the clergyman with his elbow —'Dost thou hear that?—What cock will fight that cock? We shall carry it now over their necks, and Woodstock shall be brave Woodstock still!'

'Keep thine elbow from my side, friend,' said Holdenough, annoyed by the action which the mayor had suited to his words; 'and may the Lord send that Cromwell prove not as sharp to the people of England as thy bones against my person! Yet I approve that we should use his authority to stop the course of these men's proceedings.'

'Let us set out, then,' said Colonel Everard; 'and I trust we shall find the gentlemen reasonable and obedient.'

The functionaries, laic and clerical, assented with much joy; and the colonel required and received Wildrake's assistance in putting on his cloak and rapier, as if he had been the dependent whose part he acted. The Cavalier contrived, however, while doing him these menial offices, to give his friend a shrewd pinch, in order to maintain the footing of secret equality betwixt them.

The colonel was saluted, as they passed through the streets, by many of the anxious inhabitants, who seemed to consider his intervention as affording the only chance of saving their fine Park, and the rights of the corporation as well as of individuals, from ruin and confiscation.

As they entered the Park, the colonel asked his companions, 'What is this you say of apparitions being seen amongst them?'

'Why, Colonel,' said the clergyman, 'you know yourself that Woodstock was always haunted?'

'I have lived therein many a day,' said the colonel; 'and I know that I never saw the least sign of it, although idle people spoke of the house as they do of all old mansions, and gave the apartments ghosts and spectres to fill up the places of as many of the deceased great as had ever dwelt there.'

'Nay but, good Colonel,' said the clergyman, 'I trust you have not reached the prevailing sin of the times, and become indifferent to the testimony in favour of apparitions, which appears so conclusive to all but atheists and advocates for witches?'

'I would not absolutely disbelieve what is so generally affirmed,' said the colonel; 'but my reason leads me to doubt most of the stories which I have heard of this sort, and my own experience never went to confirm any of them.'

'Ay, but trust me,' said Holdenough, 'there was always a demon of one or the other species about this Woodstock. Not a man or woman in

the town but has heard stories of apparitions in the forest, or about the old castle. Sometimes it is a pack of hounds that sweep along, and the whoops and halloos of the huntsmen, and the winding of horns and the galloping of horse, which is heard as if first more distant, and then close around you—and then anon it is a solitary huntsman, who asks if you can tell him which way the stag has gone. He is always dressed in green; but the fashion of his clothes is some five hundred years old. This is what we call Demon Meridianum—the noonday spectre.'

'My worthy and reverend sir,' said the colonel, 'I have lived at Woodstock many seasons, and have traversed the Chase at all hours. Trust me, what you hear from the villagers is the growth of their idle folly and superstition.'

'Colonel,' replied Holdenough, 'a negative proves nothing. What signifies, craving your pardon, that you have not seen anything, be it earthly or be it of the other world, to detract from the evidence of a score of people who have?—And besides, there is the Demon Nocturnum—the being that walketh by night; he has been among these Independents and schismatics last night. Ay, Colonel, you may stare; but it is even so—they may try whether he will mend their gifts, as they profanely call them, of exposition and prayer. No, sir, I trow, to master the foul fiend there goeth some competent knowledge of theology, and an acquaintance of the humane letters, ay, and a regular clerical education and clerical calling.'

'I do not in the least doubt,' said the colonel, 'the efficacy of your qualifications to lay the devil; but still I think some odd mistake has occasioned this confusion amongst them, if there has any such in reality existed. Desborough is a blockhead, to be sure; and Harrison is fanatic enough to believe anything. But there is Bletson, on the other hand, who believes nothing.—What do you know of this matter, good Master Mayor?'

'In sooth, and it was Master Bletson who gave the first alarm,' replied the magistrate; 'or, at least, the first distinct one. You see, sir, I was in bed with my wife, and no one else; and I was as fast asleep as a man can desire to be at two hours after midnight, when, behold you, they came knocking at my bedroom door, to tell me there was an alarm in Woodstock, and that the bell of the Lodge was ringing at that dead hour of the night as hard as ever it rung when it called the court to dinner.'

'Well, but the cause of this alarm?' said the colonel.

'You shall hear, worthy Colonel, you shall hear,' answered the mayor, waving his hand with dignity; for he was one of those persons who will not be hurried out of their own pace. 'So Mistress Mayor would have persuaded me, in her love and affection, poor wretch, that to rise at such an hour out of my own warm bed was like to bring on my old complaint the lumbago, and that I should send the people to Alderman Dutton.—Alderman Devil, Mistress Mayor, said I;—I beg your reverence's pardon for using such a phrase—Do you think I am going to lie a-bed when the town is on fire, and the Cavaliers up, and the devil to pay?—I beg pardon again, parson.—But here we are before the gate of the palace; will it not please you to enter?'

'I would first hear the end of your story,' said the colonel; 'that is, Master Mayor, if it happens to have an end.'

'Everything hath an end,' said the mayor, 'and that which we call a pudding hath two.—Your worship will forgive me for being facetious. Where was I?—O, I jumped out of bed, and put on my red plush breeches, with the blue nether stocks, for I always make a point of being dressed suitably to my dignity, night and day, summer or winter, Colonel Everard; and I took the constable along with me, in case the alarm should be raised by night-walkers or thieves, and called up worthy Master Holdenough out of his bed, in case it should turn out to be the devil. And so I thought I was provided for the worst, and so away we came; and, by and by, the soldiers who came to the town with Master Tomkins, who had been called to arms, came marching down to Woodstock as fast as their feet would carry them; so I gave our people the sign to let them pass us, and outmarch us, as it were, and this for a twofold reason.'

'I will be satisfied,' interrupted the colonel, 'with one good reason. You desired the redcoats have the *first* of the fray?'

'True, sir, very true;—and also that they should have the *last* of it, in respect that fighting is their especial business. However, we came on at a slow pace, as men who are determined to do their duty without fear or favour, when suddenly we saw something white haste away up the avenue towards the town, when six of our constables and assistants fled at once, as conceiving it to be an apparition called the White Woman of Woodstock.'

'Look you there, Colonel,' said Master Holdenough; 'I told you there were demons of more kinds than one, which haunt the ancient scenes of royal debauchery and cruelty.'

'I hope you stood your own ground, Master Mayor?' said the colonel.

'I—yes—most assuredly—that is, I did not, strictly speaking, keep my ground; but the town-clerk and I retreated—retreated, Colonel, and without confusion or dishonour, and took post behind worthy Master Holdenough, who, with the spirit of a lion, threw himself in the way of the supposed spectre, and attacked it with such a siserary of Latin as might have scared the devil himself, and thereby plainly discovered that it was no devil at all, nor white woman, neither woman of any colour, but worshipful Master Bletson, a member of the House of Commons, and one of the Commissioners sent hither upon this unhappy sequestration of the Wood, Chase, and Lodge of Woodstock.'

'And this was all you saw of the demon?' said the colonel.

'Truly, yes,' answered the mayor; 'and I had no wish to see more. However, we conveyed Master Bletson, as in duty bound, back to the Lodge, and he was ever maundering by the way how that he met a party of scarlet devils incarnate marching down to the Lodge; but,

to my poor thinking, it must have been the Independent dragoons who had just passed us.'

'And more incarnate devils I would never wish to see,' said Wildrake, who could remain silent no longer. His voice, so suddenly heard, showed how much the mayor's nerves were still alarmed, for he started and jumped aside with an alacrity of which no one would at first sight suppose a man of his portly dignity to have been capable. Everard imposed silence on his intrusive attendant; and, desirous to hear the conclusion of this strange story, requested the mayor to tell him how the matter ended, and whether they stopped the supposed spectre.

'Truly, worthy sir,' said the mayor, 'Master Holdenough was quite venturous upon confronting, as it were, the devil, and compelling him to appear under the real form of Master Joshua Bletson, member of Parliament for the borough of Littlefaith.'

'In sooth, Master Mayor,' said the divine, 'I were strangely ignorant of my own commission and its immunities, if I were to value opposing myself to Satan, or any Independent in his likeness, all of whom, in the name of Him I serve, I do defy, spit at, and trample under my feet; and because Master Mayor is something tedious, I will briefly inform your honour that we saw little of the Enemy that night, save what Master Bletson said in the first feeling of his terrors, and save what we might collect from the disordered appearance of the Honourable Colonel Desborough and Major-General Harrison.'

'And what plight were they in, I pray you?' demanded the colonel.

'Why, worthy sir, every one might see with half an eye that they had been engaged in a fight wherein they had not been honoured with perfect victory; seeing that General Harrison was stalking up and down the parlour, with his drawn sword in his hand, talking to himself, his doublet unbuttoned, his points untrussed, his garters loose, and like to throw him down as he now and then trod on them, and gaping and grinning like a mad player. And yonder sat Desborough with a dry pottle of sack before him, which he had just emptied, and which, though the element in which he trusted, had not restored him sense enough to speak, or courage enough to look over his shoulder. He had a Bible in his hand, forsooth, as if it would of itself make battle against the Evil One; but I peered over his shoulder, and, alas! the good gentleman held the bottom of the page uppermost. It was as if one of your musketeers, noble and valued sir, were to present the butt of his piece at the enemy instead of the muzzle—ha, ha, ha! it was a sight to judge of schismatics by; both in point of head and in point of heart, in point of skill and in point of courage. —O, Colonel, then was the time to see the true character of an authorized pastor of souls over those unhappy men who leap into the fold without due and legal authority, and will, forsooth, preach, teach, and exhort, and blasphemously term the doctrine of the Church saltless porridge and dry chips!'

'I have no doubt you were ready to meet the danger, reverend sir; but I would fain know of what nature it was, and from whence it was to be apprehended?'

'Was it for me to make such inquiry?' said the clergyman triumphantly. 'Is it for a brave soldier to number his enemies, or inquire from what quarter they are to come? No, sir, I was there with match lighted, bullet in my mouth, and my harquebuss shouldered, to encounter as many devils as hell could pour in, were they countless as motes in the sunbeam, and although they came from all points of the compass. The Papists talk of the temptation of Saint Anthony —pshaw! let them double all the myriads which the brain of a crazy Dutch painter hath invented, and you will find a poor Presbyterian divine— I will answer for one at least—who, not in his own strength, but his Master's, will receive the assault in such sort that, far from returning against him as against yonder poor hound, day after day and night after night, he will at once pack them off as with a vengeance to the uttermost parts of Assyria!'

'Still,' said the colonel, 'I pray to know whether you saw anything upon which to exercise your pious learning?'

'Saw?' answered the divine; 'no, truly, I saw nothing, nor did I look for anything. Thieves will not attack well-armed travellers, nor will devils or evil spirits come against one who bears in his bosom the Word of truth in the very language in which it was first dictated. No, sir; they shun a divine who can understand the holy text, as a crow is said to keep wide of a gun loaded with hailshot.'

They had walked a little way back upon their road to give time for this conversation; and the colonel, perceiving it was about to lead to no satisfactory explanation of the real cause of alarm on the preceding night, turned round, and, observing it was time they should go to the Lodge, began to move in that direction with his three companions.

It had now become dark, and the towers of Woodstock arose high above the umbrageous shroud which the forest spread around the ancient and venerable mansion. From one of the highest turrets, which could still be distinguished as it rose against the clear blue sky, there gleamed a light like that of a candle within the building. The mayor stopped short, and, catching fast hold of the divine, and then of Colonel Everard, exclaimed in a trembling and hasty, but suppressed tone,

'Do you see yonder light?'

'Ay, marry do I,' said Colonel Everard; 'and what does that matter?—a light in a garret-room of such an old mansion as Woodstock is no subject of wonder, I trow.'

'But a light from Rosamond's Tower is surely so?' said the mayor.

'True,' said the colonel, something surprised, when, after a careful examination, he satisfied himself that the worthy magistrate's conjecture was right. 'That is indeed Rosamond's Tower; and as the drawbridge by which it was accessible has been destroyed for centuries, it is hard to say what chance could have lighted a lamp in such an inaccessible place.'

'That light burns with no earthly fuel,' said the mayor; 'neither from whale nor olive oil,

nor bees-wax, nor mutton-suet either. I dealt in these commodities, Colonel, before I went into my present line; and I can assure you I could distinguish the sort of light they give, one from another, at a greater distance than yonder turret—Look you, that is no earthly flame.—See you not something blue and reddish upon the edges?—that bodes full well where it comes from.—Colonel, in my opinion, we had better go back to sup at the town, and leave the devil and the red-coats to settle their matters together for to-night; and then, when we come back the next morning, we will have a pull with the party that chances to keep afield.'

'You will do as you please, Master Mayor,' said Everard, 'but my duty requires me that I should see the Commissioners to-night.'

'And mine requires me to see the foul fiend,' said Master Holdenough, 'if he dare make himself visible to me. I wonder not that, knowing who is approaching, he betakes himself to the very citadel, the inner and the last defences of this ancient and haunted mansion. He is dainty, I warrant you, and must dwell where is a relish of luxury and murder about the walls of his chamber. In yonder turret sinned Rosamond, and in yonder turret she suffered; and there she sits, or more likely the Enemy in her shape, as I have heard true men of Woodstock tell. I wait on you, good Colonel—Master Mayor will do as he pleases. The strong man hath fortified himself in his dwelling-house, but lo, there cometh another stronger than he.'

'For me,' said the mayor, 'who am as unlearned as I am unwarlike, I will not engage either with the powers of the earth or the Prince of the powers of the air, and I would we were again at Woodstock!—And hark ye, good fellow,' slapping Wildrake on the shoulder, 'I will bestow on thee a shilling wet and a shilling dry if thou wilt go back with me.'

'Gadzookers, Master Mayor,' said Wildrake, neither flattered by the magistrate's familiarity of address nor captivated by his munificence—'I wonder who the devil made you and me fellows? and besides, do you think I would go back to Woodstock with your worshipful cod's-head, when, by good management, I may get a peep of fair Rosamond, and see whether she was that choice and incomparable piece of ware which the world has been told of by rhymers and ballad-makers?'

'Speak less lightly and wantonly, friend,' said the divine; 'we are to resist the devil that he may flee from us, and not to tamper with him, or enter into his counsels, or traffic with the merchandise of his great Vanity Fair.'

'Mind what the good man says, Wildrake,' said the colonel; 'and take heed another time how thou dost suffer thy wit to outrun discretion.'

'I am beholden to the reverend gentleman for his advice,' answered Wildrake, upon whose tongue it was difficult to impose any curb whatever, even when his own safety rendered it most desirable. 'But, gadzookers, let him have had what experience he will in fighting with the devil, he never saw one so black as I had a tussle with—not a hundred years ago.'

'How, friend,' said the clergyman, who understood everything literally when apparitions were mentioned, 'have you had so late a visitation of Satan? Believe me, then, that I wonder why thou darest to entertain his name so often and so lightly, as I see thou dost use it in thy ordinary discourse. But when and where didst thou see the Evil One?'

Everard hastily interposed, lest by something yet more strongly alluding to Cromwell his imprudent squire should, in mere wantonness, betray his interview with the General. 'The young man raves,' he said, 'of a dream which he had the other night, when he and I slept together in Victor Lee's chamber, belonging to the Ranger's apartments in the Lodge.'

'Thanks for help at a pinch, good patron,' said Wildrake, whispering into Everard's ear, who in vain endeavoured to shake him off—'a fib never failed a fanatic.'

'You also spoke something too lightly of these matters, considering the work which we have in hand, worthy Colonel,' said the Presbyterian divine. 'Believe me, the young man thy servant was more likely to see visions than to dream merely idle dreams in that apartment; for I have always heard that, next to Rosamond's Tower, in which, as I said, she played the wanton, and was afterwards poisoned by Queen Eleanor, Victor Lee's chamber was the place in the Lodge of Woodstock more peculiarly the haunt of evil spirits.—I pray you, young man, tell this dream or vision of yours.'

'With all my heart, sir,' said Wildrake—Then addressing his patron, who began to interfere, he said, 'Tush, sir, you have had the discourse for an hour, and why should not I hold forth in my turn? By this darkness, if you keep me silent any longer, I will turn Independent preacher, and stand up in your despite for the freedom of private judgment.—And so, reverend sir, I was dreaming of a carnal divertisement called a bull-baiting; and methought they were venturing dogs at head, as merrily as e'er I saw them at Tutbury bull-running;* and methought I heard some one say, there was the devil come to have a sight of the bull-ring. Well, I thought that, gadswoons, I would have a peep at his Infernal Majesty. So I looked, and there was a butcher in greasy woollen, with his steel by his side; but he was none of the devil. And there was a drunken Cavalier, with his mouth full of oaths and his stomach full of emptiness, and a gold-laced waistcoat in a very dilapidated condition, and a ragged hat, with a piece of a feather in it; and he was none of the devil neither. And here was a miller, his hands dusty with meal, and every atom of it stolen; and there was a vintner, his green apron stained with wine, and every drop of it sophisticated; but neither was the old gentleman I looked for to be detected among these artisans of iniquity. At length, sir, I saw a grave person with cropped hair, a pair of long-ish and projecting ears, a band as broad as a slobbering bib under his chin, a brown coat surmounted by a Geneva cloak, and I had old Nicholas at once in his genuine paraphernalia, by ——.'

'Shame, shame!' said Colonel Everard.

* [Note B. Tutbury Bull-running.]

What! behave thus to an old gentleman and a divine!'

'Nay, let him proceed,' said the minister, with perfect equanimity; 'if thy friend, or secretary, is gibing, I must have less patience than becomes my profession, if I could not bear an idle jest, and forgive him who makes it. Or if, on the other hand, the Enemy has really presented himself to the young man in such a guise as he intimates, wherefore should we be surprised that he who can take upon him the form of an angel of light, should be able to assume that of a frail and peccable mortal, whose spiritual calling and profession ought, indeed, to induce him to make his life an example to others; but whose conduct, nevertheless, such is the imperfection of our unassisted nature, sometimes rather presents us with a warning of what we should shun!'

'Now, by the mass, honest dominie—I mean reverend sir—I crave you a thousand pardons,' said Wildrake, penetrated by the quietness and patience of the Presbyter's rebuke. 'By Saint George, if quiet patience will do it, thou art fit to play a game at foils with the devil himself, and I would be contented to hold stakes.'

As he concluded an apology, which was certainly not uncalled for, and seemed to be received in perfectly good part, they approached so close to the exterior door of the Lodge that they were challenged with the emphatic *Stand*, by a sentinel who mounted guard there. Colonel Everard replied, *A friend;* and the sentinel, repeating his command, 'Stand, friend,' proceeded to call the corporal of the guard. The corporal came forth, and at the same time turned out his guard. Colonel Everard gave his name and designation, as well as those of his companions, on which the corporal said 'he doubted not there would be orders for his instant admission; but, in the first place, Master Tomkins must be consulted, that he might learn their honours' mind.'

'How, sir!' said the colonel, 'do you, knowing who I am, presume to keep me on the outside of your post?'

'Not if your honour pleases to enter,' said the corporal, 'and undertakes to be my warranty; but such are the orders of my post.'

'Nay, then, do your duty,' said the colonel; 'but are the Cavaliers up, or what is the matter, that you keep so close and strict a watch?'

The fellow gave no distinct answer, but muttered between his moustaches something about the Enemy and the roaring Lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Presently afterwards Tomkins appeared, followed by two servants bearing lights in great standing brass candlesticks. They marched before Colonel Everard and his party, keeping as close to each other as two cloves of the same orange, and starting from time to time; and shouldering as they passed through sundry intricate passages, they led up a large and ample wooden staircase, the banisters, rail, and lining of which were executed in black oak, and finally into a long saloon or parlour, where there was a prodigious fire and about twelve candles of the largest size distributed in sconces against the wall. There were seated the Commissioners, who now held in their power the ancient mansion and royal domain of Woodstock.

CHAPTER XI.

The bloody bear, an independent beast,
Unlick'd to forms, in groans his hate express'd—
* * * * *
Next him the buffoon ape, as atheists use,
Mimick'd all sects, and had his own to choose.
HIND AND PANTHER.

THE strong light in the parlour which we have described served to enable Everard easily to recognise his acquaintances, Desborough, Harrison, and Bletson, who had assembled round an oak table of large dimensions, placed near the blazing chimney, on which were arranged wine and ale, and materials for smoking, then the general indulgence of the time. There was a species of moveable cupboard set betwixt the table and the door, calculated originally for a display of plate upon grand occasions, but at present only used as a screen, which purpose it served so effectually that, ere he had coasted around it, Everard heard the following fragment of what Desborough was saying, in his strong, coarse voice:—'Sent him to share with us, I'se warrant ye—It was always his Excellency my brother-in-law's way—if he made a treat for five friends, he would invite more than the table could hold—I have known him ask three men to eat two eggs.'

'Hush, hush,' said Bletson; and the servants, making their appearance from behind the tall cupboard, announced Colonel Everard. It may not be uninteresting to the reader to have a description of the party into which he now entered.

Desborough was a stout, bull-necked man, of middle size, with heavy vulgar features, grizzled bushy eyebrows, and wall-eyes. The flourish of his powerful relative's fortunes had burst forth in the finery of his dress, which was much more ornamented than was usual among the Roundheads. There was embroidery on his cloak and lace upon his band; his hat displayed a feather with a golden clasp, and all his habiliments were those of a Cavalier, or follower of the court, rather than the plain dress of a Parliamentarian officer. But, Heaven knows, there was little of courtlike grace or dignity in the person or demeanour of the individual, who became his fine suit as the hog on the sign-post does his gilded armour. It was not that he was positively deformed or misshaped, for, taken in detail, the figure was well enough. But his limbs seemed to act upon different and contradictory principles. They were not, as the play says, in a concatenation accordingly;—the right hand moved as if it were upon bad terms with the left, and the legs showed an inclination to foot it in different and opposite directions. In short, to use an extravagant comparison, the members of Colonel Desborough seemed rather to resemble the disputatious representatives of a federative congress than the well-ordered union of the orders of the State in a firm and well-compacted monarchy, where each holds his own place and all obey the dictates of a common head.

General Harrison, the second of the Commissioners, was a tall, thin, middle-aged man,

who had risen into his high situation in the army, and his intimacy with Cromwell, by his dauntless courage in the field, and the popularity he had acquired by his exalted enthusiasm amongst the military saints, sectaries, and Independents, who composed the strength of the existing army. Harrison was of mean extraction, and bred up to his father's employment of a butcher. Nevertheless, his appearance, though coarse, was not vulgar, like that of Desborough, who had so much the advantage of him in birth and education. He had a masculine height and strength of figure, was well made, and in his manner announced a rough military character, which might be feared, but could not easily become the object of contempt or ridicule. His aquiline nose and dark black eyes set off to some advantage a countenance otherwise irregular, and the wild enthusiasm that sometimes sparkled in them as he dilated on his opinions to others, and often seemed to slumber under his long dark eyelashes as he mused upon them himself, gave something strikingly wild, and even noble, to his aspect. He was one of the chief leaders of those who were called Fifth-Monarchy men, who, going even beyond the general fanaticism of the age, presumptuously interpreted the Book of the Revelations after their own fancies, considered that the Second Advent of the Messiah, and the Millennium, or reign of the saints upon earth, was close at hand, and that they themselves, illuminated, as they believed, with the power of foreseeing these approaching events, were the chosen instruments for the establishment of the New Reign, or Fifth Monarchy, as it was called, and were fated also to win its honours, whether celestial or terrestrial.

When this spirit of enthusiasm, which operated like a partial insanity, was not immediately affecting Harrison's mind, he was a shrewd worldly man, and a good soldier, one who missed no opportunity of mending his fortune, and who, in expecting the exaltation of the Fifth Monarchy, was, in the meanwhile, a ready instrument for the establishment of the Lord-General's supremacy. Whether it was owing to his early occupation, and habits of indifference to pain or bloodshed acquired in the shambles, to natural disposition and want of feeling, or, finally, to the awakened character of his enthusiasm, which made him look upon those who opposed him as opposing the divine will, and therefore meriting no favour or mercy, is not easy to say; but all agreed that, after a victory, or the successful storm of a town, Harrison was one of the most cruel and pitiless men in Cromwell's army; always urging some misapplied text to authorize the continued execution of the fugitives, and sometimes even putting to death those who had surrendered themselves prisoners. It was said that at times the recollection of some of these cruelties troubled his conscience, and disturbed the dreams of beatification in which his imagination indulged.

When Everard entered the apartment, this true representative of the fanatical soldiers of the day, who filled those ranks and regiments which Cromwell had politically kept on foot, while he procured the reduction of those in which the Presbyterian interest predominated, was seated a little apart from the others, his legs crossed, and stretched out at length towards the fire, his head resting on his elbow, and turned upwards, as if studying, with the most profound gravity, the half-seen carving of the Gothic roof.

Bletson remains to be mentioned, who in person and figure was diametrically different from the other two. There was neither foppery nor slovenliness in his exterior, nor had he any marks of military service or rank about his person. A small walking rapier seemed merely worn as a badge of his rank as a gentleman, without his hand having the least purpose of becoming acquainted with the hilt, or his eye with the blade. His countenance was thin and acute, marked with lines which thought rather than age had traced upon it; and a habitual sneer on his countenance, even when he least wished to express contempt on his features, seemed to assure the individual addressed that in Bletson he conversed with a person of intellect far superior to his own. This was a triumph of intellect only, however; for on all occasions of difference respecting speculative opinions, and indeed on all controversies whatsoever, Bletson avoided the ultimate *ratio* of blows and knocks.

Yet this peaceful gentleman had found himself obliged to serve personally in the Parliamentary army at the commencement of the Civil War, till, happening unluckily to come in contact with the fiery Prince Rupert, his retreat was judged so precipitate that it required all the shelter his friends could afford to keep him free of an impeachment or a court-martial. But as Bletson spoke well and with great effect in the House of Commons, which was his natural sphere, and was on that account high in the estimation of his party, his behaviour at Edgehill was passed over, and he continued to take an active share in all the political events of that bustling period, though he faced not again the actual front of war.

Bletson's theoretical politics had long inclined him to espouse the opinions of Harrington and others, who adopted the visionary idea of establishing a pure democratical republic in so extensive a country as Britain. This was a rash theory, where there is such an infinite difference betwixt ranks, habits, education, and morals—where there is such an immense disproportion betwixt the wealth of individuals—and where a large portion of the inhabitants consists of the inferior classes of the large towns and manufacturing districts—men unfitted to bear that share in the direction of a State which must be exercised by the members of a republic in the proper sense of the word. Accordingly, as soon as the experiment was made, it became obvious that no such form of government could be adopted with the smallest chance of stability; and the question came only to be, whether the remnant, or, as it was vulgarly called, the Rump of the Long Parliament, now reduced by the seclusion of so many of the members to a few scores of persons, should continue, in spite of their unpopularity, to rule the affairs of Britain? Whether they should cast all loose by dissolving themselves, and issuing writs to convoke a new Parliament, the composition of which no one

could answer for, any more than for the measures they might take when assembled? Or, lastly, Whether Cromwell, as actually happened, was not to throw the sword into the balance, and boldly possess himself of that power which the remnant of the Parliament were unable to hold, and yet afraid to resign?

Such being the state of parties, the Council of State, in distributing the good things in their gift, endeavoured to soothe and gratify the army, as a beggar flings crusts to a growling mastiff. In this view Desborough had been created a Commissioner in the Woodstock matter to gratify Cromwell, Harrison to soothe the fierce Fifth-Monarchy men, and Bletson as a sincere republican, and one of their own leaven.

But if they supposed Bletson had the least intention of becoming a martyr to his republicanism, or submitting to any serious loss on account of it, they much mistook the man. He entertained their principles sincerely, and not the less that they were found impracticable; for the miscarriage of his experiment no more converts the political speculator than the explosion of a retort undeceives an alchemist. But Bletson was quite prepared to submit to Cromwell, or any one else who might be possessed of the actual authority. He was a ready subject in practice to the powers existing, and made little difference betwixt various kinds of government, holding in theory all to be nearly equal in imperfection so soon as they diverged from the model of Harrington's Oceana. Cromwell had already been tampering with him, like wax between his finger and thumb, and which he was ready shortly to seal with, smiling at the same time to himself when he beheld the Council of State giving rewards to Bletson, as their faithful adherent, while he himself was secure of his allegiance, how soon soever the expected change of government should take place.

But Bletson was still more attached to his metaphysical than his political creed, and carried his doctrines of the perfectibility of mankind as far as he did those respecting the conceivable perfection of a model of government; and as in the one case he declared against all power which did not emanate from the people themselves, so, in his moral speculations, he was unwilling to refer any of the phenomena of nature to a final cause. When pushed, indeed, very hard, Bletson was compelled to mutter some inarticulate and unintelligible doctrines concerning an *Animus Mundi*, or Creative Power in the works of Nature, by which she originally called into existence, and still continues to preserve, her works. To this power, he said, some of the purest metaphysicians rendered a certain degree of homage; nor was he himself inclined absolutely to censure those who, by the institution of holidays, choral dances, songs, and harmless feasts and libations, might be disposed to celebrate the great goddess Nature; at least, dancing, singing, feasting, and sporting being comfortable things to both young and old, they might as well sport, dance, and feast in honour of such appointed holidays as under any other pretext. But then this moderate show of religion was to be practised under such exceptions as are admitted by the Highgate oath;* and no one was to be compelled to dance, drink, sing, or feast whose taste did not happen to incline them to such divertisements; nor was any one to be obliged to worship the Creative Power, whether under the name of the *Animus Mundi* or any other whatsoever. The interference of the Deity in the affairs of mankind he entirely disowned, having proved to his own satisfaction that the idea originated entirely in priestcraft. In short, with the shadowy metaphysical exception aforesaid, Master Joshua Bletson of Darlington, member for Littlefaith, came as near the predicament of an atheist as it is perhaps possible for a man to do. But we say this with the necessary salvo; for we have known many like Bletson whose curtains have been shrewdly shaken by superstition, though their fears were unsanctioned by any religious faith. The devils, we are assured, believe and tremble; but on earth there are many who, in worse plight than even the natural children of perdition, tremble without believing and fear even while they blaspheme.

It follows, of course, that nothing could be treated with more scorn by Master Bletson than the debates about Prelacy and Presbytery, about Presbytery and Independency, about Quakers and Anabaptists, Muggletonians and Brownists, and all the various sects with which the Civil War had commenced, and by which its dissensions were still continued. 'It was,' he said, 'as if beasts of burden should quarrel amongst themselves about the fashion of their halters and pack-saddles, instead of embracing a favourable opportunity of throwing them aside.' Other witty and pithy remarks he used to make when time and place suited—for instance, at the club called the Rota, frequented by Saint John,† and established by Harrington, for the free discussion of political and religious subjects.

But when Bletson was out of this academy, or stronghold of philosophy, he was very cautious how he carried his contempt of the general prejudice in favour of religion and Christianity farther than an implied objection or a sneer. If he had an opportunity of talking in private with an ingenuous and intelligent youth, he sometimes attempted to make a proselyte, and showed much address in bribing the vanity of inexperience, by suggesting that a mind like his ought to spurn the prejudices impressed upon it in childhood, and, when assuming the *latus clavus* of reason, assuring him that such as he, laying aside the *bulla* of juvenile incapacity, as Bletson called it, should proceed to examine and decide for himself. It frequently happened that the youth was induced to adopt the doctrines in whole or in part of the sage who had seen his natural genius, and who had urged him to exert it in examining, detecting, and declaring for himself; and thus flattery gave proselytes to infidelity which could not have been gained by

* [It is said that formerly it was the custom to make travellers swear at a tavern in Highgate, on the north side of London, certain ridiculous oaths, such as that they would never drink small beer when they could get strong, unless they preferred it.]

† [Oliver Saint John defended Hampden in the Ship-Money trial, and eventually became Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas during Cromwell's protectorship.]

all the powerful eloquence or artful sophistry of the infidel.

These attempts to extend the influence of what was called free-thinking and philosophy were carried on, as we have hinted, with a caution dictated by the timidity of the philosopher's disposition. He was conscious his doctrines were suspected, and his proceedings watched, by the two principal sects of Prelatists and Presbyterians, who, however inimical to each other, were still more hostile to one who was an opponent, not only to a church establishment of any kind, but to every denomination of Christianity. He found it more easy to shroud himself among the Independents, whose demands were for a general liberty of conscience, or an unlimited toleration, and whose faith, differing in all respects and particulars, was by some pushed into such wild errors as to get totally beyond the bounds of every species of Christianity, and approach very near to infidelity itself, as extremes of each kind are said to approach each other. Bletson mixed a good deal among those sectaries; and such was his confidence in his own logic and address, that he is supposed to have entertained hopes of bringing to his opinions in time the enthusiastic Vane,* as well as the no less enthusiastic Harrison, provided he could but get them to resign their visions of a Fifth Monarchy, and induce them to be contented with a reign of philosophers in England for the natural period of their lives, instead of the reign of the saints during the Millennium.

Such was the singular group into which Everard was now introduced; showing, in their various opinions, upon how many devious coasts human nature may make shipwreck, when she has once let go her hold on the anchor which religion has given her to lean upon—the acute self-conceit and worldly learning of Bletson, the rash and ignorant conclusions of the fierce and underbred Harrison, leading them into the opposite extremes of enthusiasm and infidelity, while Desborough, constitutionally stupid, thought nothing about religion at all; and, while the others were active in making sail on different but equally erroneous courses, he might be said to perish like a vessel which springs a leak and founders in the roadstead. It was wonderful to behold what a strange variety of mistakes and errors, on the part of the king and his ministers, on the part of the Parliament and their leaders, on the part of the allied kingdoms of Scotland and England towards each other, had combined to rear up men of such dangerous opinions and interested characters among the arbiters of the destiny of Britain.

Those who argue for party's sake will see all the faults on the one side, without deigning to look at those on the other; those who study history for instruction will perceive that nothing but the want of concession on either side, and the deadly height to which the animosity of the king's and Parliament's parties had arisen, could have so totally overthrown the well-poised balance of the English constitution. But we hasten to quit political reflections, the rather that ours, we believe, will please neither Whig nor Tory.

* [Sir Henry Vane, one of the leaders of the Independents, and a bitter opponent of the Church of England.]

CHAPTER XII.

Three form a College—an you give us four,
Let him bring his share with him.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Master Bletson arose and paid his respects to Colonel Everard with the ease and courtesy of a gentleman of the time; though on every account grieved at his intrusion, as a religious man who held his free-thinking principles in detestation, and would effectually prevent his conversion of Harrison, and even of Desborough, if anything could be moulded out of such a clod, to the worship of the *Animus Mundi*. Moreover, Bletson knew Everard to be a man of steady probity, and by no means disposed to close with a scheme on which he had successfully sounded the other two, and which was calculated to assure the Commissioners of some little private indemnification for the trouble they were to give themselves in the public business. The philosopher was yet less pleased when he saw the magistrate and the pastor who had met him in his flight of the preceding evening, when he had been seen, *parma non bene relicta*, with cloak and doublet left behind him.

The presence of Colonel Everard was as unpleasing to Desborough as to Bletson; but the former having no philosophy in him, nor an idea that it was possible for any man to resist helping himself out of untold money, was chiefly embarrassed by the thought that the plunder which they might be able to achieve out of their trust might, by this unwelcome addition to their number, be divided into four parts instead of three; and this reflection added to the natural awkwardness with which he grumbled forth a sort of welcome addressed to Everard.

As for Harrison, he remained like one on higher thoughts intent; his posture unmoved, his eyes fixed on the ceiling as before, and in no way indicating the least consciousness that the company had been more than doubled around him.

Meantime, Everard took his place at the table as a man who assumed his own right, and pointed to his companions to sit down nearer the foot of the board. Wildrake so far misunderstood his signals as to sit down above the mayor; but, rallying his recollection at a look from his patron, he rose and took his place lower, whistling, however, as he went, a sound at which the company stared, as at a freedom highly unbecoming. To complete his indecorum, he seized upon a pipe, and, filling it from a large tobacco-box, was soon immersed in a cloud of his own raising; from which a hand shortly after emerged, seized on the black-jack of ale, withdrew it within the vapoury sanctuary, and, after a potential draught, replaced it upon the table, its owner beginning to renew the cloud which his intermitted exercise of the tube had almost allowed to subside.

Nobody made any observation on his conduct, out of respect, probably, to Colonel Everard, who bit his lip, but continued silent, aware that censure might extract some escapade more unequivocally characteristic of a Cavalier from his refractory companion. As silence seemed

awkward, and the others made no advances to break it, beyond the ordinary salutation, Colonel Everard at length said, 'I presume, gentlemen, that you are somewhat surprised at my arrival here, and thus intruding myself into your meeting?'

'Why the dickens should we be surprised, Colonel?' said Desborough; 'we know his Excellency, my brother-in-law Noll's—I mean my Lord Cromwell's way, of overquartering his men in the towns he marches through. Thou hast obtained a share in our commission?'

'And in that,' said Bletson, smiling and bowing, 'the Lord-General has given us the most acceptable colleague that could have been added to our number. No doubt your authority for joining with us must be under warrant of the Council of State?'

'Of that, gentlemen,' said the colonel, 'I will presently advise you.'—He took out his warrant accordingly, and was about to communicate the contents; but observing that there were three or four half-empty flasks upon the table, that Desborough looked more stupid than usual, and that the philosopher's eyes were reeling in his head, notwithstanding the temperance of Bletson's usual habits, he concluded that they had been fortifying themselves against the horrors of the haunted mansion, by laying in a store of what is called Dutch courage, and therefore prudently resolved to postpone his more important business with them till the cooler hour of morning. He therefore, instead of presenting the General's warrant superseding their commission, contented himself with replying,—'My business has, of course, some reference to your proceedings here. But here is—excuse my curiosity—a reverend gentleman,' pointing to Holdenough, 'who has told me that you are so strangely embarrassed here as to require both the civil and spiritual authority to enable you to keep possession of Woodstock.'

'Before we go into that matter,' said Bletson, blushing up to the eyes at the recollection of his own fears, so manifestly displayed, yet so inconsistent with his principles, 'I should like to know who this other stranger is, who has come with the worthy magistrate and the no less worthy Presbyterian?'

'Meaning me?' said Wildrake, laying his pipe aside; 'Gadzooks, the time hath been that I could have answered the question with a better title; but at present I am only his honour's poor clerk, or secretary, whichever is the current phrase.'

''Fore George, my lively blade, thou art a frank fellow of thy tattle,' said Desborough. 'There is my secretary Tomkins, whom men sillily enough call Fibbet, and the honourable Lieutenant-General Harrison's secretary Bibbet, who are now at supper below stairs, that durst not for their ears speak a phrase above their breath in the presence of their betters, unless to answer a question.'

'Yes, Colonel Everard,' said the philosopher, with his quiet smile, glad, apparently, to divert the conversation from the topics of last night's alarm, and recollections which humbled his self-love and self-satisfaction—'yes; and when Master Fibbet and Master Bibbet *do* speak, their affirmations are as much in a common mould of mutual attestation as their names would accord in the verses of a poet. If Master Fibbet happens to tell a fiction, Master Bibbet swears it as truth. If Master Bibbet chances to have gotten drunk in the fear of the Lord, Master Fibbet swears he is sober. I have called my own secretary Gibbet, though his name chances to be only Gibeon, a worthy Israelite at your service, but as pure a youth as ever picked a lamb-bone at Paschal. But I call him Gibbet, merely to make up the holy trefoil with another rhyme. This squire of thine, Colonel Everard, looks as if he might be worthy to be coupled with the rest of the fraternity.'

'Not I, truly,' said the Cavalier; 'I'll be coupled with no Jew that was ever whelped, and no Jewess neither.'

'Scorn not for that, young man,' said the philosopher; 'the Jews are, in point of religion, the elder brethren, you know.'

'The Jews older than the Christians?' said Desborough; ''fore George, they will have thee before the General Assembly, Bletson, if thou venturest to say so.'

Wildrake laughed without ceremony at the gross ignorance of Desborough, and was joined by a sniggling response from behind the cupboard, which, when inquired into, proved to be produced by the serving-men. These worthies, timorous as their betters, when they were supposed to have left the room, had only withdrawn to their present place of concealment.

'How now, ye rogues,' said Bletson angrily; 'do you not know your duty better?'

'We beg your worthy honour's pardon,' said one of the men, 'but we dared not go down-stairs without a light.'

'A light, ye cowardly poltroons?' said the philosopher; 'what—to show which of you looks palest when a rat squeaks?—But take a candlestick and begone, you cowardly villains! the devils you are so much afraid of must be but paltry kites, if they hawk at such bats as you are.'

The servants, without replying, took up one of the candlesticks and prepared to retreat, Trusty Tomkins at the head of the troop, when suddenly, as they arrived at the door of the parlour, which had been left half open, it was shut violently. The three terrified domestics tumbled back into the middle of the room, as if a shot had been discharged in their face, and all who were at the table started to their feet.

Colonel Everard was incapable of a moment's fear, even if anything frightful had been seen; but he remained stationary, to see what his companions would do, and to get at the bottom, if possible, of the cause of their alarm upon an occasion so trifling. The philosopher seemed to think that *he* was the person chiefly concerned to show manhood on the occasion.

He walked to the door accordingly, murmuring at the cowardice of the servants; but at such a snail's pace, that it seemed he would most willingly have been anticipated by any one whom his reproaches had roused to exertion. 'Cowardly blockheads!' he said at last, seizing hold of the handle of the door, but without turning it effectually round—'dare you not open a door?'—(still fumbling with the lock)—

'dare you not go down a staircase without a light? Here, bring me the candle, you cowardly villains!—By Heaven, something sighs on the outside!'

As he spoke, he let go the handle of the parlour door, and stepped back a pace or two into the apartment, with cheeks as pale as the band he wore.

'*Deus adjutor meus!*' said the Presbyterian clergyman, rising from his seat. 'Give place, sir,' addressing Bletson; 'it would seem I know more of this matter than thou, and I bless Heaven I am armed for the conflict.'

Bold as a grenadier about to mount a breach, yet with the same belief in the existence of a great danger to be encountered, as well as the same reliance in the goodness of his cause, the worthy man stepped before the philosophical Bletson, and, taking a light from a sconce in one hand, quietly opened the door with the other, and, standing in the threshold, said, 'Here is nothing!'

'And who expected to see anything?' said Bletson, 'excepting those terrified oafs, who take fright at every puff of wind that whistles through the passages of this old dungeon!'

'Mark you, Master Tomkins,' said one of the waiting-men in a whisper to the steward,—'See how boldly the minister pressed forward before all of them. Ah, Master Tomkins, our parson is the real commissioned officer of the church—your lay-preachers are no better than a parcel of club-men and volunteers.'

'Follow me, those who list,' said Master Holdenough, 'or go before me those who choose. I will walk through the habitable places of this house before I leave it, and satisfy myself whether Satan hath really mingled himself among these dreary dens of ancient wickedness, or whether, like the wicked of whom holy David speaketh, we are afraid, and flee when no one pursueth.'

Harrison, who had heard these words, sprung from his seat, and, drawing his sword, exclaimed, 'Were there as many fiends in the house as there are hairs on my head, upon this cause I will charge them up to their very trenches!'

So saying, he brandished his weapon, and pressed to the head of the column, where he moved side by side with the minister. The Mayor of Woodstock next joined the body, thinking himself safer perhaps in the company of his pastor; and the whole train moved forward in close order, accompanied by the servants bearing lights, to search the Lodge for some cause of that panic with which they seemed to be suddenly seized.

'Nay, take me with you, my friends,' said Colonel Everard, who had looked on in surprise, and was now about to follow the party, when Bletson laid hold on his cloak and begged him to remain.

'You see, my good Colonel,' he said, affecting a courage which his shaking voice belied, 'here are only you and I and honest Desborough left behind in garrison, while all the others are absent on a sally. We must not hazard the whole troops in one sortie—that were unmilitary—Ha, ha, ha!'

'In the name of Heaven, what means all this?' said Everard. 'I heard a foolish tale about apparitions as I came this way, and now I find you all half mad with fear, and cannot get a word of sense among so many of you. Fie, Colonel Desborough—fie, Master Bletson—try to compose yourselves, and let me know, in Heaven's name, the cause of all this disturbance. One would be apt to think your brains were turned.'

'And so mine well may,' said Desborough, 'ay, and overturned too, since my bed last night was turned upside down, and I was placed for ten minutes heels uppermost and head downmost, like a bullock going to be shod.'

'What means this nonsense, Master Bletson?—Desborough must have had the nightmare.'

'No, faith, Colonel; the goblins, or whatever else they were, had been favourable to honest Desborough, for they reposed the whole of his person on that part of his body which—Hark, did you not hear something?—is the central point of gravity, namely, his head.'

'Did you see anything to alarm you?' said the colonel.

'Nothing,' said Bletson; 'but we heard hellish noises, as all our people did; and I, believing little of ghosts and apparitions, concluded the Cavaliers were taking us at advantage; so, remembering Rainsborough's* fate, I e'en jumped the window, and ran to Woodstock to call the soldiers to the rescue of Harrison and Desborough.'

'And did you not first go to see what the danger was?'

'Ah, my good friend, you forget that I laid down my commission at the time of the Self-Denying Ordinance. It would have been quite inconsistent with my duty as a Parliament-man to be brawling amidst a set of ruffians without any military authority. No—when the Parliament commanded me to sheathe my sword, Colonel, I have too much veneration for their authority to be found again with it drawn in my hand.'

'But the Parliament,' said Desborough hastily, 'did not command you to use your heels when your hands could have saved a man from choking. Odds dickens! you might have stopped when you saw my bed canted heels uppermost and me half stifled in the bedclothes—you might, I say, have stopped and lent a hand to put it to rights, instead of jumping out of the window, like a new-shorn sheep, so soon as you had run across my room.'

'Nay, worshipful Master Desborough,' said Bletson, winking on Everard, to show that he was playing on his thick-skulled colleague, 'how could I tell your particular mode of reposing?—there are many tastes—I have known men who slept by choice on a slope or angle of forty-five.'

'Yes, but did ever a man sleep standing on his head, except by miracle?' said Desborough.

'Now, as to miracles,' said the philosopher, confident in the presence of Everard, besides that an opportunity of scoffing at religion really in some degree diverted his fear, 'I leave these

* [He was assassinated by the Royalists at Doncaster, in 1648.]

out of the question, seeing that the evidence on such subjects seems as little qualified to carry conviction as a horse-hair to land a leviathan.'

A loud clap of thunder, or a noise as formidable, rang through the Lodge as the scoffer had ended, which struck him pale and motionless, and made Desborough throw himself on his knees, and repeat exclamations and prayers in much-admired confusion.

'There must be some contrivance here,' exclaimed Everard; and, snatching one of the candles from a sconce, he rushed out of the apartment, little heeding the entreaties of the philosopher, who, in the extremity of his distress, conjured him by the *Animus Mundi* to remain to the assistance of a distressed philosopher endangered by witches and a Parliament-man assaulted by ruffians. As for Desborough, he only gaped like a clown in a pantomime; and, doubtful whether to follow or stop, his natural indolence prevailed, and he sat still.

When on the landing-place of the stairs, Everard paused a moment to consider which was the best course to take. He heard the voices of men talking fast and loud, like people who wish to drown their fears, in the lower storey; and aware that nothing could be discovered by those whose inquiries were conducted in a manner so noisy, he resolved to proceed in a different direction, and examine the second floor, which he had now gained.

He had known every corner, both of the inhabited and uninhabited part of the mansion, and availed himself of the candle to traverse two or three intricate passages, which he was afraid he might not remember with sufficient accuracy. This movement conveyed him to a sort of *œil-de-bœuf*, an octagon vestibule, or small hall, from which various rooms opened. Amongst these doors Everard selected that which led to a very long, narrow, and dilapidated gallery, built in the time of Henry VIII., and which, running along the whole south-west side of the building, communicated at different points with the rest of the mansion. This he thought was likely to be the post occupied by those who proposed to act the sprites upon the occasion; especially as its length and shape gave him some idea that it was a spot where the bold thunder might in many ways be imitated.

Determined to ascertain the truth, if possible, he placed his light on a table in the vestibule, and applied himself to open the door into the gallery. At this point he found himself strongly opposed either by a bolt drawn, or, as he rather conceived, by somebody from within resisting his attempt. He was induced to believe the latter, because the resistance slackened and was renewed, like that of human strength, instead of presenting the permanent opposition of an inanimate obstacle. Though Everard was a strong and active young man, he exhausted his strength in the vain attempt to open the door; and, having paused to take breath, was about to renew his efforts with foot and shoulder, and to call at the same time for assistance, when, to his surprise, on again attempting the door more gently, in order to ascertain if possible where the strength of the opposing obstacle was situated, he found it give way to a very slight impulse, some impediment fell broken to the ground, and the door flew wide open. The gust of wind occasioned by the sudden opening of the door blew out the candle, and Everard was left in darkness, save where the moonshine, which the long side-row of latticed windows dimmed, could imperfectly force its way into the gallery, which lay in ghostly length before him.

The melancholy and doubtful twilight was increased by a quantity of creeping plants on the outside, which, since all had been neglected in these ancient halls, now completely overgrown, had in some instances greatly diminished, and in others almost quite choked up, the space of the lattices extending between the heavy stone shaftwork which divided the windows both lengthways and across. On the other side there were no windows at all, and the gallery had been once hung round with paintings, chiefly portraits, by which that side of the apartment had been adorned. Most of the pictures had been removed, yet the empty frames of some, and the tattered remnants of others, were still visible along the extent of the waste gallery; the look of which was so desolate, and it appeared so well adapted for mischief, supposing there were enemies near him, that Everard could not help pausing at the entrance and recommending himself to God, ere, drawing his sword, he advanced into the apartment, treading as lightly as possible and keeping in the shadow as much as he could.

Markham Everard was by no means superstitious, but he had the usual credulity of the times; and though he did not yield easily to tales of supernatural visitations, yet he could not help thinking he was in the very situation where, if such things were ever permitted, they might be expected to take place, while his own stealthy and ill-assured pace, his drawn weapon, and extended arms, being the very attitude and action of doubt and suspicion, tended to increase in his mind the gloomy feelings of which they are the usual indications, and with which they are constantly associated. Under such unpleasant impressions, and conscious of the neighbourhood of something unfriendly, Colonel Everard had already advanced about half along the gallery, when he heard some one sigh very near him, and a low soft voice pronounce his name.

'Here I am,' he replied, while his heart beat thick and short. 'Who calls on Markham Everard?'

Another sigh was the only answer.

'Speak,' said the colonel, 'whoever or whatsoever you are, and tell with what intent and purpose you are lurking in these apartments?'

'With a better intent than yours,' returned the soft voice.

'Than mine!' answered Everard in great surprise. 'Who are you that dare judge of my intents?'

'What or who are you, Markham Everard, who wander by moonlight through these deserted halls of royalty, where none should be but those who mourn their downfall or are sworn to avenge it?'

'It is—and yet it cannot be,' said Everard; 'yet it is, and must be. Alice Lee, the devil or

you speaks. Answer me, I conjure you !—speak openly—On what dangerous scheme are you engaged ? where is your father ? why are you here ?—wherefore do you run so deadly a venture ?—Speak, I conjure you, Alice Lee !'

'She whom you call on is at the distance of miles from this spot. What if her Genius speaks when she is absent ?—what if the soul of an ancestress of hers and yours were now addressing you ?—what if'——

'Nay,' answered Everard, 'but what if the dearest of human beings has caught a touch of her father's enthusiasm ?—what if she is exposing her person to danger, her reputation to scandal, by traversing in disguise and darkness a house filled with armed men ?—Speak to me, my fair cousin, in your own person. I am furnished with powers to protect my uncle, Sir Henry—to protect you too, dearest Alice, even against the consequences of this visionary and wild attempt. Speak—I see where you are, and, with all my respect, I cannot submit to be thus practised upon. Trust me—trust your cousin Markham with your hand, and believe that he will die or place you in honourable safety.'

As he spoke, he exercised his eyes as keenly as possible to detect where the speaker stood ; and it seemed to him that about three yards from him there was a shadowy form, of which he could not discern even the outline, placed as it was within the deep and prolonged shadow thrown by a space of wall intervening betwixt two windows, upon that side of the room from which the light was admitted. He endeavoured to calculate, as well as he could, the distance betwixt himself and the object which he watched, under the impression that if, by even using a slight degree of compulsion, he could detach his beloved Alice from the confederacy into which he supposed her father's zeal for the cause of royalty had engaged her, he would be rendering them both the most essential favour. He could not, indeed, but conclude that, however successfully the plot, which he conceived to be in agitation, had proceeded against the timid Bletson, the stupid Desborough, and the crazy Harrison, there was little doubt that at length their artifices must necessarily bring shame and danger on those engaged in it.

It must also be remembered, that Everard's affection to his cousin, although of the most respectful and devoted character, partook less of the distant veneration which a lover of those days entertained for the lady whom he worshipped with humble diffidence, than of the fond and familiar feelings which a brother entertains towards a younger sister, whom he thinks himself entitled to guide, advise, and even in some degree to control. So kindly and intimate had been their intercourse, that he had little more hesitation in endeavouring to arrest her progress in the dangerous course in which she seemed to be engaged, even at the risk of giving her momentary offence, than he would have had in snatching her from a torrent or conflagration, at the chance of hurting her by the violence of his grasp. All this passed through his mind in the course of a single minute ; and he resolved at all events to detain her on the spot, and compel, if possible, an explanation from her.

With this purpose, Everard again conjured his cousin, in the name of Heaven, to give up this idle and dangerous mummery ; and, lending an accurate ear to her answer, endeavoured from the sound to calculate as nearly as possible the distance between them.

'I am not she for whom you take me,' said the voice ; 'and dearer regards than aught connected with her life or death bid me warn you to keep aloof, and leave this place.'

'Not till I have convinced you of your childish folly,' said the colonel, springing forward and endeavouring to catch hold of her who spoke to him. But no female form was within his grasp. On the contrary, he was met by a shock which could come from no woman's arm, and which was rude enough to stretch him on his back on the floor. At the same time he felt the point of a sword at his throat, and his hands so completely mastered, that not the slightest defence remained to him.

'A cry for assistance,' said a voice near him, but not that which he had hitherto heard, 'will be stifled in your blood !—No harm is meant you—be wise and be silent.'

The fear of death, which Everard had often braved in the field of battle, became more intense as he felt himself in the hands of unknown assassins, and totally devoid of all means of defence. The sharp point of the sword pricked his bare throat, and the foot of him who held it was upon his breast. He felt as if a single thrust would put an end to life, and all the feverish joys and sorrows which agitate us so strangely, and from which we are yet so reluctant to part. Large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead—his heart throbbed, as if it would burst from its confinement in the bosom—he experienced the agony which fear imposes on the brave man, acute in proportion to that which pain inflicts when it subdues the robust and healthy.

'Cousin Alice,'—he attempted to speak, and the sword's point pressed his throat yet more closely,—'Cousin, let me not be murdered in a manner so fearful !'

'I tell you,' replied the voice, 'that you speak to one who is not here ; but your life is not aimed at, provided you swear, on your faith as a Christian and your honour as a gentleman, that you will conceal what has happened, whether from the people below or from any other person. On this condition you may rise ; and if you seek her, you will find Alice Lee at Joceline's cottage in the forest.'

'Since I may not help myself otherwise,' said Everard, 'I swear, as I have a sense of religion and honour, I will say nothing of this violence, nor make any search after those who are concerned in it.'

'For that we care nothing,' said the voice. 'Thou hast an example how well thou mayst catch mischief on thy own part ; but we are in case to defy thee. Rise, and begone.'

The foot, the sword's-point, were withdrawn, and Everard was about to start up hastily, when the voice, in the same softness of tone which distinguished it at first, said, 'No haste—cold

and bare steel is yet around thee. Now—now—now'—(the words dying away as at a distance)—'thou art free. Be secret and be safe.'

Markham Everard arose, and in rising embarrassed his feet with his own sword, which he had dropped when springing forward, as he supposed, to lay hold of his fair cousin. He snatched it up in haste, and, as his hand clasped the hilt, his courage, which had given way under the apprehension of instant death, began to return; he considered, with almost his usual composure, what was to be done next. Deeply affronted at the disgrace which he had sustained, he questioned for an instant whether he ought to keep his extorted promise, or should not rather summon assistance, and make haste to discover and seize those who had been recently engaged in such violence on his person. But these persons, be they who they would, had had his life in their power—he had pledged his word in ransom of it—and, what was more, he could not divest himself of the idea that his beloved Alice was a confidant, at least, if not an actor, in the confederacy which had thus baffled him. This prepossession determined his conduct; for, though angry at supposing she must have been accessory to his personal ill-treatment, he could not in any event think of an instant search through the mansion, which might have compromised her safety or that of his uncle. 'But I will to the hut,' he said—'I will instantly to the hut, ascertain her share in this wild and dangerous confederacy, and snatch her from ruin, if it be possible.'

As, under the influence of the resolution which he had formed, Everard groped his way through the gallery and regained the vestibule, he heard his name called by the well-known voice of Wildrake. 'What—ho!—holla!—Colonel Everard—Mark Everard—it is dark as the devil's mouth—speak—where are you?—the witches are keeping their hellish sabbath here, as I think—Where are you?'

'Here, here!' answered Everard. 'Cease your bawling. Turn to the left and you will meet me.'

Guided by his voice, Wildrake soon appeared, with a light in one hand and his drawn sword in the other. 'Where have you been?' he said—'What has detained you?—Here are Bletson and the brute Desborough terrified out of their lives, and Harrison raving mad, because the devil will not be civil enough to rise to fight him in single *duello*.'

'Saw or heard you nothing as you came along?' said Everard.

'Nothing,' said his friend, 'excepting that when I first entered this cursed ruinous labyrinth, the light was struck out of my hand, as if by a switch, which obliged me to return for another.'

'I must come by a horse instantly, Wildrake, and another for thyself if it be possible.'

'We can take two of those belonging to the troopers,' answered Wildrake. 'But for what purpose should we run away, like rats, at this time in the evening?—Is the house falling?'

'I cannot answer you,' said the colonel, pushing forward into a room where there was some remains of furniture.

Here the Cavalier took a more strict view of his person, and exclaimed in wonder, 'What the devil have you been fighting with, Markham, that has bedizened you after this sorry fashion?'

'Fighting!' exclaimed Everard.

'Yes,' replied his trusty attendant, 'I say fighting. Look at yourself in the mirror.'

He did, and saw he was covered with dust and blood. The latter proceeded from a scratch which he had received in the throat, as he struggled to extricate himself. With unaffected alarm, Wildrake undid his friend's collar, and with eager haste proceeded to examine the wound, his hands trembling, and his eyes glistening with apprehension for his benefactor's life. When, in spite of Everard's opposition, he had examined the hurt, and found it trifling, he resumed the natural wildness of his character, perhaps the more readily that he had felt shame in departing from it, into one which expressed more of feeling than he would be thought to possess.

'If that be the devil's work, Mark,' said he, 'the foul fiend's claws are not nigh so formidable as they are represented; but no one shall say that your blood has been shed unrevenged, while Roger Wildrake was by your side. Where left you this same imp? I will back to the field of fight, confront him with my rapier, and were his nails tenpenny nails, and his teeth as long as those of a harrow, he shall render me reason for the injury he has done you.'

'Madness—madness!' exclaimed Everard; 'I had this trifling hurt by a fall—a basin and towel will wipe it away. Meanwhile, if you will ever do me kindness, get the troop-horses—command them for the service of the public in the name of his Excellency the General. I will but wash, and join you in an instant before the gate.'

'Well, I will serve you, Everard, as a mute serves the Grand Seignior,* without knowing why or wherefore. But will you go without seeing these people below?'

'Without seeing any one,' said Everard; 'lose no time, for God's sake.'

He found out the non-commissioned officer, and demanded the horses in a tone of authority, to which the corporal yielded undisputed obedience, as one well aware of Colonel Everard's military rank and consequence. So all was in a minute or two ready for the expedition.

CHAPTER XIII.

She kneel'd, and saintlike
Cast her eyes to heaven, and pray'd devoutly.
KING HENRY VIII.

COLONEL EVERARD'S departure at the late hour, for so it was then thought, of seven in the evening, excited much speculation. There was a gathering of menials and dependents in the outer chamber or hall, for no one doubted that his sudden departure was owing to his having, as they expressed it, 'seen something,' and all desired to know how a man of such acknowledged

* [The Sultan of Turkey.]

courage as Everard looked under the awe of a recent apparition. But he gave them no time to make comments; for, striding through the hall wrapped in his riding suit, he threw himself on horseback, and rode furiously through the Chase, towards the hut of the keeper Joliffe.

It was the disposition of Markham Everard to be hot, keen, earnest, impatient, and decisive to a degree of precipitation. The acquired habits which education had taught, and which the strong moral and religious discipline of his sect had greatly strengthened, were such as to enable him to conceal as well as to check this constitutional violence, and to place him upon his guard against indulging it. But when in the high tide of violent excitation, the natural impetuosity of the young soldier's temper was sometimes apt to overcome these artificial obstacles, and then, like a torrent foaming over a wear, it became more furious, as if in revenge for the constrained calm which it had been for some time obliged to assume. In these instances he was accustomed to see only that point to which his thoughts were bent, and to move straight towards it, whether a moral object or the storming of a breach, without either calculating, or even appearing to see, the difficulties which were before him.

At present, his ruling and impelling motive was to detach his beloved cousin, if possible, from the dangerous and discreditable machinations in which he suspected her to have engaged, or, on the other hand, to discover that she really had no concern with these stratagems. He should know how to judge of that in some measure, he thought, by finding her present or absent at the hut, towards which he was now galloping. He had read, indeed, in some ballad or minstrel's tale, of a singular deception practised on a jealous old man by means of a subterranean communication between his house and that of a neighbour, which the lady in question made use of to present herself in the two places alternately, with such speed and so much address that, after repeated experiments, the dotard was deceived into the opinion that his wife and the lady who was so very like her, and to whom his neighbour paid so much attention, were two different persons. But in the present case there was no room for such a deception; the distance was too great, and as he took by much the nearest way from the castle, and rode full speed, it would be impossible, he knew, for his cousin, who was a timorous horsewoman even by daylight, to have got home before him.

Her father might indeed be displeased at his interference; but what title had he to be so?—Was not Alice Lee the near relation of his blood, the dearest object of his heart, and would he now abstain from an effort to save her from the consequences of a silly and wild conspiracy, because the old knight's spleen might be awakened by Everard's making his appearance at their present dwelling contrary to his commands? No. He would endure the old man's harsh language, as he endured the blast of the autumn wind, which was howling around him, and swinging the crashing branches of the trees under which he passed, but could not oppose, or even retard, his journey.

If he found not Alice, as he had reason to believe she would be absent, to Sir Henry Lee himself he would explain what he had witnessed. However she might have become accessory to the juggling tricks performed at Woodstock, he could not but think it was without her father's knowledge, so severe a judge was the old knight of female propriety and so strict an asserter of female decorum. He would take the same opportunity, he thought, of stating to him the well-grounded hopes he entertained that his dwelling at the Lodge might be prolonged, and the sequestrators removed from the royal mansion and domains, by other means than those of the absurd species of intimidation which seemed to be resorted to, to scare them from thence.

All this seemed to be so much within the line of his duty as a relative, that it was not until he halted at the door of the ranger's hut, and threw his bridle into Wildrake's hand, that Everard recollected the fiery, high, and unbending character of Sir Henry Lee, and felt, even when his fingers were on the latch, a reluctance to intrude himself upon the presence of the irritable old knight.

But there was no time for hesitation. Bevis, who had already bayed more than once from within the hut, was growing impatient, and Everard had but just time to bid Wildrake hold the horses until he should send Joceline to his assistance, when old Joan unpinned the door, to demand who was without at that time of the night. To have attempted anything like an explanation with poor Dame Joan would have been quite hopeless; the colonel, therefore, put her gently aside, and, shaking himself loose from the hold she had laid on his cloak, entered the kitchen of Joceline's dwelling. Bevis, who had advanced to support Joan in her opposition, humbled his lion-port, with that wonderful instinct which makes his race remember so long those with whom they have been familiar, and acknowledged his master's relative, by doing homage in his fashion with his head and tail.

Colonel Everard, more uncertain in his purpose every moment as the necessity of its execution drew near, stole over the floor like one who treads in a sick chamber, and, opening the door of the interior apartment with a slow and trembling hand, as he would have withdrawn the curtains of a dying friend, he saw, within, the scene which we are about to describe.

Sir Henry Lee sat in a wicker arm-chair by the fire. He was wrapped in a cloak, and his limbs extended on a stool, as if he were suffering from gout or indisposition. His long white beard, flowing over the dark-coloured garment, gave him more the appearance of a hermit than of an aged soldier or man of quality; and that character was increased by the deep and devout attention with which he listened to a respectable old man, whose dilapidated dress showed still something of the clerical habit, and who, with a low, but full and deep voice, was reading the Evening Service according to the Church of England. Alice Lee kneeled at the feet of her father, and made the responses with a voice that might have suited the choir of angels, and a modest and serious devotion, which suited the melody of her tone. The face of the officiating clergyman would have been good-looking, had

t not been disfigured with a black patch which overed the left eye and a part of his face, and ad not the features which were visible been narked with the traces of care and suffering.

When Colonel Everard entered, the clergyman aised his finger, as cautioning him to forbear listurbing the divine service of the evening, and ointed to a seat; to which, struck deeply with he scene he had witnessed, the intruder stole with as light a step as possible, and knelt devoutly down as one of the little congregation.

Everard had been bred by his father what was called a Puritan; a member of a sect who, in the primitive sense of the word, were persons that did not except against the doctrines of the Church of England, or even in all respects against its hierarchy, but chiefly dissented from it on the subject of certain ceremonies, habits, and forms of ritual, which were insisted upon by the celebrated and unfortunate Laud with ill-timed tenacity. But even if, from the habits of his father's house, Everard's opinions had been diametrically opposed to the doctrines of the English Church, he must have been reconciled to them by the regularity with which the service was performed in his uncle's family at Woodstock, who, during the blossom of his fortunes, generally had a chaplain residing in the Lodge for that special purpose.

Yet, deep as was the habitual veneration with which he heard the impressive service of the Church, Everard's eyes could not help straying towards Alice, and his thoughts wandering to the purpose of his presence there. She seemed to have recognised him at once, for there was a deeper glow than usual upon her cheek, her fingers trembled as they turned the leaves of her prayer-book, and her voice, lately as firm as it was melodious, faltered when she repeated the responses. It appeared to Everard, as far as he could collect by the stolen glances which he directed towards her, that the character of her beauty, as well as of her outward appearance, had changed with her fortunes.

The beautiful and high-born young lady had now approached as nearly as possible to the brown stuff dress of an ordinary village maiden; but what she had lost in gaiety of appearance she had gained as it seemed in dignity. Her beautiful light-brown tresses, now folded around her head, and only curled where nature had so arranged them, gave her an air of simplicity which did not exist when her head-dress showed the skill of a curious tirewoman. A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others. Perhaps the former arch though innocent expression of countenance was uppermost in her lover's recollection, when he concluded that Alice had acted a part in the disturbances which had taken place at the Lodge. It is certain that, when he now looked upon her, it was with shame for having nourished such a suspicion, and the resolution to believe rather that the devil had imitated her voice than that a creature, who seemed so much above the feelings of this world, and so nearly allied to the purity of the next, should have had the indelicacy to mingle in such manœuvres as he himself and others had been subjected to.

These thoughts shot through his mind, in spite of the impropriety of indulging them at such a moment. The service now approached the close, and, a good deal to Colonel Everard's surprise as well as confusion, the officiating priest, in firm and audible tone, and with every attribute of dignity, prayed to the Almighty to bless and preserve 'Our Sovereign Lord, King Charles, the lawful and undoubted King of these realms.' The petition (in those days most dangerous) was pronounced with a full, raised, and distinct articulation, as if the priest challenged all who heard him to dissent, if they dared. If the republican officer did not assent to the petition, he thought at least it was no time to protest against it.

The service was concluded in the usual manner, and the little congregation arose. It now included Wildrake, who had entered during the latter prayer, and was the first of the party to speak, running up to the priest and shaking him by the hand most heartily, swearing at the same time that he truly rejoiced to see him. The good clergyman returned the pressure with a smile, observing he should have believed his asseveration without an oath. In the meanwhile, Colonel Everard, approaching his uncle's seat, made a deep inclination of respect, first to Sir Henry Lee and then to Alice, whose colour now spread from her cheek to her brow and bosom.

'I have to crave your excuse,' said the colonel with hesitation, 'for having chosen for my visit, which I dare not hope would be very agreeable at any time, a season most peculiarly unsuitable.'

'So far from it, nephew,' answered Sir Henry, with much more mildness of manner than Everard had dared to expect, 'that your visits at other times would be much more welcome, had we the fortune to see you often at our hours of worship.'

'I hope the time will soon come, sir, when Englishmen of all sects and denominations,' replied Everard, 'will be free in conscience to worship in common the great Father, whom they all after their manner call by that affectionate name.'

'I hope so too, nephew,' said the old man in the same unaltered tone; 'and we will not at present dispute whether you would have the Church of England coalesce with the Conventicle, or the Conventicle conform to the Church. It was, I ween, not to settle jarring creeds that you have honoured our poor dwelling, where, to say the truth, we dared scarce have expected to see you again, so coarse was our last welcome.'

'I should be happy to believe,' said Colonel Everard, hesitating, 'that—that—in short, my presence was not now so unwelcome here as on that occasion.'

'Nephew,' said Sir Henry, 'I will be frank with you. When you were last here, I thought you had stolen from me a precious pearl, which at one time it would have been my pride and happiness to have bestowed on you; but which, being such as you have been of late, I would bury in the depths of the earth rather than

give to your keeping. This somewhat chafed, as honest Will says, "the rash humour which my mother gave me." I thought I was robbed, and I thought I saw the robber before me. I am mistaken—I am not robbed; and the attempt without the deed I can pardon.'

'I would not willingly seek offence in your words, sir,' said Colonel Everard, 'when their general purport sounds kind; but I can protest before Heaven that my views and wishes towards you and your family are as void of selfish hopes and selfish ends as they are fraught with love to you and to yours.'

'Let us hear them, man; we are not much accustomed to good wishes now-a-days; and their very rarity will make them welcome.'

'I would willingly, Sir Henry, since you might not choose me to give you a more affectionate name, convert those wishes into something effectual for your comfort. Your fate, as the world now stands, is bad, and, I fear, like to be worse.'

'Worse than I expect it cannot be. Nephew, I do not shrink before my changes of fortune. I shall wear coarser clothes,—I shall feed on more ordinary food,—men will not doff their cap to me as they were wont, when I was the great and the wealthy. What of that? Old Harry Lee loved his honour better than his title, his faith better than his land and lordship. Have I not seen the 30th of January?* I am neither philomath nor astrologer; but old Will teaches me that when green leaves fall winter is at hand, and that darkness will come when the sun sets.'

'Bethink you, sir,' said Colonel Everard, 'if, without any submission asked, any oath taken, any engagement imposed, express or tacit, excepting that you are not to excite disturbances in the public peace, you can be restored to your residence in the Lodge, and your usual fortunes and perquisites there—I have great reason to hope this may be permitted, if not expressly, at least on sufferance.'

'Yes, I understand you. I am to be treated like the royal coin, marked with the ensign of the Rump to make it pass current, although I am too old to have the royal insignia grinded off from me. Kinsman, I will have none of this. I have lived at the Lodge too long; and, let me tell you, I had left it in scorn long since, but for the orders of one whom I may yet live to do service to. I will take nothing from the usurpers, be their name Rump or Cromwell—be they one devil or legion—I will not take from them an old cap to cover my grey hairs, a cast cloak to protect my frail limbs from the cold. They shall not say they have, by their unwilling bounty, made Abraham rich—I will live, as I will die, the Loyal Lee.'

'May I hope you will think of it, sir; and that you will, perhaps, considering what slight submission is asked, give me a better answer?'

'Sir, if I retract my opinion, which is not my wont, you shall hear of it.—And now, cousin, have you more to say? We keep that worthy clergyman in the outer room.'

'Something I had to say—something touching my cousin Alice,' said Everard, with embarrassment; 'but I fear that the prejudices of both are so strong against me'——

'Sir, I dare turn my daughter loose to you—I will go join the good Doctor in Dame Joan's apartment. I am not unwilling that you should know that the girl hath, in all reasonable sort, the exercise of her free will.'

He withdrew, and left the cousins together.

Colonel Everard advanced to Alice, and was about to take her hand. She drew back, took the seat which her father had occupied, and pointed out to him one at some distance.

'Are we then so much estranged, my dearest Alice?' he said.

'We will speak of that presently,' she replied. 'In the first place, let me ask the cause of your visit here at so late an hour.'

'You heard,' said Everard, 'what I stated to your father?'

'I did; but that seems to have been only part of your errand—something there seemed to be which applied particularly to me.'

'It was a fancy—a strange mistake,' answered Everard. 'May I ask if you have been abroad this evening?'

'Certainly not,' she replied. 'I have small temptation to wander from my present home, poor as it is; and whilst here, I have important duties to discharge. But why does Colonel Everard ask so strange a question?'

'Tell me, in turn, why your cousin Markham has lost the name of friendship and kindred, and even of some nearer feeling, and then I will answer you, Alice.'

'It is soon answered,' she said. 'When you drew your sword against my father's cause—almost against his person—I studied, more than I should have done, to find excuse for you. I knew, that is, I thought I knew, your high feelings of public duty—I knew the opinions in which you had been bred up; and I said, I will not, even for this, cast him off—he opposes his King because he is loyal to his country. You endeavoured to avert the great and concluding tragedy of the 30th of January; and it confirmed me in my opinion that Markham Everard might be misled, but could not be base or selfish.'

'And what has changed your opinion, Alice? or who dare,' said Everard, reddening, 'attach such epithets to the name of Markham Everard?'

'I am no subject,' she said, 'for exercising your valour, Colonel Everard, nor do I mean to offend. But you will find enough of others who will avow that Colonel Everard is truckling to the usurper Cromwell, and that all his fair pretexts of forwarding his country's liberties are but a screen for driving a bargain with the successful encroacher, and obtaining the best terms he can for himself and his family.'

'For myself—Never!'

'But for your family you have—Yes, I am well assured that you have pointed out to the military tyrant the way in which he and his satraps may master the government. Do you think my father or I would accept an asylum purchased at the price of England's liberty and your honour?'

'Gracious Heaven, Alice, what is this? You accuse me of pursuing the very course which so lately had your approbation!'

* [The day on which King Charles I. was executed.]

'When you spoke with authority of your ather, and recommended our submission to the xisting government, such as it was, I own I ought—that my father's grey head might, ithout dishonour, have remained under the oof where it had so long been sheltered. But id your father sanction your becoming the dviser of yonder ambitious soldier to a new ourse of innovation, and his abettor in the tablishment of a new species of tyranny?—It one thing to submit to oppression, another to e the agent of tyrants—And O, Markham—eir bloodhound!'

'How! bloodhound?—what mean you?—I wn it is true I could see with content the ounds of this bleeding country staunched, even t the expense of beholding Cromwell, after his atchless rise, take a yet farther step to power —but to be his bloodhound! What is your eaning?'

'It is false, then?—I thought I could swear had been false.'

'What, in the name of God, is it you ask?'

'It is false that you are engaged to betray the oung King of Scotland?'

'Betray him! *I* betray him, or any fugitive? Never! I would he were well out of England—would lend him my aid to escape, were he in he house at this instant; and think in acting o I did his enemies good service, by preventing heir soiling themselves with his blood—but etray him, never!'

'I knew it—I was sure it was impossible. O, e yet more honest; disengage yourself from onder gloomy and ambitious soldier! Shun im and his schemes, which are formed in inustice, and can only be realized in yet more lood!'

'Believe me,' replied Everard, 'that I choose he line of policy best befitting the times.'

'Choose that,' she said, 'which best befits uty, Markham—which best befits truth and onour. Do your duty, and let Providence deide the rest.—Farewell! we tempt my father's atience too far—you know his temper—farewell, Markham.'

She extended her hand, which he pressed to is lips, and left the apartment. A silent bow o his uncle, and a sign to Wildrake, whom he ound in the kitchen of the cabin, were the only okens of recognition exhibited, and, leaving the ut, he was soon mounted, and, with his comanion, advanced on his return to the Lodge.

CHAPTER XIV.

Deeds are done on earth
Which have their punishment ere the earth closes
Upon the perpetrators. Be it the working
Of the remorse-stirr'd fancy, or the vision,
Distinct and real, of unearthly being,
All ages witness, that beside the couch
Of the fell homicide oft stalks the ghost
Of him he slew, and shows the shadowy wound.
OLD PLAY.

EVERARD had come to Joceline's hut as fast s horse could bear him, and with the same imetuosity of purpose as of speed. He saw no hoice in the course to be pursued, and felt in his own imagination the strongest right to direct, and even reprove, his cousin, beloved as she was, on account of the dangerous machinations with which she appeared to have connected herself. He returned slowly, and in a very different mood.

Not only had Alice, prudent as beautiful, appeared completely free from the weakness of conduct which seemed to give him some authority over her, but her views of policy, if less practicable, were so much more direct and noble than his own, as led him to question whether he had not compromised himself too rashly with Cromwell, even although the state of the country was so greatly divided and torn by faction, that the promotion of the General to the possession of the executive government seemed the only chance of escaping a renewal of the Civil War. The more exalted and purer sentiments of Alice lowered him in his own eyes; and though unshaken in his opinion, that it were better the vessel should be steered by a pilot having no good title to the office, than that she should run upon the breakers, he felt that he was not espousing the most direct, manly, and disinterested side of the question.

As he rode on, immersed in these unpleasant contemplations, and considerably lessened in his own esteem by what had happened, Wildrake, who rode by his side, and was no friend to long silence, began to enter into conversation. 'I have been thinking, Mark,' said he, 'that if you and I had been called to the bar—as, by the by, has been in danger of happening to me in more senses than one—I say, had we become barristers, I would have had the better oiled tongue of the two—the fairer art of persuasion.'

'Perhaps so,' replied Everard, 'though I never heard thee use any, save to induce an usurer to lend thee money or a taverner to abate a reckoning.'

'And yet this day, or rather night, I could have, as I think, made a conquest which baffled you.'

'Indeed?' said the colonel, becoming attentive.

'Why, look you,' said Wildrake, 'it was a main object with you to induce Mistress Alice Lee—By Heaven, she is an exquisite creature—I approve of your taste, Mark—I say, you desire to persuade her, and the stout old Trojan her father, to consent to return to the Lodge, and live there quietly, and under connivance, like gentle folk, instead of lodging in a hut hardly fit to harbour a Tom of Bedlam.'

'Thou art right; such, indeed, was a great part of my object in this visit,' answered Everard.

'But perhaps you also expected to visit there yourself, and so keep watch over pretty Mistress Lee—eh?'

'I never entertained so selfish a thought,' said Everard; 'and if this nocturnal disturbance at the mansion were explained and ended, I would instantly take my departure.'

'Your friend Noll would expect something more from you,' said Wildrake; 'he would expect, in case the knight's reputation for loyalty should draw any of our poor exiles and wanderers about the Lodge, that you should be on the watch and ready to snap them. In a word, as

far as I can understand his long-winded speeches, he would have Woodstock a trap, your uncle and his pretty daughter the bait of toasted cheese—craving your Chloe's pardon for the comparison—you the spring-fall which should bar their escape, his lordship himself being the great grimalkin to whom they are to be given over to be devoured.'

'Dared Cromwell mention this to thee in express terms?' said Everard, pulling up his horse and stopping in the midst of the road.

'Nay, not in express terms, which I do not believe he ever used in his life; you might as well expect a drunken man to go straight forward; but he insinuated as much to me, and indicated that you might deserve well of him—Gadzo, the damnable proposal sticks in my throat—by betraying our noble and rightful King' (here he pulled off his hat), 'whom God grant in health and wealth long to reign, as the worthy clergyman says, though I fear just now his Majesty is both sick and sorry, and never a penny in his pouch to boot.'

'This tallies with what Alice hinted,' said Everard; 'but how could she know it? didst thou give her any hint of such a thing?'

'I!' replied the Cavalier, 'I, who never saw Mistress Alice in my life till to-night, and then only for an instant—zooks, man, how is that possible?'

'True,' replied Everard, and seemed lost in thought. At length he spoke—'I should call Cromwell to account for his bad opinion of me; for, even though not seriously expressed, but, as I am convinced it was with the sole view of proving you, and perhaps myself, it was, nevertheless, a misconstruction to be resented.'

'I'll carry a cartel for you, with all my heart and soul,' said Wildrake; 'and turn out with his godliness's second, with as good will as I ever drank a glass of sack.'

'Pshaw!' replied Everard, 'those in his high place fight no single combats. But tell me, Roger Wildrake, didst thou thyself think me capable of the falsehood and treachery implied in such a message?'

'I!' exclaimed Wildrake. 'Markham Everard, you have been my early friend, my constant benefactor. When Colchester was reduced, you saved me from the gallows, and since that thou hast twenty times saved me from starving. But, by Heaven, if I thought you capable of such villany as your General recommended,—by yonder blue sky, and all the works of creation which it bends over, I would stab you with my own hand!'

'Death,' replied Everard, 'I should indeed deserve, but not from you, perhaps; but fortunately, I cannot if I would be guilty of the treachery you would punish. Know that I had this day secret notice, and from Cromwell himself, that the young Man has escaped by sea from Bristol.'

'Now, God Almighty be blessed, who protected him through so many dangers!' exclaimed Wildrake. 'Huzza!—Up hearts, Cavaliers!—Hey for Cavaliers—God bless King Charles!—Moon and stars, catch my hat!'—and he threw it up as high as he could into the air. The celestial bodies which he invoked did not receive the present despatched to them; but, as in the case of Sir Henry Lee's scabbard, an old gnarled oak became a second time the receptacle of a waif and stray of loyal enthusiasm. Wildrake looked rather foolish at the circumstance, and his friend took the opportunity of admonishing him.

'Art thou not ashamed to bear thee so like a schoolboy?'

'Why,' said Wildrake, 'I have but sent a Puritan's hat upon a loyal errand. I laugh to think how many of the schoolboys thou talk'st of will be cheated into climbing the pollard next year, expecting to find the nest of some unknown bird in yonder unmeasured margin of felt.'

'Hush now, for God's sake, and let us speak calmly,' said Everard. 'Charles has escaped, and I am glad of it. I would willingly have seen him on his father's throne by composition, but not by the force of the Scottish army, and the incensed and vengeful Royalists.'

'Master Markham Everard,' began the Cavalier, interrupting him——

'Nay, hush, dear Wildrake,' said Everard; 'let us not dispute a point on which we cannot agree, and give me leave to go on.—I say, since the young Man has escaped, Cromwell's offensive and injurious stipulation falls to the ground; and I see not why my uncle and his family should not again enter their own house, under the same terms of connivance as many other Royalists. What may be incumbent on me is different, nor can I determine my course until I have an interview with the General, which, as I think, will end in his confessing that he threw in this offensive proposal to sound us both. It is much in his manner; for he is blunt, and never sees or feels the punctilious honour which the gallants of the day stretch to such delicacy.'

'I'll acquit him of having any punctilio about him,' said Wildrake, 'either touching honour or honesty. Now, to come back to where we started. Supposing you were not to reside in person at the Lodge, and to forbear even visiting there, unless on invitation, when such a thing can be brought about, I tell you frankly, I think your uncle and his daughter might be induced to come back to the Lodge, and reside there as usual. At least the clergyman, that worthy old cock, gave me to hope as much.'

'He had been hasty in bestowing his confidence,' said Everard.

'True,' replied Wildrake; 'he confided in me at once; for he instantly saw my regard for the Church. I thank Heaven I never passed a clergyman in his canonicals without pulling my hat off—(and thou knowest the most desperate duel I ever fought was with young Grayless of the Inner Temple, for taking the wall of the Reverend Doctor Bunce)—Ah, I can gain a chaplain's ear instantly. Gadzooks, they know whom they have to trust to in such a one as I.'

'Dost thou think, then,' said Colonel Everard, 'or rather does this clergyman think, that, if they were secure of intrusion from me, the family would return to the Lodge, supposing the intruding Commissioners gone, and this nocturnal disturbance explained and ended?'

'The old knight,' answered Wildrake, 'may be wrought upon by the Doctor to return, if he is secure against intrusion. As for disturbances,

the stout old boy, so far as I can learn in two minutes' conversation, laughs at all this turmoil as the work of mere imagination, the consequence of the remorse of their own evil consciences; and says that goblin or devil was never heard of at Woodstock, until it became the residence of such men as they who have now usurped the possession.'

'There is more than imagination in it,' said Everard. 'I have personal reason to know there is some conspiracy carrying on, to render the house untenable by the Commissioners. I acquit my uncle of accession to such a silly trick; but I must see it ended ere I can agree to his and my cousin's residing where such a confederacy exists; for they are likely to be considered as the contrivers of such pranks, be the actual agent who he may.'

'With reference to your better acquaintance with the gentleman, Everard, I should rather suspect the old father of Puritans (I beg your pardon again) has something to do with the business; and if so, Lucifer will never look near the true old knight's beard, nor abide a glance of yonder maiden's innocent blue eyes. I will uphold them as safe as pure gold in a miser's chest.'

'Sawest thou aught thyself, which makes thee think thus?'

'Not a quill of the devil's pinion saw I,' replied Wildrake. 'He supposes himself too secure of an old Cavalier, who must steal, hang, or drown in the long run, so he gives himself no trouble to look after the assured booty. But I heard the serving-fellows prate of what they had seen and heard; and though their tales were confused enough, yet if there was any truth among them at all, I should say the devil must have been in the dance. — But, holla! here comes some one upon us.—Stand, friend—who art thou?'

'A poor day-labourer in the great work of England—Joseph Tomkins by name—secretary to a godly and well-endowed leader in this poor Christian army of England, called General Harrison.'

'What news, Master Tomkins?' said Everard; 'and why are you on the road at this late hour?'

'I speak to the worthy Colonel Everard, as I judge?' said Tomkins; 'and truly I am glad of meeting your honour. Heaven knows I need such assistance as yours. — O, worthy Master Everard!—Here has been a sounding of trumpets, and a breaking of vials, and a pouring forth, and'——

'Prithee, tell me in brief what is the matter—where is thy master—and, in a word, what has happened?'

'My master is close by, parading it in the little meadow, beside the hugeous oak, which is called by the name of the late Man; ride but two steps forward, and you may see him walking swiftly to and fro, advancing all the while the naked weapon.'

Upon proceeding as directed, but with as little noise as possible, they descried a man, whom of course they concluded must be Harrison, walking to and fro beneath the King's Oak, as a sentinel under arms, but with more wildness of demeanour. The tramp of the horses did not escape his ear; and they heard him call out, as if at the head of the brigade—'Lower pikes against cavalry!—Here comes Prince Rupert—Stand fast, and you shall turn them aside, as a bull would toss a cur-dog.—Lower your pikes still, my hearts, the end secured against your foot—down on your right knee, front rank—spare not for the spoiling of your blue aprons.—Ha—Zerobabel—ay, that is the word!'

'In the name of Heaven, about whom or what is he talking?' said Everard; 'wherefore does he go about with his weapon drawn?'

'Truly, sir, when aught disturbs my master, General Harrison, he is something rapt in the spirit, and conceives that he is commanding a reserve of pikes at the great battle of Armageddon—and for his weapon, alack, worthy sir, wherefore should he keep Sheffield steel in calves'-leather when there are fiends to be combated—incarnate fiends on earth and raging infernal fiends under the earth?'

'This is intolerable,' said Everard. 'Listen to me, Tomkins. Thou art not now in the pulpit, and I desire none of thy preaching language. I know thou canst speak intelligibly when thou art so minded. Remember, I may serve or harm thee; and as you hope or fear anything on my part, answer straightforward—What has happened to drive out thy master to the wild wood at this time of night?'

'Forsooth, worthy and honoured sir, I will speak with the precision I may. True it is, and of verity, that the breath of man, which is in his nostrils, goeth forth and returneth'——

'Hark you, sir,' said Colonel Everard, 'take care where you ramble in your correspondence with me. You have heard how at the great battle of Dunbar in Scotland the General himself held a pistol to the head of Lieutenant Hewcreed, threatening to shoot him through the brain if he did not give up holding forth, and put his squadron in line to the front. Take care, sir.'

'Verily the lieutenant then charged with an even and unbroken order, said Tomkins, 'and bore a thousand plaids and bonnets over the beach before him into the sea. Neither shall I pretermit or postpone your honour's commands, but speedily obey them, and that without delay.'

'Go to, fellow; thou knowest what I would have,' said Everard; 'speak at once—I know thou canst if thou wilt. Trusty Tomkins is better known than he thinks for.'

'Worthy sir,' said Tomkins, in a much less periphrastic style, 'I will obey your worship as far as the spirit will permit. Truly, it was not an hour since, when my worshipful master being at table with Master Bibbet and myself, not to mention the worshipful Master Bletson and Colonel Desborough, and behold there was a violent knocking at the gate, as of one in haste. Now, of a certainty, so much had our household been harassed with witches and spirits, and other objects of sound and sight, that the sentinels could not be brought to abide upon their posts without doors, and it was only by a provision of beef and strong liquors that we were able to maintain a guard of three men in the hall, who nevertheless ventured not to open the door, lest they should be surprised with some of the goblins

wherewith their imaginations were overwhelmed. And they heard the knocking, which increased until it seemed that the door was well-nigh about to be beaten down. Worthy Master Bibbet was a little overcome with liquor (as is his fashion, good man, about this time of the evening,) not that he is in the least given to ebriety, but simply, that since the Scottish campaign he hath had a perpetual ague, which obliges him so to nourish his frame against the damps of the nights; wherefore, as it is well known to your honour that I discharge the office of a faithful servant, as well to Major-General Harrison and the other Commissioners as to my just and lawful master, Colonel Desborough'——

'I know all that.—And now that thou art trusted by both, I pray to Heaven thou mayst merit the trust,' said Colonel Everard.

'And devoutly do I pray,' said Tomkins, 'that your worshipful prayers may be answered with favour; for certainly to be, and to be called and entitled, Honest Joe and Trusty Tomkins is to me more than ever would be an earl's title, were such things to be granted anew in this regenerated government.'

'Well, go on—go on—or if thou dalliest much longer, I will make bold to dispute the article of your honesty. I like short tales, sir, and doubt what is told with a long unnecessary train of words.'

'Well, good sir, be not hasty. As I said before, the doors rattled till you would have thought the knocking was reiterated in every room of the palace. The bell rung out for company, though we could not find that any one tolled the clapper, and the guards let off their firelocks, merely because they knew not what better to do. So, Master Bibbet being, as I said, unsusceptible of his duty, I went down with my poor rapier to the door, and demanded who was there; and I was answered in a voice, which, I must say, was much like another voice, that it was one wanting Major-General Harrison. So, as it was then late, I answered mildly, that General Harrison was betaking himself to his rest, and that any who wished to speak to him must return on the morrow morning, for that after nightfall the door of the palace, being in the room of a garrison, would be opened to no one. So the voice replied, and bid me open directly, without which he would blow the folding leaves of the door into the middle of the hall. And therewithal the noise recommenced, that we thought the house would have fallen; and I was in some measure constrained to open the door, even like a besieged garrison which can hold out no longer.'

'By my honour, and it was stoutly done of you, I must say,' said Wildrake, who had been listening with much interest. 'I am a bold dare-devil enough, yet when I had two inches of oak plank between the actual fiend and me, hang him that would demolish the barrier between us, say I—I would as soon, when aboard, bore a hole in the ship and let in the waves; for you know we always compare the devil to the deep sea.'

'Prithee, peace, Wildrake,' said Everard, 'and let him go on with his history.—Well, and what saw'st thou when the door was opened?—the great devil with his horns and claws, thou wilt say, no doubt.'

'No, sir, I will say nothing but what is true. When I undid the door, one man stood there, and he to seeming a man of no extraordinary appearance. He was wrapped in a taffeta cloak of a scarlet colour, and with a red lining. He seemed as if he might have been in his time a very handsome man, but there was something of paleness and sorrow in his face—a long lovelock and long hair he wore, even after the abomination of the Cavaliers, and the unloveliness, as learned Master Prynne * well termed it, of lovelocks—a jewel in his ear—a blue scarf over his shoulder, like a military commander for the King, and a hat with a white plume, bearing a peculiar hatband.'

'Some unhappy officer of Cavaliers, of whom so many are in hiding and seeking shelter through the country,' briefly replied Everard.

'True, worthy sir—right as a judicious exposition. But there was something about this man (if he was a man) whom I, for one, could not look upon without trembling; nor the musketeers, who were in the hall, without betraying much alarm, and swallowing, as they themselves will aver, the very bullets which they had in their mouths for loading their carabines and muskets. Nay, the wolf and deer dogs, that are the fiercest of their kind, fled from this visitor, and crept into holes and corners, moaning and wailing in a low and broken tone. He came into the middle of the hall, and still he seemed no more than an ordinary man, only somewhat fantastically dressed, in a doublet of black velvet pinked upon scarlet satin under his cloak, a jewel in his ear, with large roses in his shoes, and a kerchief in his hand, which he sometimes pressed against his left side.'

'Gracious Heavens!' said Wildrake, coming close up to Everard, and whispering in his ear, with accents which terror rendered tremulous (a mood of mind most unusual to the daring man, who seemed now overcome by it)—'it must have been poor Dick Robison the player, in the very dress in which I have seen him play Philaster † —ay, and drunk a jolly bottle with him after it at the Mermaid! I remember how many frolics we had together, and all his little fantastic fashions. He served for his old master, Charles, in Mohun's ‡ troop, and was murdered by this butcher's dog, as I have heard, after surrender at the battle of Naseby Field.'

'Hush! I have heard of the deed,' said Everard; 'for God's sake hear the man to an end.—Did this visitor speak to thee, my friend?'

'Yes, sir, in a pleasing tone of voice, but somewhat fanciful in the articulation, and like one who is speaking to an audience as from a bar or a pulpit, more than in the voice of ordin-

* [William Prynne, a fierce pamphleteer and a bitter opponent of Archbishop Laud, published in 1627 *The Unlovelinesse of Lovelockes*, a diatribe against the Cavaliers.]

† [*Philaster, or Love Lies a Bleeding*, by Beaumont and Fletcher.]

‡ [Mohun, an actor, was a major in the royal army, he and nearly all of his colleagues siding with the king. After the Restoration, Mohun was accounted the second actor in London.]

ry men on ordinary matters. He desired to ee Major-General Harrison.'

'He did!—and you,' said Everard, infected by the spirit of the time, which, as is well known, leaned to credulity upon all matters of supernatural agency,—'what did you do?'

'I went up to the parlour, and related that such a person inquired for him. He started when I told him, and eagerly desired to know the man's dress; but no sooner did I mention his dress, and the jewel in his ear, than he said, "Begone! tell him I will not admit him to speech of me. Say that I defy him, and will make my defiance good at the great battle in the valley of Armageddon, when the voice of the angel shall call all fowls which fly under the face of heaven to feed on the flesh of the captain and the soldier, the war-horse and his rider. Say to the Evil One, I have power to appeal our conflict even till that day, and that in the front of that fearful day he will again meet with Harrison." I went back with this answer to the stranger, and his face was writhed into such a deadly frown as a mere human brow hath seldom worn. "Return to him," he said, "and say it is MY HOUR, and that, if he come not instantly down to speak with me, I will mount the stairs to him. Say that I COMMAND him to descend, by the token, that on the field of Naseby *he did not the work negligently.*"'

'I have heard,' whispered Wildrake—who felt more and more strongly the contagion of superstition—'that these words were blasphemously used by Harrison when he shot my poor friend Dick.'

'What happened next?' said Everard. 'See that thou speakest the truth.'

'As gospel unexpounded by a steeple-man,' said the Independent; 'yet truly it is but little I have to say. I saw my master come down, with a blank, yet resolved air; and when he entered the hall and saw the stranger, he made a pause. The other waved on him as if to follow, and walked out at the portal. My worthy patron seemed as if he were about to follow, yet again paused, when this visitant, be he man or fiend, re-entered and said, "Obey thy doom.

> By pathless march, by greenwood tree,
> It is thy weird to follow me—
> To follow me through the ghastly moonlight—
> To follow me through the shadows of night—
> To follow me, comrade, still art thou bound:
> I conjure thee by the unstanch'd wound—
> I conjure thee by the last words I spoke,
> When the body slept and the spirit awoke,
> In the very last pangs of the deadly stroke!"

So saying, he stalked out, and my master followed him into the wood.—I followed also at a distance. But when I came up, my master was alone, and bearing himself as you now behold him.'

'Thou hast had a wonderful memory, friend,' said the colonel coldly, 'to remember these rhymes in a single recitation—there seems something of practice in all this.'

'A single recitation, my honoured sir!' exclaimed the Independent—'alack, the rhyme is seldom out of my poor master's mouth, when, as sometimes haps, he is less triumphant in his wrestles with Satan. But it was the first time I ever heard it uttered by another; and, to say truth, he ever seems to repeat it unwillingly, as a child after his pedagogue, and as it was not indited by his own head, as the Psalmist saith.'

'It is singular,' said Everard;—'I have heard and read that the spirits of the slaughtered have strange power over the slayer; but I am astonished to have it insisted upon that there may be truth in such tales. Roger Wildrake—what art thou afraid of, man?—why dost thou shift thy place thus?'

'Fear? it is not fear—it is hate, deadly hate.—I see the murderer of poor Dick before me, and see, he throws himself into a posture of fence—Sa—sa—say'st thou, brood of a butcher's mastiff? thou shalt not want an antagonist.'

Ere any one could stop him, Wildrake threw aside his cloak, drew his sword, and almost with a single bound cleared the distance betwixt him and Harrison, and crossed swords with the latter, as he stood brandishing his weapon, as if in immediate expectation of an assailant. Accordingly, the republican general was not for an instant taken at unawares, but the moment the swords clashed, he shouted, 'Ha! I feel thee now, thou hast come in body at last.—Welcome! welcome!—the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'

'Part them, part them,' cried Everard, as he and Tomkins, at first astonished at the suddenness of the affray, hastened to interfere. Everard, seizing on the Cavalier, drew him forcibly backwards, and Tomkins contrived, with risk and difficulty, to master Harrison's sword, while the general exclaimed, 'Ha! two to one—two to one!—thus fight demons.' Wildrake, on his side, swore a dreadful oath, and added, 'Markham, you have cancelled every obligation I owed you—they are all out of sight—gone, d—n me!'

'You have indeed acquitted these obligations rarely,' said Everard. 'Who knows how this affair shall be explained and answered?'

'I will answer it with my life,' said Wildrake.

'Good now, be silent,' said Tomkins, 'and let me manage. It shall be so ordered that the good General shall never know that he hath encountered with a mortal man; only let that man of Moab put his sword into the scabbard's rest and be still.'

'Wildrake, let me entreat thee to sheathe thy sword,' said Everard, 'else, on my life, thou must turn against me.'

'No, 'fore George, not so mad as that neither, but I'll have another day with him.'

'Thou, another day!' exclaimed Harrison, whose eye had still remained fixed on the spot where he found such palpable resistance. 'Yes, I know thee well; day by day, week by week, thou makest the same idle request, for thou knowest that my heart quivers at thy voice. But my hand trembles not when opposed to thine—the spirit is willing to the combat, if the flesh be weak when opposed to that which is not of the flesh.'

'Now, peace all, for Heaven's sake,'—said the steward Tomkins; then added, addressing his master, 'There is no one here, if it please your Excellence, but Tomkins and the worthy Colonel Everard.'

General Harrison, as sometimes happens in cases of partial insanity (that is, supposing his

to have been a case of mental delusion), though firmly and entirely persuaded of the truth of his own visions, yet was not willing to speak on the subject to those who, he knew, would regard them as imaginary. Upon this occasion he assumed the appearance of perfect ease and composure, after the violent agitation he had just manifested, in a manner which showed how anxious he was to disguise his real feelings from Everard, whom he considered as unlikely to participate them.

He saluted the colonel with profound ceremony, and talked of the fineness of the evening, which had summoned him forth of the Lodge, to take a turn in the Park and enjoy the favourable weather. He then took Everard by the arm, and walked back with him towards the Lodge, Wildrake and Tomkins following close behind and leading the horses. Everard, desirous to gain some light on these mysterious incidents, endeavoured to come on the subject more than once, by a mode of interrogation, which Harrison (for madmen are very often unwilling to enter on the subject of their mental delusion) parried with some skill, or addressed himself for aid to his steward Tomkins, who was in the habit of being voucher for his master upon all occasions, which led to Desborough's ingenious nickname of Fibbet.

'And wherefore had you your sword drawn, my worthy General,' said Everard, 'when you were only on an evening walk of pleasure?'

'Truly, excellent Colonel, these are times when men must watch with their loins girded, and their lights burning, and their weapons drawn. The day draweth nigh, believe me or not as you will, that men must watch lest they be found naked and unarmed, when the seven trumpets shall sound. Boot and saddle; and the pipes of Jezer shall strike up, Horse and away.'

'True, good General; but methought I saw you making passes, even now, as if you were fighting,' said Everard.

'I am of a strange fantasy, friend Everard,' answered Harrison; 'and when I walk alone, and happen, as but now, to have my weapon drawn, I sometimes, for exercise sake, will practise a thrust against such a tree as that. It is a silly pride men have in the use of weapons. I have been accounted a master of fence, and have fought prizes when I was unregenerated, and before I was called to do my part in the great work, entering as a trooper into our victorious General's first regiment of horse.'

'But methought,' said Everard, 'I heard a weapon clash with yours?'

'How? a weapon clash with my sword!—How could that be, Tomkins?'

'Truly, sir,' said Tomkins, 'it must have been a bough of the tree; they have them of all kinds here, and your honour may have pushed against one of them, which the Brazilians call iron-wood, a block of which being struck with a hammer, saith Purchas, in *His Pilgrimage*,* ringeth like an anvil.'

'Truly, it may be so,' said Harrison; 'for those rulers who are gone, assembled in this their abode of pleasure many strange trees and plants, though they gathered not of the fruit of that tree which beareth twelve manner of fruits, or of those leaves which are for the healing of the nations.'

Everard pursued his investigation; for he was struck with the manner in which Harrison evaded his questions, and the dexterity with which he threw his transcendental and fanatical notions, like a sort of veil, over the darker visions excited by remorse and conscious guilt.

'But,' said he, 'if I may trust my eyes and ears, I cannot but still think that you had a real antagonist.—Nay, I am sure I saw a fellow, in a dark-coloured jerkin, retreat through the wood.'

'Did you?' said Harrison, with a tone of surprise, while his voice faltered in spite of him—'Who could he be?—Tomkins, did you see the fellow Colonel Everard talks of with the napkin in his hand—the bloody napkin which he always pressed to his side?'

This last expression, in which Harrison gave a mark different from that which Everard had assigned, but corresponding to Tomkins's original description of the supposed spectre, had more effect on Everard in confirming the steward's story than anything he had witnessed or heard. The voucher answered the draft upon him as promptly as usual, that he had seen such a fellow glide past them into the thicket—that he dared to say he was some deer-stealer, for he had heard they were become very audacious.

'Look ye there now, Master Everard,' said Harrison, hurrying from the subject—'Is it not time now that we should lay aside our controversies, and join hand in hand to repairing the breaches of our Zion? Happy and contented were I, my excellent friend, to be a treader of mortar, or a bearer of a hod, upon this occasion, under our great leader, with whom Providence has gone forth in this great national controversy; and truly, so devoutly do I hold by our excellent and victorious General Oliver—whom Heaven long preserve!—that were he to command me, I should not scruple to pluck forth of his high place the man whom they call Speaker, even as I lent a poor hand to pluck down the man whom they called King.—Wherefore, as I know your judgment holdeth with mine on this matter, let me urge unto you lovingly, that we may act as brethren, and build up the breaches and re-establish the bulwarks of our English Zion, whereby we shall be doubtless chosen as pillars and buttresses, under our excellent Lord-General, for supporting and sustaining the same, and endowed with proper revenues and incomes, both spiritual and temporal, to serve as a pedestal on which we may stand, seeing that otherwise our foundation will be on the loose sand.—Nevertheless,' continued he, his mind again diverging from his views of temporal ambition into his visions of the Fifth Monarchy, 'these things are but vanity in respect of the opening of the book which is sealed; for all things approach speedily towards lightning and thundering, and unloosing of the great dragon from the bottomless pit, wherein he is chained.'

With this mingled strain of earthly politics and fanatical prediction Harrison so overpowered

* [A compilation of travellers' accounts of different parts of the world, published in 1613.]

olonel Everard as to leave him no time to urge im further on the particular circumstances of is nocturnal skirmish, concerning which it is lain he had no desire to be interrogated. They ow reached the Lodge of Woodstock.

CHAPTER XV.

Now the wasted brands do glow,
While the screech-owl, sounding loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets out its sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

BEFORE the gate of the palace the guards were ow doubled. Everard demanded the reason of his from the corporal, whom he found in the all with his soldiers, sitting or sleeping around great fire, maintained at the expense of the arved chairs and benches, with fragments of hich it was furnished.

'Why, verily,' answered the man, 'the *corps-le-garde*, as your worship says, will be harassed o pieces by such duty; nevertheless, fear hath one abroad among us, and no man will mount uard alone. We have drawn in, however, one r two of our outposts from Banbury and else-here, and we are to have a relief from Oxford o-morrow.'

Everard continued minute inquiries concerning he sentinels that were posted within as well as vithout the Lodge; and found that, as they had een stationed under the eye of Harrison him-elf, the rules of prudent discipline had been xactly observed in the distribution of the posts. There remained nothing, therefore, for Colonel Everard to do, but, remembering his own ad-enture of the evening, to recommend that an additional sentinel should be placed, with a ompanion if judged indispensable, in that estibule, or anteroom, from which the long allery where he had met with the rencontre, and ther suites of apartments, diverged. The cor-oral respectfully promised all obedience to his rders. The serving-men being called, appeared lso in double force. Everard demanded to now whether the Commissioners had gone to ed, or whether he could get speech with them.

'They are in their bedroom, forsooth,' replied ne of the fellows; 'but I think they be not yet ndressed.'

'What!' said Everard, 'are Colonel Des-orough and Master Bletson both in the same leeping apartment?'

'Their honours have so chosen it,' said the an; 'and their honours' secretaries remain pon guard all night.'

'It is the fashion to double guards all over he house,' said Wildrake. 'Had I a glimpse f a tolerably good-looking housemaid now, I hould know how to fall into the fashion.'

'Peace, fool!' said Everard.—'And where are he Mayor and Master Holdenough?'

'The Mayor is returned to the borough on orseback, behind the trooper who goes to Oxford for the reinforcement; and the man of the steeple-house hath quartered himself in the chamber which Colonel Desborough had last night, being that in which he is most likely to meet the —— your honour understands. The Lord pity us, we are a harassed family!'

'And where be General Harrison's knaves, said Tomkins, 'that they do not marshal him to his apartment?'

'Here—here—here, Master Tomkins,' said three fellows, pressing forward, with the same consternation on their faces which seemed to pervade the whole inhabitants of Woodstock.

'Away with you, then,' said Tomkins;—'speak not to his worship—you see he is not in the humour.'

'Indeed,' observed Colonel Everard, 'he looks singularly wan—his features seem writhen as by a palsy stroke; and though he was talking so fast while we came along, he hath not opened his mouth since we came to the light.'

'It is his manner after such visitations,' said Tomkins.—'Give his honour your arms, Zedekiah and Jonathan, to lead him off—I will follow instantly.—You, Nicodemus, tarry to wait upon me—it is not well walking alone in this mansion.'

'Master Tomkins,' said Everard, 'I have heard of you often as a sharp, intelligent man—tell me fairly, are you in earnest afraid of anything supernatural haunting this house?'

'I would be loath to run the chance, sir,' said Tomkins very gravely; 'by looking on my worshipful master you may form a guess how the living look after they have spoken with the dead.' He bowed low, and took his leave. Everard proceeded to the chamber which the two remaining Commissioners had, for comfort's sake, chosen to inhabit in company. They were preparing for bed as he went into their apartment. Both started as the door opened—both rejoiced when they saw it was only Everard who entered.

'Hark ye hither,' said Bletson, pulling him aside; 'sawest thou ever ass equal to Desborough?—the fellow is as big as an ox and as timorous as a sheep. He has insisted on my sleeping here, to protect him. Shall we have a merry night on't, ha? We will, if thou wilt take the third bed, which was prepared for Harrison; but he is gone out, like a mooncalf, to look for the valley of Armageddon in the Park of Woodstock.'

'General Harrison has returned with me but now,' said Everard.

'Nay, but, as I shall live, he comes not into our apartment,' said Desborough, overhearing his answer. 'No man that has been supping, for aught I know, with the devil has a right to sleep among Christian folk.'

'He does not propose so,' said Everard; 'he sleeps, as I understand, apart—and alone.'

'Not quite alone, I daresay,' said Desborough; 'for Harrison hath a sort of attraction for goblins—they fly round him like moths about a candle. But, I prithee, good Everard, do thou stay with us. I know not how it is, but although thou hast not thy religion always in thy mouth, nor speakest many hard words about it, like Harrison—nor makest long preachments, like a certain most honourable relation of mine who shall be nameless, yet somehow I feel myself

safer in thy company than with any of them. As for this Bletson, he is such a mere blasphemer, that I fear the devil will carry him away ere morning.'

'Did you ever hear such a paltry coward?' said Bletson apart to Everard. 'Do tarry, however, mine honoured Colonel—I know your zeal to assist the distressed, and you see Desborough is in that predicament, that he will require near him more than one good example to prevent him thinking of ghosts and fiends.'

'I am sorry I cannot oblige you, gentlemen,' said Everard; 'but I have settled my mind to sleep in Victor Lee's apartment, so I wish you good-night; and if you would repose without disturbance, I would advise that you commend yourselves, during the watches of the night, to Him unto whom night is even as mid-day. I had intended to have spoken with you this evening on the subject of my being here; but I will defer the conference till to-morrow, when, I think, I will be able to show you excellent reasons for leaving Woodstock.'

'We have seen plenty such already,' said Desborough; 'for one, I came here to serve the Estate, with some moderate advantage doubtless to myself for my trouble; but if I am set upon my head again to-night, as I was the night before, I would not stay longer to gain a king's crown; for I am sure my neck would be unfitted to bear the weight of it.'

'Good-night,' exclaimed Everard, and was about to go, when Bletson again pressed close and whispered to him, 'Hark thee, Colonel—you know my friendship for thee—I do implore thee to leave the door of thy apartment open, that, if thou meetest with any disturbance, I may hear thee call and be with thee upon the very instant. Do this, dear Everard, my fears for thee will keep me awake else; for I know that, notwithstanding your excellent sense, you entertain some of those superstitious ideas which we suck in with our mother's milk, and which constitute the ground of our fears in situations like the present; therefore leave thy door open, if you love me, that you may have ready assistance from me in case of need.'

'My master,' said Wildrake, 'trusts, first, in his Bible, sir, and then in his good sword. He has no idea that the devil can be baffled by the charm of two men lying in one room, still less that the foul fiend can be argued out of existence by the nullifidians of the Rota.'

Everard seized his imprudent friend by the collar, and dragged him off as he was speaking, keeping fast hold of him till they were both in the chamber of Victor Lee, where they had slept on a former occasion. Even then he continued to hold Wildrake, until the servant had arranged the lights and was dismissed from the room; then, letting him go, addressed him with the upbraiding question, 'Art thou not a prudent and sagacious person, who in times like these seek'st every opportunity to argue yourself into a broil, or embroil yourself in an argument. Out on you!'

'Ay, out on me, indeed,' said the Cavalier; 'out on me for a poor tame-spirited creature, that submits to be bandied about in this manner, by a man who is neither better born nor better bred than myself. I tell thee, Mark, you make an unfair use of your advantages over me. Why will you not let me go from you, and live and die after my own fashion?'

'Because, before we had been a week separate, I should hear of your dying after the fashion of a dog. Come, my good friend, what madness was it in thee to fall foul on Harrison, and then to enter into useless argument with Bletson?'

'Why, we are in the devil's house, I think, and I would willingly give the landlord his due wherever I travel. To have sent him Harrison or Bletson now, just as a lunch to stop his appetite, till Crom'——

'Hush! stone walls have ears,' said Everard, looking around him. 'Here stands thy night-drink. Look to thy arms, for we must be as careful as if the Avenger of Blood were behind us. Yonder is thy bed—and I, as thou seest, have one prepared in the parlour. The door only divides us.'

'Which I will leave open, in case thou shouldst holla for assistance, as yonder nullifidian hath it.—But how hast thou got all this so well put in order, good patron?'

'I gave the steward Tomkins notice of my purpose to sleep here.'

'A strange fellow that,' said Wildrake, 'and, as I judge, has taken measure of every one's foot—all seems to pass through his hands.'

'He is, I have understood,' replied Everard, 'one of the men formed by the times—has a ready gift of preaching and expounding, which keeps him in high terms with the Independents; and recommends himself to the more moderate people by his intelligence and activity.'

'Has his sincerity ever been doubted?' said Wildrake.

'Never, that I heard of,' said the colonel; 'on the contrary, he has been familiarly called Honest Joe and Trusty Tomkins. For my part, I believe his sincerity has always kept pace with his interest.—But come, finish thy cup, and to bed.—What, all emptied at one draught?'

'Adzookers, yes—my vow forbids me to make two on't; but, never fear—the nightcap will only warm my brain, not clog it. So, man or devil, give me notice if you are disturbed, and rely on me in a twinkling.' So saying, the Cavalier retreated into his separate apartment, and Colonel Everard, taking off the most cumbrous part of his dress, lay down in his hose and doublet, and composed himself to rest.

He was awakened from sleep by a slow and solemn strain of music, which died away as at a distance. He started up and felt for his arms, which he found close beside him. His temporary bed being without curtains, he could look around him without difficulty; but as there remained in the chimney only a few red embers of the fire which he had arranged before he went to sleep, it was impossible he could discern anything. He felt, therefore, in spite of his natural courage, that undefined and thrilling species of tremor which attends a sense that danger is near, and an uncertainty concerning its cause and character. Reluctant as he was to yield belief to supernatural occurrences, we have already said he was not absolutely incredulous; as perhaps, even in this more sceptical age, there are many fewer complete

and absolute infidels on this particular than give themselves out for such. Uncertain whether he had not dreamed of these sounds which seemed yet in his ears, he was unwilling to risk the raillery of his friend by summoning him to his assistance. He sat up, therefore, in his bed, not without experiencing that nervous agitation to which brave men as well as cowards are subject; with this difference, that the one sinks under it, like the vine under the hailstorm, and the other collects his energies to shake it off, as the cedar of Lebanon is said to elevate its boughs to disperse the snow which accumulates upon them.

The story of Harrison, in his own absolute despite, and notwithstanding a secret suspicion which he had of trick or connivance, returned on his mind at this dead and solitary hour. Harrison, he remembered, had described the vision by a circumstance of its appearance different from that which his own remark had been calculated to suggest to the mind of the visionary;—that bloody napkin, always pressed to the side, was then a circumstance present either to his bodily eye or to that of his agitated imagination. Did, then, the murdered revisit the living haunts of those who had forced them from the stage with all their sins unaccounted for? And if they did, might not the same permission authorize other visitations of a similar nature, to warn—to instruct—to punish? Rash are they, was his conclusion, and credulous, who receive as truth every tale of the kind; but no less rash may it be, to limit the power of the Creator over the works which he has made, and to suppose that, by the permission of the Author of nature, the laws of nature may not, in peculiar cases, and for high purposes, be temporarily suspended.

While these thoughts passed through Everard's mind, feelings unknown to him, even when he stood first on the rough and perilous edge of battle, gained ground upon him. He feared he knew not what; and where an open and discernible peril would have drawn out his courage, the absolute uncertainty of his situation increased his sense of the danger. He felt an almost irresistible desire to spring from his bed and heap fuel on the dying embers, expecting by the blaze to see some strange sight in his chamber. He was also strongly tempted to awaken Wildrake; but shame, stronger than fear itself, checked these impulses. What! should it be thought that Markham Everard, held one of the best soldiers who had drawn a sword in this sad war—Markham Everard, who had obtained such distinguished rank in the army of the Parliament, though so young in years, was afraid of remaining by himself in a twilight room at midnight? It never should be said.

This was, however, no charm for his unpleasant current of thought. There rushed on his mind the various traditions of Victor Lee's chamber, which, though he had often despised them as vague, unauthenticated, and inconsistent rumours, engendered by ancient superstition, and transmitted from generation to generation by loquacious credulity, had something in them which did not tend to allay the present unpleasant state of his nerves. Then, when he recollected the events of that very afternoon, the weapon pressed against his throat, and the strong arm which threw him backward on the floor—if the remembrance served to contradict the idea of flitting phantoms and unreal daggers, it certainly induced him to believe that there was in some part of this extensive mansion a party of Cavaliers, or malignants, harboured, who might arise in the night, overpower the guards, and execute upon them all, but on Harrison in particular, as one of the regicide judges, that vengeance which was so eagerly thirsted for by the attached followers of the slaughtered monarch.

He endeavoured to console himself on this subject by the number and position of the guards, yet still was dissatisfied with himself for not having taken yet more exact precautions, and for keeping an extorted promise of silence which might consign so many of his party to the danger of assassination. These thoughts, connected with his military duties, awakened another train of reflections. He bethought himself that all he could now do was to visit the sentries, and ascertain that they were awake, alert, on the watch, and so situated that in time of need they might be ready to support each other.—'This better befits me,' he thought, 'than to lie here like a child, frightening myself with the old woman's legend, which I have laughed at when a boy. What although old Victor Lee was a sacrilegious man, as common report goes, and brewed ale in the font which he brought from the ancient palace of Holyrood,* while church and building were in flames? And what although his eldest son was when a child scalded to death in the same vessel? How many churches have been demolished since his time? How many fonts desecrated? So many, indeed, that, were the vengeance of Heaven to visit such aggressions in a supernatural manner, no corner in England, no, not the most petty parish church, but would have its apparition.—Tush, these are idle fancies, unworthy, especially, to be entertained by those educated to believe that sanctity resides in the intention and the act, not in the buildings or fonts, or the form of worship.'

As thus he called together the articles of his Calvinistic creed, the bell of the great clock (a token seldom silent in such narratives) tolled three, and was immediately followed by the hoarse call of the sentinels through vault and gallery, up-stairs and beneath, challenging and answering each other with the usual watchword, 'All's well.' Their voices mingled with the deep boom of the bell, yet ceased before that was silent, and when they had died away, the tingling echo of the prolonged knell was scarcely audible. Ere yet that last distant tingling had finally subsided into silence, it seemed as if it again was awakened; and Everard could hardly judge at first whether a new echo had taken up the falling cadence, or whether some other and separate sound was disturbing anew the silence to which the deep knell had, as its voice ceased,

* [Holyrood Abbey and Palace were destroyed by the English, the former being burned, in 1544, when the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, invaded Scotland.]

consigned the ancient mansion and the woods around it.

But the doubt was soon cleared up. The musical tones which had mingled with the dying echoes of the knell seemed at first to prolong, and afterwards to survive them. A wild strain of melody, beginning at a distance, and growing louder as it advanced, seemed to pass from room to room, from cabinet to gallery, from hall to bower, through the deserted and dishonoured ruins of the ancient residence of so many sovereigns; and, as it approached, no soldier gave alarm, nor did any of the numerous guests of various degrees, who spent an unpleasant and terrified night in that ancient mansion, seem to dare to announce to each other the inexplicable cause of apprehension.

Everard's excited state of mind did not permit him to be so passive. The sounds approached so nigh that it seemed they were performing, in the very next apartment, a solemn service for the dead, when he gave the alarm, by calling loudly to his trusty attendant and friend Wildrake, who slumbered in the next chamber with only a door betwixt them, and even that ajar.

'Wildrake—Wildrake!—Up—up! Dost thou not hear the alarm?'

There was no answer from Wildrake, though the musical sounds which now rung through the apartment, as if the performers had actually been within its precincts, would have been sufficient to awaken a sleeping person, even without the shout of his comrade and patron.

'Alarm!—Roger Wildrake—alarm!' again called Everard, getting out of bed and grasping his weapons—'Get a light, and cry alarm!'

There was no answer. His voice died away as the sound of the music seemed also to die; and the same soft, sweet voice, which still to his thinking resembled that of Alice Lee, was heard in his apartment, and, as he thought, at no distance from him.

'Your comrade will not answer,' said the low soft voice. 'Those only hear the alarm whose consciences feel the call!'

'Again this mummery!' said Everard. 'I am better armed than I was of late; and but for the sound of that voice, the speaker had bought his trifling dear.'

It was singular, we may observe in passing, that the instant the distinct sounds of the human voice were heard by Everard, all idea of supernatural interference was at an end, and the charm by which he had been formerly fettered appeared to be broken; so much is the influence of imaginary or superstitious terror dependent (so far as respects strong judgments at least) upon what is vague or ambiguous; and so readily do distinct tones and express ideas bring such judgments back to the current of ordinary life. The voice returned answer, as addressing his thoughts as well as his words—

'We laugh at the weapons thou thinkest should terrify us. Over the guardians of Woodstock they have no power. Fire, if thou wilt and try the effect of thy weapons. But know, it is not our purpose to harm thee; thou art of a falcon breed, and noble in thy disposition, though, unreclaimed and ill-nurtured thou hauntest with kites and carrion-crows. Wing thy flight from hence on the morrow, for, if thou tarriest with the bats, owls, vultures, and ravens which have thought to nestle here, thou wilt inevitably share their fate. Away, then, that these halls may be swept and garnished for the reception of those who have a better right to inhabit them.'

Everard answered in a raised voice,—'Once more I warn you, think not to defy me in vain. I am no child to be frightened by goblins tales; and no coward, armed as I am, to be alarmed at the threats of banditti. If I give you a moment's indulgence, it is for the sake of dear and misguided friends, who may be concerned with this dangerous gambol. Know, I can bring a troop of soldiers round the castle, who will search its most inward recesses for the author of this audacious frolic; and if that search should fail, it will cost but a few barrels of gunpowder to make the mansion a heap of ruins, and bury under them the authors of such an ill-judged pastime.'

'You speak proudly, Sir Colonel,' said another voice, similar to that harsher and stronger tone by which he had been addressed in the gallery; 'try your courage in this direction.'

'You should not dare me twice,' said Colonel Everard, 'had I a glimpse of light to take aim by.'

As he spoke, a sudden gleam of light was thrown with a brilliancy which almost dazzled the speaker, showing distinctly a form somewhat resembling that of Victor Lee, as represented in his picture, holding in one hand a lady completely veiled and in the other his leading-staff, or truncheon. Both figures were animated, and, as it appeared, standing within six feet of him.

'Were it not for the woman,' said Everard, 'I would not be thus mortally dared.'

'Spare not for the female form, but do your worst,' replied the same voice. 'I defy you.'

'Repeat your defiance when I have counted thrice,' said Everard, 'and take the punishment of your insolence. Once—I have cocked my pistol—Twice—I never missed my aim—By all that is sacred, I fire if you do not withdraw. When I pronounce the next number, I will shoot you dead where you stand. I am yet unwilling to shed blood—I give you another chance of flight—once—twice—THRICE!'

Everard aimed at the bosom, and discharged his pistol. The figure waved its arm in an attitude of scorn; and a loud laugh arose, during which the light, as gradually growing weaker, danced and glimmered upon the apparition of the aged knight, and then disappeared. Everard's life-blood ran cold to his heart—'Had he been of human mould,' he thought, 'the bullet must have pierced him—but I have neither will nor power to fight with supernatural beings.'

The feeling of oppression was now so strong as to be actually sickening. He groped his way, however, to the fireside, and flung on the embers, which were yet gleaming, a handful of dry fuel. It presently blazed, and afforded him light to see the room in every direction. He looked cautiously, almost timidly, around, and half expected some horrible phantom to become visible.

But he saw nothing save the old furniture, the reading-desk, and other articles, which had been left in the same state as when Sir Henry Lee departed. He felt an uncontrollable desire, mingled with much repugnance, to look at the portrait of the ancient knight, which the form he had seen so strongly resembled. He hesitated betwixt the opposing feelings, but at length snatched, with desperate resolution, the taper which he had extinguished, and re-lighted it ere the blaze of the fuel had again died away. He held it up to the ancient portrait of Victor Lee, and gazed on it with eager curiosity, not unmingled with fear. Almost the childish terrors of his earlier days returned, and he thought the severe pale eye of the ancient warrior followed his, and menaced him with its displeasure. And although he quickly argued himself out of such an absurd belief, yet the mixed feelings of his mind were expressed in words that seemed half addressed to the ancient portrait.

'Soul of my mother's ancestor,' he said, 'be it for weal or for woe, by designing men, or by supernatural beings, that these ancient halls are disturbed, I am resolved to leave them on the morrow.'

'I rejoice to hear it, with all my soul,' said a voice behind him.

He turned, saw a tall figure in white, with a sort of turban upon its head, and, dropping the candle in the exertion, instantly grappled with it.

'*Thou* at least art palpable,' he said.

'Palpable?' answered he whom he grasped so strongly—''Sdeath, methinks you might know that without the risk of choking me; and if you loose me not, I'll show you that two can play at the game of wrestling.'

'Roger Wildrake!' said Everard, letting the Cavalier loose, and stepping back.

'Roger Wildrake? ay, truly. Did you take me for Roger Bacon, come to help you to raise the devil?—for the place smells of sulphur consumedly.'

'It is the pistol I fired—Did you not hear it?'

'Why, yes, it was the first thing waked me—for that nightcap which I pulled on made me sleep like a dormouse—Pshaw, I feel my brains giddy with it yet.'

'And wherefore came you not on the instant?—I never needed help more.'

'I came as fast as I could,' answered Wildrake; 'but it was some time ere I got my senses collected, for I was dreaming of that cursed field at Naseby—and then the door of my room was shut, and hard to open, till I played the locksmith with my foot.'

'How! it was open when I went to bed,' said Everard.

'It was locked when I came out of bed, though,' said Wildrake, 'and I marvel you heard me not when I forced it open.'

'My mind was occupied otherwise,' said Everard.

'Well,' said Wildrake, 'but what has happened?—Here am I bolt upright, and ready to fight, if this yawning fit will give me leave—Mother Redcap's* mightiest is weaker than I drank last night by a bushel to a barleycorn—I have quaffed the very elixir of malt—Ha—yaw.'

'And some opiate besides, I should think,' said Everard.

'Very like—very like—less than the pistol-shot would not waken me; even me, who, with but an ordinary grace-cup, sleep as lightly as a maiden on the first of May, when she watches for the earliest beam to go to gather dew. But what are you about to do next?'

'Nothing,' answered Everard.

'Nothing?' said Wildrake in surprise.

'I speak it,' said Colonel Everard, 'less for your information than for that of others who may hear me, that I will leave the Lodge this morning, and, if it is possible, remove the Commissioners.'

'Hark!' said Wildrake, 'do you not hear some noise like the distant sound of the applause of a theatre? The goblins of the place rejoice in your departure.'

'I shall leave Woodstock,' said Everard, 'to the occupation of my uncle Sir Henry Lee and his family, if they choose to resume it; not that I am frightened into this as a concession to the series of artifices which have been played off on this occasion, but solely because such was my intention from the beginning. But let me warn' (he added, raising his voice)—'let me warn the parties concerned in this combination, that, though it may pass off successfully on a fool like Desborough, a visionary like Harrison, a coward like Bletson'——

Here a voice distinctly spoke, as standing near them—'or a wise, moderate, and resolute person like Colonel Everard.'

'By Heaven, the voice came from the picture,' said Wildrake, drawing his sword; 'I will pink his plated armour for him.'

'Offer no violence,' said Everard, startled at the interruption, but resuming with firmness what he was saying—'Let those engaged be aware that, however this string of artifices may be immediately successful, it must, when closely looked into, be attended with the punishment of all concerned—the total demolition of Woodstock and the irremediable downfall of the family of Lee. Let all concerned think of this, and desist in time.'

He paused, and almost expected a reply, but none such came.

'It is a very odd thing,' said Wildrake; 'but yaw-ha—my brain cannot compass it just now; it whirls round like a toast in a bowl of muscadine. I must sit down—ha-yaw—and discuss it at leisure—Gramercy, good elbow-chair.'

So saying, he threw himself, or rather sank gradually down on a large easy-chair which had been often pressed by the weight of stout Sir Henry Lee, and in an instant was sound asleep. Everard was far from feeling the same inclination for slumber, yet his mind was relieved of the apprehension of any further visitation that night; for he considered his treaty to evacuate Woodstock as made known to, and accepted in all probability by, those whom the intrusion of the Commissioners had induced to take such singular measures for expelling them. His opinion, which had for a time bent towards a belief in something supernatural in the disturb-

* [An old nurse at Hungerford Stairs, London. See p. 579 of Fortunes of Nigel.]

ances, had now returned to the more rational mode of accounting for them by dexterous combination, for which such a mansion as Woodstock afforded so many facilities.

He heaped the hearth with fuel, lighted the candle, and, examining poor Wildrake's situation, adjusted him as easily in the chair as he could, the Cavalier stirring his limbs no more than an infant. His situation went far, in his patron's opinion, to infer trick and confederacy, for ghosts have no occasion to drug men's possets. He threw himself on the bed, and, while he thought these strange circumstances over, a sweet and low strain of music stole through the chamber, the words 'Good-night—good-night—good-night,' thrice repeated, each time in a softer and more distant tone, seeming to assure him that the goblins and he were at truce, if not at peace, and that he had no more disturbance to expect that night. He had scarcely the courage to call out a 'good-night;' for, after all his conviction of the existence of a trick, it was so well performed as to bring with it a feeling of fear, just like what an audience experience during the performance of a tragic scene, which they know to be unreal, and which yet affects their passions by its near approach to nature. Sleep overtook him at last, and left him not till broad daylight on the ensuing morning.

CHAPTER XVI.

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyard.
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

WITH the fresh air and the rising of morning, every feeling of the preceding night had passed away from Colonel Everard's mind, excepting wonder how the effects which he had witnessed could be produced. He examined the whole room, sounding both floor and wainscot with his knuckles and cane, but was unable to discern any secret passages; while the door, secured by a strong cross-bolt, and the lock besides, remained as firm as when he had fastened it on the preceding evening. The apparition resembling Victor Lee next called his attention. Ridiculous stories had been often circulated of this figure, or one exactly resembling it, having been met with by night among the waste apartments and corridors of the old palace; and Markham Everard had often heard such in his childhood. He was angry to recollect his own deficiency of courage, and the thrill which he felt on the preceding night, when, by confederacy doubtless, such an object was placed before his eyes.

'Surely,' he said, 'this fit of childish folly could not make me miss my aim—more likely that the bullet had been withdrawn clandestinely from the pistol.'

He examined that which was undischarged—he found the bullet in it. He investigated the apartment opposite to the point at which he had fired, and, at five feet from the floor, in a direct line between the bedside and the place where the appearances had been seen, a pistol-ball had recently buried itself in the wainscot. He had little doubt, therefore, that he had fired in a just direction; and indeed, to have arrived at the place where it was lodged, the bullet must have passed through the appearance at which he aimed, and proceeded point-blank to the wall beyond. This was mysterious, and induced him to doubt whether the art of witchcraft or conjuration had not been called in to assist the machinations of those daring conspirators, who, being themselves mortal, might nevertheless, according to the universal creed of the times, have invoked and obtained assistance from the inhabitants of another world.

His next investigation respected the picture of Victor Lee itself. He examined it minutely as he stood on the floor before it, and compared its pale, shadowy, faintly-traced outlines, its faded colours, the stern repose of the eye and death-like pallidness of the countenance, with its different aspect on the preceding night, when illuminated by the artificial light which fell full upon it, while it left every other part of the room in comparative darkness. The features seemed then to have an unnatural glow, while the rising and falling of the flame in the chimney gave the head and limbs something which resembled the appearance of actual motion. Now, seen by day, it was a mere picture of the hard and ancient school of Holbein; last night, it seemed for the moment something more. Determined to get to the bottom of this contrivance if possible, Everard, by the assistance of a table and chair, examined the portrait still more closely, and endeavoured to ascertain the existence of any private spring by which it might be slipped aside,—a contrivance not unfrequent in ancient buildings, which usually abounded with means of access and escape, communicated to none but the lords of the castle or their immediate confidants. But the panel on which Victor Lee was painted was firmly fixed in the wainscoting of the apartment of which it made a part, and the colonel satisfied himself that it could not have been used for the purpose which he had suspected.

He next aroused his faithful squire, Wildrake, who, notwithstanding his deep share of the 'blessedness of sleep,' had scarce even yet got rid of the effects of the grace-cup of the preceding evening. 'It was the reward,' according to his own view of the matter, 'of his temperance; one single draught having made him sleep more late and more sound than a matter of half-a-dozen, or from thence to a dozen pulls, would have done, when he was guilty of the enormity of rere-suppers,* and of drinking deep after them.'

'Had your temperate draught,' said Everard, 'been but a thought more strongly seasoned, Wildrake, thou hadst slept so sound that the last trump only could have waked thee.'

'And then,' answered Wildrake, 'I should

* Rere-suppers (*quasi arrière*) belonged to a species of luxury introduced in the jolly days of King James's extravagance, and continued through the subsequent reign. The supper took place at an early hour, six or seven o'clock at latest — the rere-supper was a postliminary banquet, a *hors d'œuvre*, which made its appearance at ten or eleven, and served as an apology for prolonging the entertainment till midnight.

have waked with a headache, Mark; for I see my modest sip has not exempted me from that epilogue.—But let us go forth, and see how the night, which we have passed so strangely, has been spent by the rest of them. I suspect they are all right willing to evacuate Woodstock, unless they have either rested better than we or at least been more lucky in lodgings.'

'In that case, I will despatch thee down to Joceline's hut, to negotiate the re-entrance of Sir Henry Lee and his family into their old apartments, where, my interest with the General being joined with the indifferent repute of the place itself, I think they have little chance of being disturbed either by the present or by any new Commissioners.'

'But how are they to defend themselves against the fiends, my gallant Colonel?' said Wildrake. 'Methinks, had I an interest in yonder pretty girl, such as thou dost boast, I should be loath to expose her to the terrors of a residence at Woodstock, where these devils—I beg their pardon, for I suppose they hear every word we say—these merry goblins—make such gay work from twilight till morning.'

'My dear Wildrake,' said the colonel, 'I, as well as you, believe it possible that our speech may be overheard; but I care not, and will speak my mind plainly. I trust Sir Henry and Alice are not engaged in this silly plot; I cannot reconcile it with the pride of the one, the modesty of the other, or the good sense of both, that any motive could engage them in so strange a conjunction. But the fiends are all of your own political persuasion, Wildrake, all true-blue Cavaliers; and I am convinced that Sir Henry and Alice Lee, though they be unconnected with them, have not the slightest cause to be apprehensive of their goblin machinations. Besides, Sir Henry and Joceline must know every corner about the place; it will be far more difficult to play off any ghostly machinery upon him than upon strangers. But let us to our toilet, and when water and brush have done their work, we will inquire what is next to be done.'

'Nay, that wretched Puritan's garb of mine is hardly worth brushing,' said Wildrake; 'and but for this hundredweight of rusty iron, with which thou hast bedizened me, I look more like a bankrupt Quaker than anything else. But I'll make *you* as spruce as ever was a canting rogue of your party.'

So saying, and humming at the same time the Cavalier tune,—

> 'Though for a time we see Whitehall
> With cobwebs hung around the wall,
> Yet Heaven shall make amends for all,
> When the King shall enjoy his own again.'

'Thou forgettest who are without,' said Colonel Everard.

'No—I remember who are within,' replied his friend. 'I only sing to my merry goblins, who will like me all the better for it. Tush, man, the devils are my *bonos socios*, and when I see them, I will warrant they prove such roaring boys as I knew when I served under Lunsford and Goring, fellows with long nails that nothing escaped, bottomless stomachs that nothing filled, —mad for pillaging, ranting, drinking, and fighting,—sleeping rough on the trenches and dying stubbornly in their boots. Ah! those merry days are gone. Well, it is the fashion to make a grave face on't among Cavaliers, and specially the parsons that have lost their tithe-pigs; but I was fitted for the element of the time, and never did or can desire merrier days than I had during that same barbarous, bloody, and unnatural rebellion.'

'Thou wert ever a wild sea-bird, Roger, even according to your name; liking the gale better than the calm, the boisterous ocean better than the smooth lake, and your rough, wild struggle against the wind than daily food, ease, and quiet.'

'Pshaw! a fig for your smooth lake, and your old woman to feed me with brewer's grains, and the poor drake obliged to come swattering whenever she whistles! Everard, I like to feel the wind rustle against my pinions, — now diving, now on the crest of the wave, now in ocean, now in sky—that is the wild-drake's joy, my grave one! And in the Civil War so it went with us—down in one county, up in another, beaten to-day, victorious to-morrow— now starving in some barren leaguer — now revelling in a Presbyterian's pantry—his cellars, his plate-chest, his old judicial thumb-ring, his pretty serving-wench, all at command!'

'Hush, friend,' said Everard; 'remember I hold that persuasion.'

'More the pity, Mark, more the pity,' said Wildrake; 'but, as you say, it is needless talking of it. Let us e'en go and see how your Presbyterian pastor, Master Holdenough, has fared, and whether he has proved more able to foil the foul fiend than have you his disciple and auditor.'

They left the apartment accordingly, and were overwhelmed with the various incoherent accounts of sentinels and others, all of whom had seen or heard something extraordinary in the course of the night. It is needless to describe particularly the various rumours which each contributed to the common stock, with the greater alacrity that in such cases there seems always to be a sort of disgrace in not having seen or suffered as much as others.

The most moderate of the narrators only talked of sounds like the mewing of a cat, or the growling of a dog, especially the squeaking of a pig. They heard also as if it had been nails driven and saws used, and the clashing of fetters, and the rustling of silk gowns, and the notes of music, and in short all sorts of sounds, which have nothing to do with each other. Others swore they had smelt savours of various kinds, chiefly bituminous, indicating a Satanic derivation; others did not indeed swear, but protested, to visions of men in armour, horses without heads, asses with horns, and cows with six legs, not to mention black figures, whose cloven hoofs gave plain information what realm they belonged to.

But these strongly-attested cases of nocturnal disturbances among the sentinels had been so general as to prevent alarm and succour on any particular point, so that those who were on duty called in vain on the *corps-de-garde*, who were trembling on their own post; and an alert enemy might have done complete execution on

the whole garrison. But amid this general *alerte* no violence appeared to be meant, and annoyance, not injury, seemed to have been the goblins' object, excepting in the case of one poor fellow, a trooper, who had followed Harrison in half his battles, and now was sentinel in that very vestibule upon which Everard had recommended them to mount a guard. He had presented his carabine at something which came suddenly upon him, when it was wrested out of his hands and he himself knocked down with the butt-end of it. His broken head, and the drenched bedding of Desborough, upon whom a tub of ditch-water had been emptied during his sleep, were the only pieces of real evidence to attest the disturbances of the night.

The reports from Harrison's apartment were, as delivered by the grave Master Tomkins, that truly the general had passed the night undisturbed, though there was still upon him a deep sleep and a folding of the hands to slumber; from which Everard argued that the machinators had esteemed Harrison's part of the reckoning sufficiently paid off on the preceding evening.

He then proceeded to the apartment doubly garrisoned by the worshipful Desborough and the philosophical Bletson. They were both up and dressing themselves; the former open-mouthed in his feeling of fear and suffering. Indeed, no sooner had Everard entered than the ducked and dismayed colonel made a dismal complaint of the way he had spent the night, and murmured not a little against his worshipful kinsman for imposing a task upon him which inferred so much annoyance.

'Could not his Excellency my kinsman Noll,' he said, 'have given his poor relative and brother-in-law a sop somewhere else than out of this Woodstock, which seems to be the devil's own porridge-pot? I cannot sup broth with the devil; I have no long spoon—not I. Could he not have quartered me in some quiet corner, and given this haunted place to some of his preachers and prayers, who know the Bible as well as the muster-roll? whereas I know the four hoofs of a clean-going nag, or the points of a team of oxen, better than all the books of Moses. But I will give it over at once and for ever; hopes of earthly gain shall never make me run the risk of being carried away bodily by the devil, besides being set upon my head one whole night and soused with ditch-water the next—No, no; I am too wise for that.'

Master Bletson had a different part to act. He complained of no personal annoyances; on the contrary, he declared he should have slept as well as ever he did in his life, but for the abominable disturbances around him, of men calling to arms every half-hour, when so much as a cat trotted by one of their posts—He would rather, he said, 'have slept among a whole sabaoth of witches, if such creatures could be found.'

'Then you think there are no such things as apparitions, Master Bletson?' said Everard. 'I used to be sceptical on the subject; but, on my life, to-night has been a strange one.'

'Dreams, dreams, dreams, my simple Colonel,' said Bletson, though his pale face and shaking limbs belied the assumed courage with which he spoke. 'Old Chaucer, sir, hath told us the real moral on't—He was an old frequenter of the forest of Woodstock, here'——

'Chaser?' said Desborough; 'some huntsman, belike, by his name. Does he walk like Hearne at Windsor?'

'Chaucer,' said Bletson, 'my dear Desborough, is one of those wonderful fellows, as Colonel Everard knows, who live many a hundred years after they are buried, and whose words haunt our ears after their bones are long mouldered in the dust.'

'Ay, ay! well!' answered Desborough, to whom this description of the old poet was unintelligible—'I for one desire his room rather than his company; one of your conjurors, I warrant him. But what says he to the matter?'

'Only a slight spell, which I will take the freedom to repeat to Colonel Everard,' said Bletson; 'but which would be as bad as Greek to thee, Desborough. Old Geoffrey lays the whole blame of our nocturnal disturbance on superfluity of humours,

> Which causen folke to dred in their dreams
> Of arrowes, and of fire with red gleams,
> Right as the humour of Melancholy
> Causeth many a man in sleep to cry
> For fear of great bulls and bears black,
> And others that black devils will them take.'

While he was thus declaiming, Everard observed a book sticking out from beneath the pillow of the bed lately occupied by the honourable member.

'Is that Chaucer?' he said, making to the volume; 'I would like to look at the passage'——

'Chaucer?' said Bletson, hastening to interfere; 'no—that is Lucretius,* my darling Lucretius. I cannot let you see it; I have some private marks.'

But by this time Everard had the book in his hand. 'Lucretius?' he said; 'no, Master Bletson—this is not Lucretius, but a fitter comforter in dread or in danger—Why should you be ashamed of it? Only, Bletson, instead of resting your head, if you can but anchor your heart upon this volume, it may serve you in better stead than Lucretius or Chaucer either.'

'Why, what book is it?' said Bletson, his pale cheek colouring with the shame of detection. 'O, the Bible!' throwing it down contemptuously; 'some book of my fellow Gibeon's; these Jews have been always superstitious—ever since Juvenal's† time, thou knowest—

> Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.

He left me the old book for a spell, I warrant you; for 'tis a well-meaning fool.'

'He would scarce have left the New Testament as well as the Old,' said Everard. 'Come, my dear Bletson, do not be ashamed of the wisest thing you ever did in your life, supposing you took your Bible in an hour of apprehension with a view to profit by the contents.'

Bletson's vanity was so much galled that it overcame his constitutional cowardice. His little thin fingers quivered for eagerness, his

* [A Roman poet, and disbeliever in religious influences.]
† [The greatest of Roman satirists.]

neck and cheeks were as red as scarlet, and his articulation was as thick and vehement as—in short, as if he had been no philosopher.

'Master Everard,' he said, 'you are a man of the sword, sir; and, sir, you seem to suppose yourself entitled to say whatever comes into your mind with respect to civilians, sir. But I would have you remember, sir, that there are bounds beyond which human patience may be urged, sir—and jests which no man of honour will endure, sir—and, therefore, I expect an apology for your present language, Colonel Everard, and this unmannerly jesting, sir—or you may chance to hear from me in a way that will not please you.'

Everard could not help smiling at this explosion of valour, engendered by irritated self-love.

'Look you, Master Bletson,' he said, 'I have been a soldier, that is true, but I was never a bloody-minded one; and, as a Christian, I am unwilling to enlarge the kingdom of darkness by sending a new vassal thither before his time. If Heaven gives you time to repent, I see no reason why my hand should deprive you of it, which, were we to have a rencontre, would be your fate in the thrust of a sword or the pulling of a trigger—I therefore prefer to apologise; and I call Desborough, if he has recovered his wits, to bear evidence that I *do* apologise for having suspected you, who are completely the slave of your own vanity, of any tendency, however slight, towards grace or good sense. And I further apologise for the time that I have wasted in endeavouring to wash an Ethiopian white, or in recommending rational inquiry to a self-willed atheist.'

Bletson, overjoyed at the turn the matter had taken—for the defiance was scarce out of his mouth ere he began to tremble for the consequences—answered with great eagerness and servility of manner,—'Nay, dearest Colonel, say no more of it—an apology is all that is necessary among men of honour—it neither leaves dishonour with him who asks it nor infers degradation on him who makes it.'

'Not such an apology as I have made, I trust,' said the colonel.

'No, no—not in the least,' answered Bletson—'one apology serves me just as well as another, and Desborough will bear witness you have made one, and that is all there can be said on the subject.'

'Master Desborough and you,' rejoined the colonel, 'will take care how the matter is reported, I daresay; and I only recommend to both, that, if mentioned at all, it may be told correctly.'

'Nay, nay, we will not mention it at all,' said Bletson; 'we will forget it from this moment. Only, never suppose me capable of superstitious weakness. Had I been afraid of an apparent and real danger—why, such fear is natural to man—and I will not deny that the mood of mind may have happened to me as well as to others. But to be thought capable of resorting to spells, and sleeping with books under my pillow to secure myself against ghosts,—on my word, it was enough to provoke one to quarrel, for the moment, with his very best friend.—And now, Colonel, what is to be done, and how is our duty to be executed at this accursed place? If I should get such a wetting as Desborough's, why, I should die of catarrh, though you see it hurts him no more than a bucket of water thrown over a post-horse. You are, I presume, a brother in our commission,—how are you of opinion we should proceed?'

'Why, in good time here comes Harrison,' said Everard, 'and I will lay my commission from the Lord-General before you all, which, as you see, Colonel Desborough, commands you to desist from acting on your present authority, and intimates his pleasure accordingly that you withdraw from this place.'

Desborough took the paper and examined the signature.—'It is Noll's signature sure enough,' said he, dropping his under jaw; 'only, every time of late he has made the *Oliver* as large as a giant, while the *Cromwell* creeps after like a dwarf, as if the surname were like to disappear one of these days altogether. But is his Excellency, our kinsman Noll Cromwell (since he has the surname yet), so unreasonable as to think his relations and friends are to be set upon their heads till they have the crick in their neck—drenched as if they had been plunged in a horse-pond—frightened, day and night, by all sort of devils, witches, and fairies, and get not a penny of smart-money? Adzooks (forgive me for swearing), if that's the case I had better home to my farm, and mind team and herd, than dangle after such a thankless person, though I *have* wived his sister. She was poor enough when I took her, for as high as Noll holds his head now.'

'It is not my purpose,' said Bletson, 'to stir debate in this honourable meeting; and no one will doubt the veneration and attachment which I bear to our noble General, whom the current of events, and his own matchless qualities of courage and constancy, have raised so high in these deplorable days.—If I were to term him a direct and immediate emanation of the *Animus Mundi* itself—something which Nature had produced in her proudest hour, while exerting herself, as is her law, for the preservation of the creatures to whom she has given existence—I should scarce exhaust the ideas which I entertain of him. Always protesting that I am by no means to be held as admitting, but merely as granting for the sake of argument, the possible existence of that species of emanation, or exhalation, from the *Animus Mundi* of which I have made mention. I appeal to you, Colonel Desborough, who are his Excellency's relation—to you, Colonel Everard, who hold the dearer title of his friend, whether I have overrated my zeal in his behalf?'

Everard bowed at this pause, but Desborough gave a more complete authentication. 'Nay, I can bear witness to that. I have seen when you were willing to tie his points or brush his cloak, or the like—and to be treated thus ungratefully—and gudgeoned of the opportunities which had been given you'——

'It is not for that,' said Bletson, waving his hand gracefully. 'You do me wrong, Master Desborough—you do indeed, kind sir—although I know you meant it not—No, sir,—no partial consideration of private interest prevailed on me

to undertake this charge. It was conferred on me by the Parliament of England, in whose name this war commenced, and by the Council of State, who are the conservators of England's liberty. And the chance and serene hope of serving the country, the confidence that I—and you, Master Desborough—and you, worthy General Harrison—superior, as I am, to all selfish considerations—to which I am sure you also, good Colonel Everard, would be superior, had you been named in this commission, as I would to Heaven you had—I say, the hope of serving the country, with the aid of such respectable associates, one and all of them—as well as you, Colonel Everard, supposing you to have been of the number, induced me to accept of this opportunity, whereby I might, gratuitously, with your assistance, render so much advantage to our dear mother the Commonwealth of England.—Such was my hope—my trust—my confidence. And now comes my Lord-General's warrant to dissolve the authority by which we are entitled to act. Gentlemen, I ask this honourable meeting (with all respect to his Excellency), whether his commission be paramount to that from which he himself directly holds *his* commission? No one will say so. I ask whether he has climbed into the seat from which the late Man descended, or hath a Great Seal, or means to proceed by prerogative in such a case? I cannot see reason to believe it, and therefore I must resist such doctrine. I am in your judgment, my brave and honourable colleagues; but, touching my own poor opinion, I feel myself under the unhappy necessity of proceeding in our commission as if the interruption had not taken place; with this addition, that the Board of Sequestrators should sit by day at this same Lodge of Woodstock, but that, to reconcile the minds of weak brethren who may be afflicted by superstitious rumours, as well as to avoid any practice on our persons by the malignants, who, I am convinced, are busy in this neighbourhood, we should remove our sittings after sunset to the George Inn in the neighbouring borough.'

'Good Master Bletson,' replied Colonel Everard, 'it is not for me to reply to you; but you may know in what characters this army of England and their General write their authority. I fear me the annotation on this precept of the General will be expressed by the march of a troop of horse from Oxford to see it executed. I believe there are orders out for that effect; and you know by late experience that the soldier will obey his general equally against King and Parliament.'

'That obedience is conditional,' said Harrison, starting fiercely up. 'Know'st thou not, Markham Everard, that I have followed the man Cromwell as close as the bull-dog follows his master?—and so I will yet;—but I am no spaniel, either to be beaten, or to have the food I have earned snatched from me, as if I were a vile cur, whose wages are a whipping, and free leave to wear my own skin. I looked, amongst the three of us, that we might honestly, and piously, and with advantage to the Commonwealth, have gained out of this commission three or it may be five thousand pounds. And does Cromwell imagine I will part with it for a rough word? No man goeth a warfare on his own charges. He that serves the altar must live by the altar—and the saints must have means to provide them with good harness and fresh horses against the unsealing and the pouring forth. Does Cromwell think I am so much of a tame tiger as to permit him to rend from me at pleasure the miserable dole he hath thrown me? Of a surety I will resist; and the men who are here, being chiefly of my own regiment—men who wait and who expect, with lamps burning and loins girded, and each one his weapon bound upon his thigh, will aid me to make this house good against every assault—ay, even against Cromwell himself, until the latter coming—Selah! Selah!'——

'And I,' said Desborough, 'will levy troops and protect your out-quarters, not choosing at present to close myself up in garrison'——

'And I,' said Bletson, 'will do my part, and hie me to town and lay the matter before Parliament, arising in my place for that effect.'

Everard was little moved by all these threats. The only formidable one, indeed, was that of Harrison, whose enthusiasm, joined with his courage, and obstinacy, and character among the fanatics of his own principles, made him a dangerous enemy. Before trying any arguments with the refractory major-general, Everard endeavoured to moderate his feelings, and threw something in about the late disturbances.

'Talk not to me of supernatural disturbances, young man—talk not to me of enemies in the body or out of the body. Am I not the champion chosen and commissioned to encounter and to conquer the Great Dragon and the Beast which cometh out of the sea? Am I not to command the left wing and two regiments of the centre, when the saints shall encounter with the countless legions of Gog and Magog? I tell thee that my name is written on the sea of glass mingled with fire, and that I will keep this place of Woodstock against all mortal men, and against all devils, whether in field or chamber, in the forest or in the meadow, even till the saints reign in the fulness of their glory.'

Everard saw it was then time to produce two or three lines under Cromwell's hand, which he had received from the General, subsequently to the communication through Wildrake. The information they contained was calculated to allay the disappointment of the Commissioners. This document assigned as the reason of superseding the Woodstock Commission, that he should probably propose to the Parliament to require the assistance of General Harrison, Colonel Desborough, and Master Bletson, the honourable member for Littlefaith, in a much greater matter, namely, the disposing of the royal property and disparking of the king's forest at Windsor. So soon as this idea was started, all parties pricked up their ears; and their drooping, and gloomy, and vindictive looks began to give place to courteous smiles, and to a cheerfulness which laughed in their eyes and turned their moustaches upwards.

Colonel Desborough acquitted his right honourable and excellent cousin and kinsman of all species of unkindness; Master Bletson discovered

that the interest of the State was trebly concerned in the good administration of Windsor more than in that of Woodstock. As for Harrison, he exclaimed, without disguise or hesitation, that the gleaning of the grapes of Windsor was better than the vintage of Woodstock. Thus speaking, the glance of his dark eye expressed as much triumph in the proposed earthly advantage as if it had not been, according to his vain persuasion, to be shortly exchanged for his share in the general reign of the Millennium. His delight, in short, resembled the joy of an eagle who preys upon a lamb in the evening with not the less relish, because she descries in the distant landscape a hundred thousand men about to join battle with daybreak, and to give her an endless feast on the hearts and lifeblood of the valiant.

Yet though all agreed that they would be obedient to the General's pleasure in this matter, Bletson proposed, as a precautionary measure, in which all agreed, that they should take up their abode for some time in the town of Woodstock, to wait for their new commissions respecting Windsor; and this upon the prudential consideration, that it was best not to slip one knot until another was first tied.

Each Commissioner, therefore, wrote to Oliver individually, stating, in his own way, the depth and height, length and breadth, of his attachment to him. Each expressed himself resolved to obey the General's injunctions to the uttermost; but, with the same scrupulous devotion to the Parliament, each found himself at a loss how to lay down the commission entrusted to them by that body, and therefore felt bound in conscience to take up his residence at the borough of Woodstock, that he might not seem to abandon the charge committed to them, until they should be called to administrate the weightier matter of Windsor, to which they expressed their willingness instantly to devote themselves, according to his Excellency's pleasure.

This was the general style of their letters, varied by the characteristic flourishes of the writers. Desborough, for example, said something about the religious duty of providing for one's own household, only he blundered the text. Bletson wrote long and big words about the political obligation incumbent on every member of the community, on every person, to sacrifice his time and talents to the service of his country; while Harrison talked of the littleness of present affairs, in comparison of the approaching tremendous change of all things beneath the sun. But although the garnishing of the various epistles was different, the result came to the same, that they were determined at least to keep sight of Woodstock, until they were well assured of some better and more profitable commission.

Everard also wrote a letter in the most grateful terms to Cromwell, which would probably have been less warm had he known more distinctly than his follower chose to tell him, the expectation under which the wily General had granted his request. He acquainted his Excellency with his purpose of continuing at Woodstock, partly to assure himself of the motions of the three Commissioners, and to watch whether they did not again enter upon the execution of the trust, which they had for the present renounced,—and partly to see that some extraordinary circumstances, which had taken place in the Lodge, and which would doubtless transpire, were not followed by any explosion to the disturbance of the public peace. He knew (as he expressed himself) that his Excellency was so much the friend of order, that he would rather disturbances or insurrections were prevented than punished; and he conjured the General to repose confidence in his exertions for the public service by every mode within his power; not aware, it will be observed, in what peculiar sense his general pledge might be interpreted.

These letters, being made up into a packet, were forwarded to Windsor by a trooper, detached on that errand.

CHAPTER XVII.

> We do that in our zeal,
> Our calmer moments are afraid to answer.
> ANONYMOUS.

WHILE the Commissioners were preparing to remove themselves from the Lodge to the inn at the borough of Woodstock, with all that state and bustle which attend the movements of great persons, and especially of such to whom greatness is not entirely familiar, Everard held some colloquy with the Presbyterian clergyman, Master Holdenough, who had issued from the apartment which he had occupied, as it were in defiance of the spirits by whom the mansion was supposed to be disturbed, and whose pale cheek and pensive brow gave token that he had not passed the night more comfortably than the other inmates of the Lodge of Woodstock. Colonel Everard, having offered to procure the reverend gentleman some refreshment, received this reply:—'This day shall I not taste food, saving that which we are assured of as sufficient for our sustenance, where it is promised that our bread shall be given us, and our water shall be sure. Not that I fast, in the papistical opinion that it adds to those merits, which are but an accumulation of filthy rags; but because I hold it needful that no grosser sustenance should this day cloud my understanding, or render less pure and vivid the thanks I owe to Heaven for a most wonderful preservation.'

'Master Holdenough,' said Everard, 'you are, I know, both a good man and a bold one, and I saw you last night courageously go upon your sacred duty, when soldiers, and tried ones, seemed considerably alarmed.'

'Too courageous—too venturous,' was Master Holdenough's reply, the boldness of whose aspect seemed completely to have died away. 'We are frail creatures, Master Everard, and frailest when we think ourselves strongest. O, Colonel Everard,' he added, after a pause, and as if the confidence was partly involuntary, 'I have seen that which I shall never survive!'

'You surprise me, reverend sir,' said Everard; —'may I request you will speak more plainly? I have heard some stories of this wild night, nay, have witnessed strange things myself; but,

methinks, I would be much interested in knowing the nature of your disturbance.'

'Sir,' said the clergyman, 'you are a discreet gentleman; and though I would not willingly that these heretics, schismatics, Brownists, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, and so forth, had such an opportunity of triumph, as my defeat in this matter would have afforded them, yet with you, who have been ever a faithful follower of our Church, and are pledged to the good cause by the great National League and Covenant, surely I would be more open. Sit we down, therefore, and let me call for a glass of pure water, for as yet I feel some bodily faltering; though, I thank Heaven, I am in mind resolute and composed as a merely mortal man may after such a vision.—They say, worthy Colonel, that looking on such things foretells, or causes, speedy death—I know not if it be true; but if so, I only depart, like the tired sentinel when his officer releases him from his post; and glad shall I be to close these wearied eyes against the sight, and shut these harassed ears against the croaking, as of frogs, of Antinomians, and Pelagians, and Socinians, and Arminians, and Arians, and Nullifidians,* which have come up into our England, like those filthy reptiles into the house of Pharaoh.'

Here one of the servants, who had been summoned, entered with a cup of water, gazing at the same time in the face of the clergyman, as if his stupid grey eyes were endeavouring to read what tragic tale was written on his brow; and shaking his empty skull as he left the room, with the air of one who was proud of having discovered that all was not exactly right, though he could not so well guess what was wrong.

Colonel Everard invited the good man to take some refreshment more genial than the pure element, but he declined. 'I am in some sort a champion,' he said; 'and though I have been foiled in the late controversy with the enemy, still I have my trumpet to give the alarm, and my sharp sword to smite withal; therefore, like the Nazarites of old, I will eat nothing that cometh of the vine, neither drink wine nor strong drink, until these my days of combat shall have passed away.'

Kindly and respectfully the colonel anew pressed Master Holdenough to communicate the events that had befallen him on the preceding night; and the good clergyman proceeded as follows, with that little characteristical touch of vanity in his narrative, which naturally arose out of the part he had played in the world, and the influence which he had exercised over the minds of others. 'I was a young man at the University of Cambridge,' he said, 'when I was particularly bound in friendship to a fellow-student, perhaps because we were esteemed (though it is vain to mention it) the most hopeful scholars at our college; and so equally advanced, that it was difficult, perhaps, to say which was the greater proficient in his studies. Only our tutor, Master Purefoy, used to say that, if my comrade had the advantage of me in gifts, I had the better of him in grace; for he was attached to the profane learning of the classics, always unprofitable, often impious and impure; and I had light enough to turn my studies into the sacred tongues. Also we differed in our opinions touching the Church of England, for he held Arminian opinions, with Laud, and those who would connect our ecclesiastical establishment with the civil, and make the Church dependent on the breath of an earthly man. In fine, he favoured Prelacy both in essentials and ceremonial; and although we parted with tears and embraces, it was to follow very different courses. He obtained a living, and became a great controversial writer in behalf of the bishops and of the court. I also, as is well known to you, to the best of my poor abilities, sharpened my pen in the cause of the poor oppressed people, whose tender consciences rejected the rites and ceremonies more befitting a papistical than a reformed Church, and which, according to the blinded policy of the court, were enforced by pains and penalties. Then came the Civil War, and I—called thereunto by my conscience, and nothing fearing or suspecting what miserable consequences have chanced through the rise of these Independents—consented to lend my countenance and labour to the great work, by becoming chaplain to Colonel Harrison's regiment. Not that I mingled with carnal weapons in the field—which Heaven forbid that a minister of the altar should—but I preached, exhorted, and, in time of need, was a surgeon, as well to the wounds of the body as of the soul. Now, it fell, towards the end of the war, that a party of malignants had seized on a strong house in the shire of Shrewsbury, situated on a small island, advanced into a lake, and accessible only by a small and narrow causeway. From thence they made excursions, and vexed the country; and high time it was to suppress them, so that a part of our regiment went to reduce them; and I was requested to go, for they were few in number to take in so strong a place, and the colonel judged that my exhortations would make them do valiantly. And so, contrary to my wont, I went forth with them, even to the field, where there was valiant fighting on both sides. Nevertheless, the malignants, shooting their wall-pieces at us, had so much the advantage, that, after bursting their gates with a salvo of our cannon, Colonel Harrison ordered his men to advance on the causeway, and try to carry the place by storm. Natheless, although our men did valiantly, advancing in good order, yet, being galled on every side by the fire, they at length fell into disorder, and were retreating with much loss, Harrison himself valiantly bringing up the rear, and defending them as he could against the enemy, who sallied forth in pursuit of them, to smite them hip and thigh. Now, Colonel Everard, I am a man of a quick and vehement temper by nature, though better teaching than the old law hath made me mild and patient as you now see me. I could not bear to see our Israelites flying before the Philistines, so I rushed upon the causeway, with the Bible in one hand, and a halberd, which I had caught up, in the other, and turned back the foremost fugitives, by threatening to strike them down, pointing out to them at the same time a priest in his cassock, as they call it, who was among the malignants, and asking them whether

* [All heretical sects.]

they would not do as much for a true servant of Heaven, as the uncircumcised would for a priest of Baal. My words and strokes prevailed; they turned at once, and shouting out, Down with Baal and his worshippers! they charged the malignants so unexpectedly home, that they not only drove them back into their house of garrison, but entered it with them, as the phrase is, pell-mell. I also was there, partly hurried on by the crowd, partly to prevail on our enraged soldiers to give quarter; for it grieved my heart to see Christians and Englishmen hashed down with swords and gunstocks, like curs in the street, when there is an alarm of mad dogs. In this way, the soldiers fighting and slaughtering, and I calling to them to stay their hand, we gained the very roof of the building, which was in part leaded, and to which, as a last tower of refuge, those of the Cavaliers who yet escaped had retired. I was myself, I may say, forced up the narrow winding staircase by our soldiers, who rushed on like dogs of chase upon their prey; and when extricated from the passage, I found myself in the midst of a horrid scene. The scattered defenders were, some resisting with the fury of despair; some on their knees, imploring for compassion in words and tones to break a man's heart when he thinks on them; some were calling on God for mercy; and it was time, for man had none. They were stricken down, thrust through, flung from the battlements into the lake; and the wild cries of the victors, mingled with the groans, shrieks, and clamours of the vanquished, made a sound so horrible, that only death can erase it from my memory. And the men who butchered their fellow-creatures thus, were neither pagans from distant savage lands, nor ruffians, the refuse and offscourings of our own people. They were in calm blood reasonable, nay, religious men, maintaining a fair repute both heavenward and earthward. O, Master Everard, your trade of war should be feared and avoided, since it converts such men into wolves towards their fellow-creatures!'

'It is a stern necessity,' said Everard, looking down, 'and as such alone is justifiable. But proceed, reverend sir; I see not how this storm, an incident but e'en too frequent on both sides during the late war, connects with the affair of last night.'

'You shall hear anon,' said Master Holdenough; then paused as one who makes an effort to compose himself before continuing a relation, the tenor of which agitated him with much violence. —'In this infernal tumult,' he resumed,—'for surely nothing on earth could so much resemble hell, as when men go thus loose in mortal malice on their fellow-creatures,—I saw the same priest whom I had distinguished on the causeway, with one or two other malignants, pressed into a corner by the assailants, and defending themselves to the last, as those who had no hope.—I saw him—I knew him—O, Colonel Everard!'

He grasped Everard's hand with his own left hand, and pressed the palm of his right to his face and forehead, sobbing aloud.

'It was your college companion?' said Everard, anticipating the catastrophe.

'Mine ancient—mine only friend—with whom I had spent the happy days of youth!—I rushed forward—I struggled—I entreated—But my eagerness left me neither voice nor language—all was drowned in the wretched cry which I had myself raised—Down with the priest of Baal—Slay Mattan—slay him were he between the altars!—Forced over the battlements, but struggling for life, I could see him cling to one of those projections which were formed to carry the water from the leads, but they hacked at his arms and hands. I heard the heavy fall into the bottomless abyss below. Excuse me—I cannot go on.'

'He may have escaped.'

'O no, no, no!—the tower was four storeys in height. Even those who threw themselves into the lake from the lower windows, to escape by swimming, had no safety; for mounted troopers on the shore caught the same bloodthirsty humour which had seized the storming party, galloped around the margin of the lake, and shot those who were struggling for life in the water, or cut them down as they strove to get to land. They were all cut off and destroyed. —O may the blood shed on that day remain silent!—O that the earth may receive it in her recesses!—O that it may be mingled for ever with the dark waters of that lake, so that it may never cry for vengeance against those whose anger was fierce, and who slaughtered in their wrath!—And O, may the erring man be forgiven who came into their assembly, and lent his voice to encourage their cruelty!—O, Albany, my brother, my brother, I have lamented for thee even as David for Jonathan!'*

The good man sobbed aloud, and so much did Colonel Everard sympathize with his emotions, that he forbore to press him upon the subject of his own curiosity until the full tide of remorseful passion had for the time abated. It was, however, fierce and agitating, the more so, perhaps, that indulgence in strong mental feeling of any kind was foreign to the severe and ascetic character of the man, and was therefore the more overpowering when it had at once surmounted all restraints. Large tears flowed down the trembling features of his thin and usually stern, or, at least, austere countenance; he eagerly returned the compression of Everard's hand, as if thankful for the sympathy which the caress implied.

Presently after, Master Holdenough wiped his eyes, withdrew his hand gently from that of Everard, shaking it kindly as they parted, and proceeded with more composure: 'Forgive me this burst of passionate feeling, worthy Colonel. I am conscious it little becomes a man of my cloth, who should be the bearer of consolation to others, to give way in mine own person to an extremity of grief, weak at least, if indeed it is not sinful; for what are we, that we should weep and murmur touching that which is permitted? But Albany was to me as a brother. The happiest days of my life, ere my call to mingle myself in the strife of the land had awakened me to my duties, were spent in his company. I—but I will make the rest of my story short.'—Here he drew his chair close to

* Note C. Doctor Michael Hudson.

that of Everard, and spoke in a solemn and mysterious tone of voice, almost lowered to a whisper—'I saw him last night.'

'Saw *him*—saw whom?' said Everard. 'Can you mean the person whom'——

'Whom I saw so ruthlessly slaughtered,' said the clergyman—'my ancient college friend—Joseph Albany.'

'Master Holdenough, your cloth and your character alike must prevent your jesting on such a subject as this.'

'Jesting!' answered Holdenough; 'I would as soon jest on my deathbed—as soon jest upon the Bible.'

'But you must have been deceived,' answered Everard hastily; 'this tragical story necessarily often returns to your mind, and in moments when the imagination overcomes the evidence of the outward senses, your fancy must have presented to you an unreal appearance. Nothing more likely, when the mind is on the stretch after something supernatural, than that the imagination should supply the place with a chimera, while the over-excited feelings render it difficult to dispel the delusion.'

'Colonel Everard,' replied Holdenough, with austerity, 'in discharge of my duty I must not fear the face of man; and therefore I tell you plainly, as I have done before with more observance, that when you bring your carnal learning and judgment, as it is but too much your nature to do, to investigate the hidden things of another world, you might as well measure with the palm of your hand the waters of the Isis. Indeed, good sir, you err in this, and give men too much pretence to confound your honourable name with witch-advocates, free-thinkers, and atheists, even with such as this man Bletson, who, if the discipline of the Church had its hand strengthened, as it was in the beginning of the great conflict, would have been long ere now cast out of the pale, and delivered over to the punishment of the flesh, that his spirit might, if possible, be yet saved.'

'You mistake, Master Holdenough,' said Colonel Everard; 'I do not deny the existence of such preternatural visitations, because I cannot, and dare not, raise the voice of my own opinion against the testimony of ages, supported by such learned men as yourself. Nevertheless, though I grant the possibility of such things, I have scarce yet heard of an instance in my days so well fortified by evidence, that I could at once and distinctly say, 'This must have happened by supernatural agency, and not otherwise.'

'Hear, then, what I have to tell,' said the divine, 'on the faith of a man, a Christian, and, what is more, a servant of our Holy Church; and therefore, though unworthy, an elder and a teacher among Christians. I had taken my post yester evening in the half-furnished apartment, wherein hangs a huge mirror, which might have served Goliath of Gath to have admired himself in, when clothed from head to foot in his brazen armour. I the rather chose this place, because they informed me it was the nearest habitable room to the gallery in which they say you had been yourself assailed that evening by the Evil One.—Was it so, I pray you?'

'By some one with no good intentions I was assailed in that apartment. So far,' said Colonel Everard, 'you were correctly informed.'

'Well, I chose my post as well as I might, even as a resolved general approaches his camp, and casts up his mound as nearly as he can to the besieged city. And, of a truth, Colonel Everard, if I felt some sensation of bodily fear—for even Elias and the prophets, who commanded the elements, had a portion in our frail nature, much more such a poor sinful being as myself—yet was my hope and my courage high; and I thought of the texts which I might use, not in the wicked sense of periapts, or spells, as the blinded Papists employ them, together with the sign of the cross and other fruitless forms, but as nourishing and supporting that true trust and confidence in the blessed promises, being the true shield of faith wherewith the fiery darts of Satan may be withstood and quenched. And, thus armed and prepared, I sat me down to read, at the same time to write, that I might compel my mind to attend to those subjects which became the situation in which I was placed, as preventing any unlicensed excursions of the fancy, and leaving no room for my imagination to brood over idle fears. So I methodized, and wrote down what I thought meet for the time, and peradventure some hungry souls may yet profit by the food which I then prepared.'

'It was wisely and worthily done, good and reverend sir,' replied Colonel Everard. 'I pray you to proceed.'

'While I was thus employed, sir, and had been upon the matter for about three hours, not yielding to weariness, a strange thrilling came over my senses, and the large and old-fashioned apartment seemed to wax larger, more gloomy, and more cavernous, while the air of the night grew more cold and chill. I know not if it was that the fire began to decay, or whether there cometh before such things as were then about to happen, a breath and atmosphere, as it were, of terror, as Job saith in a well-known passage, "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made my bones to shake;" and there was a tingling noise in my ears, and a dizziness in my brain, so that I felt like those who call for aid when there is no danger, and was even prompted to flee when I saw no one to pursue. It was then that something seemed to pass behind me, casting a reflection on the great mirror before which I had placed my writing-table, and which I saw by assistance of the large standing light which was then in front of the glass. And I looked up, and I saw in the glass distinctly the appearance of a man—as sure as these words issue from my mouth, it was no other than the same Joseph Albany—the companion of my youth—he whom I had seen precipitated down the battlements of Clidesthrough Castle into the deep lake below!'

'What did you do?'

'It suddenly rushed on my mind,' said the divine, 'that the stoical philosopher Athenodorus had eluded the horrors of such a vision by patiently pursuing his studies; and it shot at the same time across my mind, that I, a Christian divine, and a Steward of the Mysteries, had less reason to fear evil, and better matter on

which to employ my thoughts, than was possessed by a heathen, who was blinded even by his own wisdom. So, instead of betraying any alarm, or even turning my head around, I pursued my writing, but with a beating heart, I admit, and with a throbbing hand.'

'If you could write at all,' said the colonel, 'with such an impression on your mind, you may take the head of the English army for dauntless resolution.'

'Our courage is not our own, Colonel,' said the divine, 'and not as ours should it be vaunted of. And again, when you speak of this strange vision as an impression on my fancy, and not a reality obvious to my senses, let me tell you once more, your worldly wisdom is but foolishness touching the things that are not worldly.'

'Did you not look again upon the mirror?' said the colonel.

'I did, when I had copied out the comfortable text, "'Thou shalt tread down Satan under thy feet."'

'And what did you then see?'

'The reflection of the same Joseph Albany,' said Holdenough, 'passing slowly as from behind my chair—the same in member and lineament that I had known him in his youth, excepting that his cheek had the marks of the more advanced age at which he died, and was very pale.'

'What did you then?'

'I turned from the glass, and plainly saw the figure which had made the reflection in the mirror retreating towards the door, not fast, nor slow, but with a gliding, steady pace. It turned again when near the door, and again showed me its pale, ghastly countenance, before it disappeared. But how it left the room, whether by the door, or otherwise, my spirits were too much hurried to remark exactly; nor have I been able, by any effort of recollection, distinctly to remember.'

'This is a strange, and, as coming from you, a most excellently well-attested apparition,' answered Everard. 'And yet, Master Holdenough, if the other world has been actually displayed, as you apprehend, and I will not dispute the possibility, assure yourself there are also wicked men concerned in these machinations. I myself have undergone some rencontres with visitants who possessed bodily strength, and wore, I am sure, earthly weapons.'

'O, doubtless, doubtless,' replied Master Holdenough; 'Beelzebub loves to charge with horse and foot mingled, as was the fashion of the old Scottish general, Davie Leslie. He has his devils in the body as well as his devils disembodied, and uses the one to support and back the other.'

'It may be as you say, reverend sir,' answered the colonel.—'But what do you advise in this case?'

'For that I must consult with my brethren,' said the divine; 'and if there be but left in our borders five ministers of the true Kirk, we will charge Satan in full body, and you shall see whether we have not power over him to resist till he shall flee from us. But failing that ghostly armament against these strange and unearthly enemies, truly I would recommend that, as a house of witchcraft and abomination, this polluted den of ancient tyranny and prostitution should be totally consumed by fire, lest Satan, establishing his headquarters so much to his mind, should find a garrison and a fastness from which he might sally forth to infest the whole neighbourhood. Certain it is, that I would recommend to no Christian soul to inhabit the mansion; and if deserted, it would become a place for wizards to play their pranks, and witches to establish their Sabbath, and those who, like Demas, go about after the wealth of this world, seeking for gold and silver, to practise spells and charms to the prejudice of the souls of the covetous. Trust me, therefore, it were better that it were spoiled and broken down, not leaving one stone upon another.'

'I say nay to that, my good friend,' said the colonel; 'for the Lord-General hath permitted, by his licence, my mother's brother, Sir Henry Lee, and his family, to return into the house of his fathers, being indeed the only roof under which he hath any chance of obtaining shelter for his grey hairs.'

'And was this done by your advice, Markham Everard?' said the divine austerely.

'Certainly it was,' returned the colonel.—'And wherefore should I not exert mine influence to obtain a place of refuge for the brother of my mother?'

'Now, as sure as thy soul liveth,' answered the Presbyter, 'I had believed this from no tongue but thine own. Tell me, was it not this very Sir Henry Lee, who, by the force of his buffcoats and his green-jerkins, enforced the Papist Laud's order to remove the altar to the eastern end of the church at Woodstock?—and did not he swear by his beard that he would hang in the very street of Woodstock whoever should deny to drink the King's health?—and is not his hand red with the blood of the saints?—and hath there been a ruffler in the field for Prelacy and high prerogative more unmitigable or fiercer?'

'All this may have been as you say, good Master Holdenough,' answered the colonel; 'but my uncle is now old and feeble, and hath scarce a single follower remaining, and his daughter is a being whom to look upon would make the sternest weep for pity; a being who'——

'Who is dearer to Everard,' said Holdenough, 'than his good name, his faith to his friends, his duty to his religion;—this is no time to speak with sugared lips. The paths in which you tread are dangerous. You are striving to raise the papistical candlestick which Heaven in its justice removed out of its place—to bring back to this hall of sorceries those very sinners who are bewitched with them. I will not permit the land to be abused by their witchcrafts.—They shall not come hither.'

He spoke this with vehemence, and striking his stick against the ground; and the colonel, very much dissatisfied, began to express himself haughtily in return. 'You had better consider your power to accomplish your threats, Master Holdenough,' he said, 'before you urge them so peremptorily.'

'And have I not the power to bind and to loose?' said the clergyman.

'It is a power little available, save over those of your own Church,' said Everard, with a tone something contemptuous.

'Take heed—take heed,' said the divine, who, though an excellent, was, as we have elsewhere seen, an irritable man.—'Do not insult me; but think honourably of the messenger, for the sake of Him whose commission he carries.—Do not, I say, defy me—I am bound to discharge my duty, were it to the displeasing of my twin brother.'

'I can see nought your office has to do in the matter,' said Colonel Everard; 'and I, on my side, give you warning not to attempt to meddle beyond your commission.'

'Right—you hold me already to be as submissive as one of your grenadiers,' replied the clergyman, his acute features trembling with a sense of indignity, so as even to agitate his grey hair; 'but beware, sir, I am not so powerless as you suppose. I will invoke every true Christian in Woodstock to gird up his loins, and resist the restoration of Prelacy, oppression, and malignancy within our borders. I will stir up the wrath of the righteous against the oppressor — the Ishmaelite — the Edomite — and against his race, and against those who support him and encourage him to rear up his horn. I will call aloud, and spare not, and arouse the many whose love hath waxed cold, and the multitude who care for none of these things. There shall be a remnant to listen to me; and I will take the stick of Joseph, which was in the hand of Ephraim, and go down to cleanse this place of witches and sorcerers, and of enchantments, and will cry and exhort, saying—Will you plead for Baal?—will you serve him? Nay, take the prophets of Baal—let not a man escape!'

'Master Holdenough, Master Holdenough,' said Colonel Everard, with much impatience, 'by the tale yourself told me, you have exhorted upon that text once too often already.'

The old man struck his palm forcibly against his forehead, and fell back into a chair as these words were uttered, as suddenly, and as much without power of resistance, as if the colonel had fired a pistol through his head. Instantly regretting the reproach which he had suffered to escape him in his impatience, Everard hastened to apologise, and to offer every conciliatory excuse, however inconsistent, which occurred to him on the moment. But the old man was too deeply affected—he rejected his hand, lent no ear to what he said, and finally started up, saying sternly, 'You have abused my confidence, sir—abused it vilely, to turn it into my own reproach: had I been a man of the sword, you dared not—But enjoy your triumph, sir, over an old man, and your father's friend—strike at the wound his imprudent confidence showed you.'

'Nay, my worthy and excellent friend,' said the colonel——

'Friend!' answered the old man, starting up—'We are foes, sir—foes now, and for ever!'

So saying, and starting from the seat into which he had rather fallen than thrown himself, he ran out of the room with a precipitation of step which he was apt to use upon occasions of irritable feeling, and which was certainly more eager than dignified, especially as he muttered while he ran, and seemed as if he were keeping up his own passion, by recounting over and over the offence which he had received.

'Soh!' said Colonel Everard, 'and there was not strife enough between mine uncle and the people of Woodstock already, but I must needs increase it by chafing this irritable and quick-tempered old man, eager as I knew him to be in his ideas of church-government, and stiff in his prejudices respecting all who dissent from him! The mob of Woodstock will rise; for though he would not get a score of them to stand by him in any honest or intelligible purpose, yet let him cry havoc and destruction, and I will warrant he has followers enow. And my uncle is equally wild and unpersuadable. For the value of all the estate he ever had, he would not allow a score of troopers to be quartered in the house for defence; and if he be alone, or has but Joceline to stand by him, he will be as sure to fire upon those who come to attack the Lodge, as if he had a hundred men in garrison; and then what can chance but danger and bloodshed?'

This progress of melancholy anticipation was interrupted by the return of Master Holdenough, who, hurrying into the room with the same precipitate pace at which he had left it, ran straight up to the colonel, and said, 'Take my hand, Markham—take my hand hastily; for the old Adam is whispering at my heart, that it is a disgrace to hold it extended so long.'

'Most heartily do I receive your hand, my venerable friend,' said Everard, 'and I trust in sign of renewed amity.'

'Surely, surely,' said the divine, shaking his hand kindly; 'thou hast, it is true, spoken bitterly, but thou hast spoken truth in good time; and I think — though your words were severe—with a good and kindly purpose. Verily, and of a truth, it were sinful in me again to be hasty in provoking violence, remembering that which you have upbraided me with'——

'Forgive me, good Master Holdenough,' said Colonel Everard, 'it was a hasty word; I meant not in serious earnest to *upbraid*.'

'Peace, I pray you, peace,' said the divine; 'I say, the allusion to that which you have *most justly* upbraided me with—though the charge aroused the gall of the old man within me, the inward tempter being ever on the watch to bring us to his lure—ought, instead of being resented, to have been acknowledged by me as a favour, for so are the wounds of a friend termed faithful. And surely I, who have by one unhappy exhortation to battle and strife sent the living to the dead—and I fear brought back even the dead among the living—should now study peace and good-will, and reconciliation of difference, leaving punishment to the Great Being whose laws are broken, and vengeance to Him who hath said, I will repay it.'

The old man's mortified features lighted up with a humble confidence as he made this acknowledgment; and Colonel Everard, who knew the constitutional infirmities, and the early prejudices of professional consequence and exclusive party opinion, which he must have subdued ere

arriving at such a tone of candour, hastened to express his admiration of his Christian charity, mingled with reproaches on himself for having so deeply injured his feelings.

'Think not of it—think not of it, excellent young man,' said Holdenough; 'we have both erred—I in suffering my zeal to outrun my charity; you perhaps in pressing hard on an old and peevish man, who had so lately poured out his sufferings into your friendly bosom. Be it all forgotten. Let your friends, if they are not deterred by what has happened at this manor of Woodstock, resume their habitation as soon as they will. If they can protect themselves against the powers of the air, believe me, that if I can prevent it by aught in my power, they shall have no annoyance from earthly neighbours; and assure yourself, good sir, that my voice is still worth something with the worthy Mayor and the good aldermen, and the better sort of housekeepers up yonder in the town, although the lower classes are blown about with every wind of doctrine. And yet further, be assured, Colonel, that should your mother's brother, or any of his family, learn that they have taken up a rash bargain in returning to this unhappy and unhallowed house, or should they find any qualms in their own hearts and consciences which require a ghostly comforter, Nehemiah Holdenough will be as much at their command by night or day, as if they had been bred up within the holy pale of the Church in which he is an unworthy minister; and neither the awe of what is fearful to be seen within these walls, nor his knowledge of their blinded and carnal state, as bred up under a Prelatic dispensation, shall prevent him doing what lies in his poor abilities for their protection and edification.'

'I feel all the force of your kindness, reverend sir,' said Colonel Everard, 'but I do not think it likely that my uncle will give you trouble on either score. He is a man much accustomed to be his own protector in temporal danger, and in spiritual doubts to trust to his own prayers and those of his Church.'

'I trust I have not been superfluous in offering mine assistance,' said the old man, something jealous that his proffered spiritual aid had been held rather intrusive. 'I ask pardon if that is the case, I humbly ask pardon—I would not willingly be superfluous.'

The colonel hastened to appease this new alarm of the watchful jealousy of his consequence, which, joined with a natural heat of temper which he could not always subdue, were the good man's only faults.

They had regained their former friendly footing, when Roger Wildrake returned from the hut of Joceline, and whispered his master that his embassy had been successful. The colonel then addressed the divine, and informed him that, as the Commissioners had already given up Woodstock, and as his uncle, Sir Henry Lee, proposed to return to the Lodge about noon, he would, if his reverence pleased, attend him up to the borough.

'Will you not tarry,' said the reverend man, with something like inquisitive apprehension in his voice, 'to welcome your relatives upon their return to this their house?'

'No, my good friend,' said Colonel Everard; 'the part which I have taken in these unhappy broils, perhaps also the mode of worship in which I have been educated, have so prejudiced me in mine uncle's opinion, that I must be for some time a stranger to his house and family.'

'Indeed! I rejoice to hear it with all my heart and soul,' said the divine. 'Excuse my frankness—I do indeed rejoice; I had thought—no matter what I had thought; I would not again give offence. But truly, though the maiden hath a pleasant feature, and he, as all men say, is in human things unexceptionable, yet—but I give you pain—in sooth, I will say no more unless you ask my sincere and unprejudiced advice, which you shall command, but which I will not press on you superfluously. Wend we to the borough together—the pleasant solitude of the forest may dispose us to open our hearts to each other.'

They did walk up to the little town in company, and, somewhat to Master Holdenough's surprise, the colonel, though they talked on various subjects, did not request of him any ghostly advice on the subject of his love to his fair cousin, while, greatly beyond the expectation of the soldier, the clergyman kept his word, and, in his own phrase, was not so superfluous as to offer upon so delicate a point his unasked counsel.

CHAPTER XVIII.

> Then are the harpies gone—Yet ere we perch
> Where such foul birds have roosted, let us cleanse
> The foul obscenity they've left behind them.
> AGAMEMNON.

THE embassy of Wildrake had been successful, chiefly through the mediation of the Episcopal divine, whom we formerly found acting in the character of a chaplain to the family, and whose voice had great influence on many accounts with its master.

A little before high noon, Sir Henry Lee, with his small household, were again in unchallenged possession of their old apartments at the Lodge of Woodstock; and the combined exertions of Joceline Joliffe, of Phœbe, and of old Joan, were employed in putting to rights what the late intruders had left in great disorder.

Sir Henry Lee had, like all persons of quality of that period, a love of order amounting to precision, and felt, like a fine lady whose dress has been disordered in a crowd, insulted and humiliated by the rude confusion into which his household goods had been thrown, and impatient till his mansion was purified from all marks of intrusion. In his anger he uttered more orders than the limited number of his domestics were likely to find time or hands to execute. 'The villains have left such sulphureous steams behind them, too,' said the old knight, 'as if old Davie Leslie and the whole Scottish army had quartered among them.'

'It may be near as bad,' said Joceline, 'for men say, for certain, it was the devil came down bodily among them, and made them troop off.'

'Then,' said the knight, 'is the Prince of Darkness a gentleman, as old Will Shakespeare

says. He never interferes with those of his own coat, for the Lees have been here, father and son, these five hundred years, without disquiet; and no sooner came these misbegotten churls, than he plays his own part among them.'

'Well, one thing he and they have left us,' said Joliffe, 'which we may thank them for; and that is, such a well-filled larder and buttery as has been seldom seen in Woodstock Lodge this many a day: carcasses of mutton, large rounds of beef, barrels of confectioners' ware, pipes and runlets of sack, muscadine, ale, and what not. We shall have a royal time on't through half the winter; and Joan must get to salting and pickling presently.'

'Out, villain!' said the knight; 'are we to feed on the fragments of such scum of the earth as these? Cast them forth instantly! Nay,' checking himself, 'that were a sin; but give them to the poor, or see them sent to the owners. And hark ye, I will none of their strong liquors I would rather drink like a hermit all my life, than seem to pledge such scoundrels as these in their leavings, like a miserable drawer, who drains off the ends of the bottles after the guests have paid their reckoning, and gone off. And, hark ye, I will taste no water from the cistern out of which these slaves have been serving themselves—fetch me down a pitcher from Rosamond's Spring.'

Alice heard this injunction, and, well guessing there was enough for the other members of the family to do, she quietly took a small pitcher, and, flinging a cloak around her, walked out in person to procure Sir Henry the water which he desired. Meantime, Joceline said, with some hesitation, 'that a man still remained, belonging to the party of these strangers, who was directing about the removal of some trunks and mails which belonged to the Commissioners, and who could receive his honour's commands about the provisions.'

'Let him come hither.' (The dialogue was held in the hall.) 'Why do you hesitate and drumble in that manner?'

'Only, sir,' said Joceline, 'only perhaps your honour might not wish to see him, being the same who, not long since'——

He paused.

'Sent my rapier a-hawking through the firmament, thou wouldst say? Why, when did I take spleen at a man for standing his ground against me? Roundhead as he is, man, I like him the better of that, not the worse. I hunger and thirst to have another turn with him. I have thought on his passado ever since, and I believe, were it to try again, I know a feat would control it. Fetch him directly.'

Trusty Tomkins was presently ushered in, bearing himself with an iron gravity, which neither the terrors of the preceding night, nor the dignified demeanour of the high-born personage before whom he stood, were able for an instant to overcome.

'How now, good fellow?' said Sir Henry; 'I would fain see something more of thy fence, which baffled me the other evening; but truly, I think the light was somewhat too faint for my old eyes. Take a foil, man—I walk here in the hall, as Hamlet says; and 'tis the breathing-time of day with me. Take a foil, then, in thy hand.'

'Since it is your worship's desire,' said the steward, letting fall his long cloak, and taking the foil in his hand.

'Now,' said the knight, 'if your fitness speaks, mine is ready. Methinks the very stepping on this same old pavement hath charmed away the gout which threatened me. Sa—sa—I tread as firm as a gamecock.'

They began the play with great spirit; and whether the old knight really fought more coolly with the blunt than with the sharp weapon, or whether the steward gave him some grains of advantage in this merely sportive encounter, it is certain Sir Henry had the better in the assault. His success put him into excellent humour.

'There,' said he, 'I found your trick—nay, you cheat me not twice the same way. There was a very palpable hit. Why, had I had but light enough the other night—But it skills not speaking of it—Here we leave off. I must not fight, as we unwise Cavaliers did with you Roundhead rascals, beating you so often that we taught you to beat us at last. And good now, tell me why you are leaving your larder so full here? Do you think I or my family can use broken victuals? What, have you no better employment for your rounds of sequestrated beef than to leave them behind you when you shift your quarters?'

'So please your honour,' said Tomkins, 'it may be that you desire not the flesh of beeves, of rams, or of goats. Nevertheless, when you know that the provisions were provided and paid for out of your own rents and stock at Ditchley, sequestrated to the use of the State more than a year since, it may be you will have less scruple to use them for your own behoof.'

'Rest assured that I shall,' said Sir Henry; 'and glad you have helped me to a share of mine own. Certainly I was an ass to suspect your masters of subsisting, save at honest men's expense.'

'And as for the rumps of beeves,' continued Tomkins, with the same solemnity, 'there is a Rump at Westminster, which will stand us of the army much hacking and hewing yet, ere it is discussed to our mind.'

Sir Henry paused, as if to consider what was the meaning of this innuendo; for he was not a person of very quick apprehension. But having at length caught the meaning of it, he burst into an explosion of louder laughter than Joceline had seen him indulge in for a good while.

'Right, knave,' he said, 'I taste thy jest—It is the very moral of the puppet-show. Faustus* raised the devil, as the Parliament raised the army, and then, as the devil flies away with Faustus, so will the army fly away with the Parliament, or the Rump, as thou call'st it, or sitting part of the so-called Parliament. And then, look you, friend, the very devil of all hath my willing consent to fly away with the army in its turn, from the highest general down to the lowest drum-boy. Nay, never look fierce for the matter; remember there is daylight enough now for a game at sharps.'

* [An allusion to the legend of Doctor Faust.]

Trusty Tomkins appeared to think it best to suppress his displeasure; and, observing that the wains were ready to transport the Commissioners' property to the borough, took a grave leave of Sir Henry Lee.

Meantime the old man continued to pace his recovered hall, rubbing his hands, and evincing greater signs of glee than he had shown since the fatal 30th of January.

'Here we are again in the old frank, Joliffe; well victualled, too. How the knave solved my point of conscience!—the dullest of them is a special casuist where the question concerns profit. Look out if there are not some of our own ragged regiment lurking about, to whom a bellyful would be a God-send, Joceline. Then his fence, Joceline, though the fellow foins well, very sufficient well. But thou saw'st how I dealt with him when I had fitting light, Joceline.'

'Ay, and so your honour did,' said Joceline. 'You taught him to know the Duke of Norfolk from Saunders Gardner.* I'll warrant him he will not wish to come under your honour's thumb again.'

'Why, I am waxing old,' said Sir Henry; 'but skill will not rust through age, though sinews must stiffen. But my age is like a lusty winter, as old Will says, frosty but kindly; and what if, old as we are, we live to see better days yet! I promise thee, Joceline, I love this jarring betwixt the rogues of the board and the rogues of the sword. When thieves quarrel, true men have a chance of coming by their own.'

Thus triumphed the old Cavalier, in the treble glory of having recovered his dwelling,—regained, as he thought, his character as a man of fence,—and, finally, discovered some prospect of a change of times, in which he was not without hopes that something might turn up for the royal interest.

Meanwhile, Alice, with a prouder and a lighter heart than had danced in her bosom for several days, went forth with a gaiety to which she of late had been a stranger, to contribute her assistance to the regulation and supply of the household, by bringing the fresh water wanted from Fair Rosamond's Well.

Perhaps she remembered that, when she was but a girl, her cousin Markham used, among others, to make her perform that duty, as presenting the character of some captive Trojan princess, condemned by her situation to draw the waters from some Grecian spring, for the use of the proud victor. At any rate, she certainly joyed to see her father reinstated in his ancient habitation; and the joy was not the less sincere, that she knew their return to Woodstock had been procured by means of her cousin, and that, even in her father's prejudiced eyes, Everard had been in some degree exculpated of the accusations the old knight had brought against him; and that, if a reconciliation had not yet taken place, the preliminaries had been established on which such a desirable conclusion might easily be founded. It was like the commencement of a bridge; when the foundation is securely laid, and the piers raised above the influence of the torrent, the throwing of the arches may be accomplished in a subsequent season.

The doubtful fate of her only brother might have clouded even this momentary gleam of sunshine; but Alice had been bred up during the close and frequent contest of civil war, and had acquired the habit of hoping in behalf of those dear to her, until hope was lost. In the present case, all reports seemed to assure her of her brother's safety.

Besides these causes for gaiety, Alice Lee had the pleasing feeling that she was restored to the habitation and the haunts of her childhood, from which she had not departed without much pain, the more felt, perhaps, because suppressed, in order to avoid irritating her father's sense of his misfortune. Finally, she enjoyed for the instant the gleam of self-satisfaction by which we see the young and well-disposed so often animated, when they can be, in common phrase, helpful to those whom they love, and perform at the moment of need some of those little domestic tasks, which age receives with so much pleasure from the dutiful hands of youth. So that, altogether, as she hasted through the remains and vestiges of a Wilderness already mentioned, and from thence about a bow-shot into the Park, to bring a pitcher of water from Rosamond's Spring, Alice Lee, her features enlivened and her complexion a little raised by the exercise, had, for the moment, regained the gay and brilliant vivacity of expression which had been the characteristic of her beauty in her earlier and happier days.

This fountain of old memory had been once adorned with architectural ornaments in the style of the sixteenth century, chiefly relating to ancient mythology. All these were now wasted and overthrown, and existed only as moss-covered ruins, while the living spring continued to furnish its daily treasures, unrivalled in purity, though the quantity was small, gushing out amid disjointed stones, and bubbling through fragments of ancient sculpture.

With a light step and laughing brow the young Lady of Lee was approaching the fountain usually so solitary, when she paused on beholding some one seated beside it. She proceeded, however, with confidence, though with a step something less gay, when she observed that the person was a female; some menial, perhaps, from the town, whom a fanciful mistress occasionally despatched for the water of a spring supposed to be peculiarly pure, or some aged woman, who made a little trade by carrying it to the better sort of families, and selling it for a trifle. There was no cause, therefore, for apprehension.

Yet the terrors of the times were so great, that Alice did not see a stranger even of her own sex without some apprehension. Denaturalized women had as usual followed the camps of both armies during the Civil War; who, on the one side with open profligacy and profanity, on the other with the fraudful tone of fanaticism or hypocrisy, exercised nearly in like degree their talents for murder or plunder. But it was broad daylight, the distance from the Lodge was but trifling, and though a little alarmed at seeing a stranger where she expected deep solitude, the daughter of the haughty old knight

* [Strokes or movements in fencing.]

had too much of the lion about her, to fear without some determined and decided cause.

Alice walked, therefore, gravely on toward the fount, and composed her looks as she took a hasty glance of the female who was seated there, and addressed herself to her task of filling her pitcher.

The woman, whose presence had surprised and somewhat startled Alice Lee, was a person of the lower rank, whose red cloak, russet kirtle, handkerchief trimmed with Coventry blue, and a coarse steeple hat, could not indicate at best anything higher than the wife of a small farmer, or, perhaps, the helpmate of a bailiff or hind. It was well if she proved nothing worse. Her clothes, indeed, were of good materials; but, what the female eye discerns with half a glance, they were indifferently adjusted and put on. This looked as if they did not belong to the person by whom they were worn, but were articles of which she had become the mistress by some accident, if not by some successful robbery. Her size, too, as did not escape Alice, even in the short perusal she afforded the stranger, was unusual; her features swarthy and singularly harsh, and her manner altogether unpropitious. The young lady almost wished, as she stooped to fill her pitcher, that she had rather turned back, and sent Joceline on the errand; but repentance was too late now, and she had only to disguise as well as she could her unpleasant feelings.

'The blessings of this bright day to one as bright as it is,' said the stranger, with no unfriendly, though a harsh voice.

'I thank you,' said Alice in reply; and continued to fill her pitcher busily, by assistance of an iron bowl which remained still chained to one of the stones beside the fountain.

'Perhaps, my pretty maiden, if you would accept my help, your work would be sooner done,' said the stranger.

'I thank you,' said Alice; 'but, had I needed assistance, I could have brought those with me who had rendered it.'

'I do not doubt of that, my pretty maiden,' answered the female; 'there are too many lads in Woodstock with eyes in their heads—No doubt you could have brought with you any one of them who looked on you, if you had listed?'

Alice replied not a syllable, for she did not like the freedom used by the speaker, and was desirous to break off the conversation.

'Are you offended, my pretty mistress?' said the stranger; 'that was far from my purpose.—I will put my question otherwise.—Are the good dames of Woodstock so careless of their pretty daughters as to let the flower of them all wander about the wild Chase without a mother, or a somebody to prevent the fox from running away with the lamb?—that carelessness, methinks, shows small kindness.'

'Content yourself, good woman, I am not far from protection and assistance,' said Alice, who liked less and less the effrontery of her new acquaintance.

'Alas! my pretty maiden,' said the stranger, patting with her large and hard hand the head which Alice had kept bended down towards the water which she was laving, 'it would be difficult to hear such a pipe as yours at the town of Woodstock, scream as loud as you would.'

Alice shook the woman's hand angrily off, took up her pitcher, though not above half full, and, as she saw the stranger rise at the same time, said, not without fear, doubtless, but with a natural feeling of resentment and dignity, 'I have no reason to make my cries heard as far as Woodstock; were there occasion for my crying for help at all, it is nearer at hand.'

She spoke not without a warrant; for, at the moment, broke through the bushes, and stood by her side, the noble hound Bevis; fixing on the stranger his eyes that glanced fire, raising every hair on his gallant mane as upright as the bristles of a wild boar when hard pressed, grinning till a case of teeth, which would have matched those of any wolf in Russia, were displayed in full array, and, without either barking or springing, seeming, by his low determined growl, to await but the signal for dashing at the female, whom he plainly considered as a suspicious person.

But the stranger was undaunted. 'My pretty maiden,' she said, 'you have indeed a formidable guardian there, where cockneys or bumpkins are concerned; but we who have been at the wars know spells for taming such furious dragons; and therefore let not your four-footed protector go loose on me, for he is a noble animal, and nothing but self-defence would induce me to do him injury.' So saying, she drew a pistol from her bosom, and cocked it—pointing it towards the dog, as if apprehensive that he would spring upon her.

'Hold, woman, hold!' said Alice Lee; 'the dog will not do you harm.—Down, Bevis, couch down.—And ere you attempt to hurt him, know he is the favourite hound of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, the Keeper of Woodstock Park, who would severely revenge any injury offered to him.'

'And you, pretty one, are the old knight's housekeeper, doubtless? I have often heard the Lees have good taste.'

'I am his daughter, good woman.'

'His daughter!—I was blind—but yet it is true, nothing less perfect could answer the description which all the world has given of Mistress Alice Lee. I trust that my folly has given my young mistress no offence, and that she will allow me, in token of reconciliation, to fill her pitcher, and carry it as far as she will permit.'

'As you will, good mother; but I am about to return instantly to the Lodge, to which, in these times, I cannot admit strangers. You can follow me no farther than the verge of the Wilderness, and I am already too long from home: I will send some one to meet and relieve you of the pitcher.' So saying, she turned her back, with a feeling of terror which she could hardly account for, and began to walk quickly towards the Lodge, thinking thus to get rid of her troublesome acquaintance.

But she reckoned without her host; for in a moment her new companion was by her side, not running, indeed, but walking with prodigious long unwomanly strides, which soon brought

her up with the hurried and timid steps of the frightened maiden. But her manner was more respectful than formerly, though her voice sounded remarkably harsh and disagreeable, and her whole appearance suggested an undefined yet irresistible feeling of apprehension.

'Pardon a stranger, lovely Mistress Alice,' said her persecutor, 'that was not capable of distinguishing between a lady of your high quality and a peasant wench, and who spoke to you with a degree of freedom ill befitting your rank, certainly, and condition, and which, I fear, has given you offence.'

'No offence whatever,' replied Alice; 'but, good woman, I am near home, and can excuse your further company.—You are unknown to me.'

'But it follows not,' said the stranger, 'that *your* fortunes may not be known to *me*, fair Mistress Alice. Look on my swarthy brow—England breeds none such—and in the lands from which I come, the sun, which blackens our complexion, pours, to make amends, rays of knowledge into our brains, which are denied to those of your lukewarm climate. Let me look upon your pretty hand'—(attempting to possess herself of it),—'and I promise you, you shall hear what will please you.'

'I hear what does *not* please me,' said Alice, with dignity; 'you must carry your tricks of fortune-telling and palmistry to the women of the village—We of the gentry hold them to be either imposture or unlawful knowledge.'

'Yet you would fain hear of a certain Colonel, I warrant you, whom certain unhappy circumstances have separated from his family; you would give better than silver if I could assure you that you would see him in a day or two—ay, perhaps, sooner.'

'I know nothing of what you speak, good woman; if you want alms, there is a piece of silver—it is all I have in my purse.'

'It were pity that I should take it,' said the female; 'and yet give it me—for the princess in the fairy tale must ever deserve by her generosity the bounty of the benevolent fairy, before she is rewarded by her protection.'

'Take it—take it—give me my pitcher,' said Alice, 'and begone,—yonder comes one of my father's servants. — What ho! — Joceline — Joceline!'

The old fortune-teller hastily dropped something into the pitcher as she restored it to Alice Lee, and, plying her long limbs, disappeared speedily under cover of the wood.

Bevis turned, and backed, and showed some inclination to harass the retreat of this suspicious person, yet, as if uncertain, ran towards Joliffe, and fawned on him, as to demand his advice and encouragement. Joceline pacified the animal, and, coming up to his young lady, asked her with surprise what was the matter, and whether she had been frightened? Alice made light of her alarm, for which, indeed, she could not have assigned any very competent reason, for the manners of the woman, though bold and intrusive, were not menacing. She only said she had met a fortune-teller by Rosamond's Well, and had had some difficulty in shaking her off.

'Ah, the gipsy thief,' said Joceline, 'how well she scented there was food in the pantry?—they have noses like ravens, these strollers. Look you, Mistress Alice, you shall not see a raven, or a carrion-crow, in all the blue sky for a mile round you; but let a sheep drop suddenly down on the greensward, and before the poor creature's dead you shall see a dozen of such guests croaking, as if inviting each other to the banquet.—Just so it is with these sturdy beggars. You will see few enough of them when there's nothing to give, but when hough's in the pot, they will have share on't.'

'You are so proud of your fresh supply of provender,' said Alice, 'that you suspect all of a design on't. I do not think this woman will venture near your kitchen, Joceline.'

'It will be best for her health,' said Joceline, 'lest I give her a ducking for digestion.—But give me the pitcher, Mistress Alice—meeter I bear it than you.—How now? what jingles at the bottom? have you lifted the pebbles as well as the water?'

'I think the woman dropped something into the pitcher,' said Alice.

'Nay, we must look to that, for it is like to be a charm, and we have enough of the devil's ware about Woodstock already—we will not spare for the water—I can run back and fill the pitcher.' He poured out the water upon the grass, and at the bottom of the pitcher was found a gold ring, in which was set a ruby, apparently of some value.

'Nay, if this be not enchantment, I know not what is,' said Joceline. 'Truly, Mistress Alice, I think you had better throw away this gimcrack. Such gifts from such hands are a kind of press-money which the devil uses for enlisting his regiment of witches; and if they take but so much as a bean from him, they become his bond-slaves for life—Ay, you look at the gewgaw, but to-morrow you will find a lead ring and a common pebble in its stead.'

'Nay, Joceline, I think it will be better to find out that dark-complexioned woman, and return to her what seems of some value. So, cause inquiry to be made, and be sure you return her ring. It seems too valuable to be destroyed.'

'Umph! that is always the way with women,' murmured Joceline. 'You will never get the best of them, but she is willing to save a bit of finery.—Well, Mistress Alice, I trust that you are too young and too pretty to be enlisted in a regiment of witches.'

'I shall not be afraid of it till you turn conjuror,' said Alice; 'so hasten to the well, where you are like still to find the woman, and let her know that Alice Lee desires none of her gifts, any more than she did of her society.'

So saying, the young lady pursued her way to the Lodge, while Joceline went down to Rosamond's Well to execute her commission. But the fortune-teller, or whoever she might be, was nowhere to be found; neither, finding that to be the case, did Joceline give himself much trouble in tracking her farther.

'If this ring, which I daresay the jade stole somewhere,' said the under-keeper to himself, 'be worth a few nobles, it is better in honest hands than that of vagabonds. My master has a right to all waifs and strays, and certainly such

a ring, in possession of a gipsy, must be a waif. So I shall confiscate it without scruple, and apply the produce to the support of Sir Henry's household, which is like to be poor enough. Thank Heaven, my military experience has taught me how to carry hooks at my finger-ends—that is trooper's law. Yet, hang it, after all, I had best take it to Mark Everard, and ask his advice —I hold him now to be your learned counsellor in law where Mistress Alice's affairs are concerned, and my learned Doctor, who shall be nameless, for such as concern Church and State and Sir Henry Lee—And I'll give them leave to give mine umbles to the kites and ravens if they find me conferring my confidence where it is not safe.'

CHAPTER XIX.

Being skilless in these parts, which, to a stranger,
Unguided and unfriended, often prove
Rough and inhospitable.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

THERE was a little attempt at preparation, now that the dinner hour was arrived, which showed that, in the opinion of his few but faithful domestics, the good knight had returned in triumph to his home.

The great tankard, exhibiting in bas-relief the figure of Michael subduing the Arch-enemy, was placed on the table, and Joceline and Phœbe dutifully attended; the one behind the chair of Sir Henry, the other to wait upon her young mistress, and both to make out, by formal and regular observance, the want of a more numerous train.

'A health to King Charles!' said the old knight, handing the massive tankard to his daughter; 'drink it, my love, though it be rebel ale which they have left us. I will pledge thee; for the toast will excuse the liquor, had Noll himself brewed it.'

The young lady touched the goblet with her lip, and returned it to her father, who took a copious draught.

'I will not say blessing on their hearts,' said he; 'though I must own they drank good ale.'

'No wonder, sir; they come lightly by the malt, and need not spare it,' said Joceline.

'Say'st thou?' said the knight; 'thou shalt finish the tankard thyself for that very jest's sake.'

Nor was his follower slow in doing reason to the royal pledge. He bowed, and replaced the tankard, saying, after a triumphant glance at the sculpture, 'I had a gibe with that same red-coat about the Saint Michael just now.'

'Red-coat—ha! what red-coat?' said the hasty old man. 'Do any of these knaves still lurk about Woodstock?—Quoit him down-stairs instantly, Joceline.—Know we not Galloway nags?'

'So please you, he is in some charge here, and will speedily be gone.—It is he—he who had a rencontre with your honour in the wood.'

'Ay, but I paid him off for it in the hall, as you yourself saw.—I was never in better fence in my life, Joceline. That same steward fellow is not so utterly black-hearted a rogue as the most of them, Joceline. He fences well—excellent well. I will have thee try a bout in the hall with him to-morrow, though I think he will be too hard for thee. I know thy strength to an inch.'

He might say this with some truth; for it was Joceline's fashion, when called on, as sometimes happened, to fence with his patron, just to put forth as much of his strength and skill as obliged the knight to contend hard for the victory, which, in the long run, he always contrived to yield up to him, like a discreet serving-man.

'And what said this Roundheaded steward of our great Saint Michael's standing cup?'

'Marry, he scoffed at our good saint, and said he was little better than one of the golden calves of Bethel. But I told him he should not talk so, until one of their own Roundheaded saints had given the devil as complete a cross-buttock as Saint Michael had given him, as 'tis carved upon the cup there. I trow that made him silent enough. And then he would know whether your honour and Mistress Alice, not to mention old Joan and myself, since it is your honour's pleasure I should take my bed here, were not afraid to sleep in a house that had been so much disturbed. But I told him we feared no fiends or goblins, having the prayers of the Church read every evening.'

'Joceline,' said Alice, interrupting him, 'wert thou mad? You know at what risk to ourselves and the good Doctor the performance of that duty takes place.'

'O, Mistress Alice,' said Joceline, a little abashed, 'you may be sure I spoke not a word of the Doctor—No, no—I did not let him into the secret that we had such a reverend chaplain. —I think I know the length of this man's foot. We have had a jollification or so together. He is hand and glove with me, for as great a fanatic as he is.'

'Trust him not too far,' said the knight. 'Nay, I fear thou hast been imprudent already, and that it will be unsafe for the good man to come here after nightfall, as is proposed. These Independents have noses like bloodhounds, and can smell out a loyalist under any disguise.'

'If your honour thinks so,' said Jocelyn, 'I'll watch for the Doctor with good will, and bring him into the Lodge by the old condemned postern, and so up to this apartment; and sure this man Tomkins would never presume to come hither; and the Doctor may have a bed in Woodstock Lodge, and he never the wiser; or, if your honour does not think that safe, I can cut his throat for you, and I would not mind it a pin.'

'God forbid!' said the knight. 'He is under our roof, and a guest, though not an invited one.—Go, Joceline; it shall be thy penance, for having given thy tongue too much licence, to watch for the good Doctor, and to take care of his safety while he continues with us. An October night or two in the forest would finish the good man.'

'He's more like to finish our October than our October is to finish him,' said the keeper, and withdrew under the encouraging smile of his patron.

He whistled Bevis along with him to share in his watch; and, having received exact information where the clergyman was most likely to be

found, assured his master that he would give the most pointed attention to his safety. When the attendants had withdrawn, having previously removed the remains of the meal, the old knight, leaning back in his chair, encouraged pleasanter visions than had of late passed through his imagination, until by degrees he was surprised by actual slumber; while his daughter, not venturing to move but on tiptoe, took some needlework, and, bringing it close by the old man's side, employed her fingers on this task, bending her eyes from time to time on her parent, with the affectionate zeal, if not the effective power, of a guardian angel. At length, as the light faded away, and night came on, she was about to order candles to be brought. But, remembering how indifferent a couch Joceline's cottage had afforded, she could not think of interrupting the first sound and refreshing sleep which her father had enjoyed, in all probability, for the last two nights and days.

She herself had no other amusement, as she sat facing one of the great oriel windows, the same by which Wildrake had on a former occasion looked in upon Tomkins and Joceline while at their compotations, than watching the clouds, which a lazy wind sometimes chased from the broad disk of the harvest moon, sometimes permitted to accumulate, and exclude her brightness. There is, I know not why, something peculiarly pleasing to the imagination in contemplating the queen of night, when she is *wading*, as the expression is, among the vapours, which she has not power to dispel, and which on their side are unable entirely to quench her lustre. It is the striking image of patient virtue, calmly pursuing her path through good report and bad report, having that excellence in herself which ought to command all admiration, but bedimmed in the eyes of the world, by suffering, by misfortune, by calumny.

As some such reflections, perhaps, were passing through Alice's imagination, she became sensible, to her surprise and alarm, that some one had clambered up upon the window, and was looking into the room. The idea of supernatural fear did not in the slightest degree agitate Alice. She was too much accustomed to the place and situation; for folk do not see spectres in the scenes with which they have been familiar from infancy. But danger from marauders in a disturbed country was a more formidable subject of apprehension, and the thought armed Alice, who was naturally high-spirited, with such desperate courage, that she snatched a pistol from the wall, on which some firearms hung, and, while she screamed to her father to awake, had the presence of mind to present it at the intruder. She did so the more readily, because she imagined she recognised in the visage, which she partially saw, the features of the woman whom she had met with at Rosamond's Well, and which had appeared to her peculiarly harsh and suspicious. Her father at the same time seized his sword and came forward, while the person at the window, alarmed at these demonstrations, and endeavouring to descend, missed footing, as had Cavaliero Wildrake before, and went down to the earth with no small noise. Nor was the reception on the bosom of our common mother either soft or safe; for, by a most terrific bark and growl, they heard that Bevis had come up and seized on the party, ere he or she could gain their feet.

'Hold fast, but worry not,' said the old knight.—'Alice, thou art the queen of wenches! Stand fast here till I run down and secure the rascal.'

'For God's sake, no, my dearest father!' Alice exclaimed; 'Joceline will be up immediately—Hark!—I hear him.'

There was indeed a bustle below, and more than one light danced to and fro in confusion, while those who bore them called to each other, yet suppressing their voices as they spoke, as men who would only be heard by those they addressed. The individual who had fallen under the power of Bevis was most impatient in his situation, and called with least precaution—'Here, Lee,—Forester,—take the dog off, else I must shoot him.'

'If thou dost,' said Sir Henry, from the window, 'I blow thy brains out on the spot. Thieves, Joceline, thieves! come up and secure this ruffian.—Bevis, hold on!'

'Back, Bevis; down, sir,' cried Joceline. 'I am coming, I am coming, Sir Henry—Saint Michael, I shall go distracted!'

A terrible thought suddenly occurred to Alice; could Joceline have become unfaithful, that he was calling Bevis off the villain, instead of encouraging the trusty dog to secure him? Her father, meantime, moved perhaps by some suspicion of the same kind, hastily stepped aside out of the moonlight, and pulled Alice close to him, so as to be invisible from without, yet so placed as to hear what should pass. The scuffle between Bevis and his prisoner seemed to be ended by Joceline's interference, and there was close whispering for an instant, as of people in consultation.

'All is quiet now,' said one voice; 'I will up and prepare the way for you.' And immediately a form presented itself on the outside of the window, pushed open the lattice, and sprung into the parlour. But almost ere his step was upon the floor, certainly before he had obtained any secure footing, the old knight, who stood ready with his rapier drawn, made a desperate pass, which bore the intruder to the ground. Joceline, who clambered up next with a dark lantern in his hand, uttered a dreadful exclamation when he saw what had happened, crying out, 'Lord in heaven, he has slain his own son!'

'No, no—I tell you no,' said the fallen young man, who was indeed young Albert Lee, the only son of the old knight; 'I am not hurt. No noise, on your lives; get lights instantly.' At the same time, he started from the floor as quickly as he could, under the embarrassment of a cloak and doublet skewered as it were together by the rapier of the old knight, whose pass, most fortunately, had been diverted from the body of Albert by the interruption of his cloak, the blade passing right across his back, piercing the clothes, while the hilt, coming against his side with the whole force of the lunge, had borne him to the ground.

Joceline all the while enjoined silence to every one, under the strictest conjurations. 'Silence,

as you would long live on earth—silence, as ye would have a place in heaven ; be but silent for a few minutes—all our lives depend on it.'

Meantime he procured lights with inexpressible despatch, and they then beheld that Sir Henry, on hearing the fatal words, had sunk back on one of the large chairs, without either motion, colour, or sign of life.

'O, brother, how could you come in this manner?' said Alice.

'Ask no questions—Good God! for what am I reserved!' He gazed on his father as he spoke, who, with clay-cold features rigidly fixed, and his arms extended in the most absolute helplessness, looked rather the image of death upon a monument, than a being in whom existence was only suspended. 'Was my life spared,' said Albert, raising his hands with a wild gesture to Heaven, 'only to witness such a sight as this?'

'We suffer what Heaven permits, young man ; we endure our lives while Heaven continues them. Let me approach.' The same clergyman who had read the prayers at Joceline's hut now came forward. 'Get water,' he said, 'instantly.' And the helpful hand and light foot of Alice, with the ready-witted tenderness which never stagnates in vain lamentations while there is any room for hope, provided with incredible celerity all that the clergyman called for.

'It is but a swoon,' he said, on feeling Sir Henry's palm ; 'a swoon produced from the instant and unexpected shock. Rouse thee up, Albert ; I promise thee it will be nothing save a syncope—A cup, my dearest Alice, and a ribbon or a bandage. I must take some blood —some aromatics, too, if they can be had, my good Alice.'

But while Alice procured the cup and bandage, stripped her father's sleeve, and seemed by intuition even to anticipate every direction of the reverend doctor, her brother, hearing no word, and seeing no sign of comfort, stood with both hands clasped and elevated into the air, a monument of speechless despair. Every feature in his face seemed to express the thought, 'Here lies my father's corpse, and it is I whose rashness has slain him!'

But when a few drops of blood began to follow the lancet—at first falling singly, and then trickling in a freer stream—when, in consequence of the application of cold water to the temples, and aromatics to the nostrils, the old man sighed feebly, and made an effort to move his limbs, Albert Lee changed his posture, at once to throw himself at the feet of the clergyman, and kiss, if he would have permitted him, his shoes, and the hem of his raiment.

'Rise, foolish youth,' said the good man, with a reproving tone ; 'must it be always thus with you? Kneel to Heaven, not to the feeblest of its agents. You have been saved once again from great danger ; would you deserve Heaven's bounty, remember you have been preserved for other purposes than you now think on. Begone, you and Joceline—you have a duty to discharge ; and be assured it will go better with your father's recovery that he see you not for a few minutes. Down—down to the Wilderness, and bring in your attendant.'

'Thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks,' answered Albert Lee ; and, springing through the lattice, he disappeared as unexpectedly as he had entered. At the same time Joceline followed him, and by the same road.

Alice, whose fears for her father were now something abated, upon this new movement among the persons of the scene could not resist appealing to her venerable assistant. 'Good Doctor, answer me but one question. Was my brother Albert here just now, or have I dreamed all that has happened for these ten minutes past? Methinks, but for your presence, I could suppose the whole had passed in my sleep ; that horrible thrust—that death-like, corpse-like old man—that soldier in mute despair ; I must indeed have dreamed.'

'If you have dreamed, my sweet Alice,' said the doctor, 'I wish every sick-nurse had your property, since you have been attending to our patient better during your sleep than most of these old dormice can do when they are most awake. But your dream came through the gate of horn,* my pretty darling, which you must remind me to explain to you at leisure. Albert has really been here, and will be here again.'

'Albert!' repeated Sir Henry ; 'who names my son?'

'It is I, my kind patron,' said the doctor ; 'permit me to bind up your arm.'

'My wound?—with all my heart, Doctor,' said Sir Henry, raising himself, and gathering his recollection by degrees. 'I knew of old thou wert body-curer as well as soul-curer, and served my regiment for surgeon as well as chaplain.—But where is the rascal I killed?—I never made a fairer *stramaçon* in my life. The shell of my rapier struck against his ribs. So, dead he must be, or my right hand has forgot its cunning.'

'Nobody was slain,' said the doctor ; 'we must thank God for that, since there were none but friends to slay. Here is a good cloak and doublet, though, wounded in a fashion which will require some skill in tailor-craft to cure. But I was your last antagonist, and took a little blood from you, merely to prepare you for the pleasure and surprise of seeing your son, who, though hunted pretty close, as you may believe, hath made his way from Worcester hither, where, with Joceline's assistance, we will care well enough for his safety. It was even for this reason that I pressed you to accept of your nephew's proposal to return to the old Lodge, where a hundred men might be concealed, though a thousand were making search to discover them. Never such a place for hide-and-seek, as I shall make good when I can find means to publish my Wonders of Woodstock.'

'But, my son, my dear son,' said the knight ; 'shall I not then instantly see him? and wherefore did you not forewarn me of this joyful event?'

'Because I was uncertain of his motions,' said the doctor, 'and rather thought he was bound for the sea-side, and that it would be best to tell you of his fate when he was safe on board, and in full sail for France. We had appointed to let

* [The ancients held that dreams come through two gates, one of ivory, the other of horn ; and that the latter alone prove true.]

you know all when I came hither to-night to join you. But there is a red-coat in the house whom we care not to trust farther than we could not help. We dared not, therefore, venture in by the hall; and so, prowling round the building, Albert informed us that an old prank of his when a boy consisted of entering by this window. A lad who was with us would needs make the experiment, as there seemed to be no light in the chamber, and the moonlight without made us liable to be detected. His foot slipped, and our friend Bevis came upon us.'

'In good truth, you acted simply,' said Sir Henry, 'to attack a garrison without a summons. But all this is nothing to my son, Albert—where is he?—Let me see him.'

'But, Sir Henry, wait,' said the doctor, 'till your restored strength'——

'A plague of my restored strength, man!' answered the knight, as his old spirit began to awaken within him.—'Dost not remember that I lay on Edgehill Field all night bleeding like a bullock from five several wounds, and wore my armour within six weeks? and you talk to me of the few drops of blood that follow such a scratch as a cat's claw might have made!'

'Nay, if you feel so courageous,' said the doctor, 'I will fetch your son—he is not far distant.'

So saying, he left the apartment, making a sign to Alice to remain, in case any symptoms of her father's weakness should return.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that Sir Henry never seemed to recollect the precise nature of the alarm, which had at once, and effectually as the shock of the thunderbolt, for the moment suspended his faculties. Something he said more than once of being certain he had done mischief with that *stramaçon*, as he called it; but his mind did not recur to that danger as having been incurred by his son. Alice, glad to see that her father appeared to have forgotten a circumstance so fearful (as men often forget the blow, or other sudden cause, which has thrown them into a swoon) readily excused herself from throwing much light on the matter, by pleading the general confusion. And in a few minutes, Albert cut off all further inquiry, by entering the room, followed by the doctor, and throwing himself alternately into the arms of his father and of his sister.

CHAPTER XX.

> The boy is—hark ye, sirrah—what's your name?—
> O, Jacob—ay, I recollect—the same.
>
> CRABBE.

THE affectionate relatives were united as those who, meeting under great adversity, feel still the happiness of sharing it in common. They embraced again and again, and gave way to those expansions of the heart, which at once express and relieve the pressure of mental agitation. At length the tide of emotion began to subside; and Sir Henry, still holding his recovered son by the hand, resumed the command of his feelings which he usually practised.

'So you have seen the last of our battles, Albert,' he said, 'and the King's colours have fallen for ever before the rebels.'

'It is but even so,' said the young man—'the last cast of the die was thrown, and, alas! lost at Worcester; and Cromwell's fortune carried it there, as it has wherever he has shown himself.'

'Well—it can but be for a time—it can but be for a time,' answered his father; 'the devil is potent, they say, in raising and gratifying favourites, but he can grant but short leases.—And the King—the King, Albert—the King—in my ear—close, close!'

'Our last news were confident that he had escaped from Bristol.'

'Thank God for that—thank God for that!' said the knight. 'Where didst thou leave him?'

'Our men were almost all cut to pieces at the bridge,' Albert replied; 'but I followed his Majesty with about five hundred other officers and gentlemen, who were resolved to die around him, until, as our numbers and appearance drew the whole pursuit after us, it pleased his Majesty to dismiss us, with many thanks and words of comfort to us in general, and some kind expressions to most of us in especial. He sent his royal greeting to you, sir, in particular, and said more than becomes me to repeat.'

'Nay, I will hear it every word, boy,' said Sir Henry; 'is not the certainty that thou hast discharged thy duty, and that King Charles owns it, enough to console me for all we have lost and suffered, and wouldst thou stint me of it from a false shamefacedness?—I will have it out of thee, were it drawn from thee with cords!'

'It shall need no such compulsion,' said the young man—'It was his Majesty's pleasure to bid me tell Sir Henry Lee, in his name, that if his son could not go before his father in the race of loyalty, he was at least following him closely, and would soon move side by side.'

'Said he so?' answered the knight—'Old Victor Lee will look down with pride on thee, Albert!—But I forget—you must be weary and hungry.'

'Even so, sir,' said Albert; 'but these are things which of late I have been in the habit of enduring for safety's sake.'

'Joceline!—what ho, Joceline!'

The under-keeper entered, and received orders to get supper prepared directly.

'My son and Doctor Rochecliffe are half starving,' said the knight.

'And there is a lad, too, below,' said Joceline; 'a page, he says, of Colonel Albert's, whose belly rings cupboard too, and that to no common tune; for I think he could eat a horse, as the Yorkshireman says, behind the saddle. He had better eat at the sideboard; for he has devoured a whole loaf of bread and butter, as fast as Phœbe could cut it, and it has not stayed his stomach for a minute—and truly I think you had better keep him under your own eyes, for the steward beneath might ask him troublesome questions if he went below—and then he is impatient, as all your gentlemen pages are, and is saucy among the women.'

'Whom is it he talks of?—what page hast thou got, Albert, that bears himself so ill?' said Sir Henry.

'The son of a dear friend, a noble lord of Scotland, who followed the great Montrose's banner — afterwards joined the King in Scotland, and came with him as far as Worcester. He was wounded the day before the battle, and conjured me to take this youth under my charge, which I did, something unwillingly; but I could not refuse a father, perhaps on his death-bed, pleading for the safety of an only son.'

'Thou hadst deserved an halter hadst thou hesitated,' said Sir Henry; 'the smallest tree can always give some shelter,—and it pleases me to think the old stock of Lee is not so totally prostrate, but it may yet be a refuge for the distressed. Fetch the youth in;—he is of noble blood, and these are no times of ceremony —he shall sit with us at the same table, page though he be; and if you have not schooled him handsomely in his manners, he may not be the worse of some lessons from me.'

'You will excuse his national drawling accent, sir?' said Albert, 'though I know you like it not.'

'I have small cause, Albert,' answered the knight—'small cause.—Who stirred up these disunions?—the Scots. Who strengthened the hands of Parliament, when their cause was well-nigh ruined?—the Scots again. Who delivered up the King, their countryman, who had flung himself upon their protection?—the Scots again. But this lad's father, you say, has fought on the part of the noble Montrose; and such a man as the great Marquis may make amends for the degeneracy of a whole nation.'

'Nay, father,' said Albert, 'and I must add, that though this lad is uncouth and wayward, and, as you will see, something wilful, yet the King has not a more zealous friend in England; and, when occasion offered, he fought stoutly, too, in his defence—I marvel he comes not.'

'He hath taken the bath,' said Joceline, 'and nothing less would serve than that he should have it immediately—the supper, he said, might be got ready in the meantime; and he commands all about him as if he were in his father's old castle, where he might have called long enough, I warrant, without any one to hear him.'

'Indeed?' said Sir Henry, 'this must be a forward chick of the game to crow so early.—What is his name?'

'His name?—it escapes me every hour, it is so hard a one,' said Albert—'Kerneguy is his name—Louis Kerneguy; his father was Lord Killstewers, of Kincardineshire.'

'Kerneguy, and Killstewers, and Kin—what d'ye call it?—Truly,' said the knight, 'these northern men's names and titles smack of their origin — they sound like a north-west wind, rumbling and roaring among heather and rocks.'

'It is but the asperities of the Celtic and Saxon dialects,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'which, according to Verstegan,* still linger in those northern parts of the island.—But peace—here comes supper, and Master Louis Kerneguy.'

Supper entered accordingly, borne in by Joceline and Phœbe, and after it, leaning on a huge knotty stick, and having his nose in the air like a questing hound—for his attention was apparently more fixed on the good provisions that went before him, than anything else—came Master Kerneguy, and seated himself, without much ceremony, at the lower end of the table.

He was a tall, rawboned lad, with a shock head of hair, fiery red, like many of his country, while the harshness of his national features was increased by the contrast of his complexion, turned almost black by the exposure to all sorts of weather, which, in that skulking and rambling mode of life, the fugitive Royalists had been obliged to encounter. His address was by no means prepossessing, being a mixture of awkwardness and forwardness, and showing in a remarkable degree how a want of easy address may be consistent with an admirable stock of assurance. His face intimated having received some recent scratches, and the care of Doctor Rochecliffe had decorated it with a number of patches, which even enhanced its natural plainness. Yet the eyes were brilliant and expressive, and, amid his ugliness—for it amounted to that degree of irregularity—the face was not deficient in some lines which expressed both sagacity and resolution.

The dress of Albert himself was far beneath his quality, as the son of Sir Henry Lee, and commander of a regiment in the royal service; but that of his page was still more dilapidated. A disastrous green jerkin, which had been changed to a hundred hues by sun and rain, so that the original could scarce be discovered, huge clouterly shoes, leathern breeches—such as were worn by hedgers—coarse grey worsted stockings, were the attire of the honourable youth, whose limping gait, while it added to the ungainliness of his manner, showed, at the same time, the extent of his sufferings. His appearance bordered so much upon what is vulgarly called the queer, that even with Alice it would have excited some sense of ridicule, had not compassion been predominant.

The grace was said, and the young squire of Ditchley, as well as Doctor Rochecliffe, made an excellent figure at a meal, the like of which, in quality and abundance, did not seem to have lately fallen to their share. But their feats were child's-play to those of the Scottish youth. Far from betraying any symptoms of the bread and butter with which he had attempted to close the orifice of his stomach, his appetite appeared to have been sharpened by a nine-days' fast; and the knight was disposed to think that the very genius of famine himself, come forth from his native regions of the north, was in the act of honouring him with a visit, while, as if afraid of losing a moment's exertion, Master Kerneguy never looked either to right or left, or spoke a single word to any at table.

'I am glad to see that you have brought a good appetite for our country fare, young gentleman,' said Sir Henry.

'Bread of gude! sir,' said the page, 'an ye'll find flesh, I'se find appetite conforming, ony day o' the year. But the truth is, sir, that the appeteezement has been coming on for three days or four, and the meat in this southland of yours has been scarce, and hard to come by; so,

* [Richard Verstegan, an English antiquary, who died in 1635.]

sir, I'm making up for lost time, as the piper of Sligo said, when he ate a haill side o' mutton.'

'You have been country-bred, young man,' said the knight, who, like others of his time, held the reins of discipline rather tight over the rising generation; 'at least, to judge from the youths of Scotland whom I have seen at his late Majesty's court in former days; they had less appetite, and more—more'—As he sought the qualifying phrase, which might supply the place of 'good manners,' his guest closed the sentence in his own way—'And more meat, it may be—the better luck theirs.'

Sir Henry stared and was silent. His son seemed to think it time to interpose—'My dear father,' he said, 'think how many years have run since the Thirty-eight, when the Scottish troubles first began, and I am sure that you will not wonder that, while the barons of Scotland have been, for one cause or other, perpetually in the field, the education of their children at home must have been much neglected, and that young men of my friend's age know better how to use a broadsword, or to toss a pike, than the decent ceremonials of society.'

'The reason is a sufficient one,' said the knight, 'and since thou sayest thy follower Kernigo can fight, we'll not let him lack victuals, a God's name.—See, he looks angrily still at yonder cold loin of mutton—for God's sake put it all on his plate!'

'I can bide the bit and the buffet,' said the Honourable Master Kerneguy—'a hungry tyke ne'er minds a blaud with a rough bane.'

'Now, God hae mercy, Albert, but if this be the son of a Scots peer,' said Sir Henry to his son, in a low tone of voice, 'I would not be the English ploughman who would change manners with him for his ancient blood, and his nobility, and his estate to boot, an he has one.—He has eaten, as I am a Christian, near four pounds of solid butcher's meat, and with the grace of a wolf tugging at the carcass of a dead horse.—O, he is about to drink at last—Soh!—he wipes his mouth, though, and dips his fingers in the ewer—and dries them, I profess, with the napkin!—there is some grace in him, after all.'

'Here is wussing all your vera gude healths!' said the youth of quality, and took a draught in proportion to the solids which he had sent before; he then flung his knife and fork awkwardly on the trencher, which he pushed back towards the centre of the table, extended his feet beneath it till they rested on their heels, folded his arms on his well-replenished stomach, and, lolling back in his chair, looked much as if he was about to whistle himself asleep.

'Soh!' said the knight—'the Honourable Master Kernigo hath laid down his arms.—Withdraw these things, and give us our glasses—Fill them around, Joceline; and if the devil or the whole Parliament were within hearing, let them hear Henry Lee of Ditchley drink a health to King Charles, and confusion to his enemies!'

'Amen!' said a voice from behind the door.

All the company looked at each other in astonishment, at a response so little expected. It was followed by a solemn and peculiar tap, such as a kind of freemasonry had introduced among Royalists, and by which they were accustomed to make themselves and their principles known to each other, when they met by accident.

'There is no danger,' said Albert, knowing the sign—'it is a friend;—yet I wish he had been at a greater distance just now.'

'And why, my son, should you wish the absence of one true man, who may, perhaps, wish to share our abundance, on one of those rare occasions when we have superfluity at our disposal?—Go, Joceline, see who knocks—and, if a safe man, admit him.'

'And if otherwise,' said Joceline, 'methinks I shall be able to prevent his troubling the good company.'

'No violence, Joceline, on your life,' said Albert Lee; and Alice echoed, 'For God's sake, no violence!'

'No unnecessary violence, at least,' said the good knight; 'for if the time demands it, I will have it seen that I am master of my own house.' Joceline Joliffe nodded assent to all parties, and went on tiptoe to exchange one or two other mysterious symbols and knocks, ere he opened the door. It may be here remarked that this species of secret association, with its signals of union, existed among the more dissolute and desperate class of Cavaliers, men habituated to the dissipated life which they had been accustomed to in an ill-disciplined army, where everything like order and regularity was too apt to be accounted a badge of Puritanism. These were the 'roaring boys' who met in hedge ale-houses, and when they had by any chance obtained a little money or a little credit, determined to create a counter-revolution by declaring their sittings permanent, and proclaimed, in the words of one of their choicest ditties,—

'We'll drink till we bring
In triumph back the King.

The leaders and gentry, of a higher description and more regular morals, did not indeed partake such excesses, but they still kept their eye upon a class of persons, who, from courage and desperation, were capable of serving on an advantageous occasion the fallen cause of royalty; and recorded the lodges and blind taverns at which they met, as wholesale merchants know the houses of call of the mechanics whom they may have occasion to employ, and can tell where they may find them when need requires. It is scarce necessary to add that, among the lower class, and sometimes even among the higher, there were men found capable of betraying the projects and conspiracies of their associates, whether well or indifferently combined, to the governors of the State. Cromwell, in particular, had gained some correspondents of this kind of the highest rank, and of the most undoubted character, among the Royalists, who, if they made scruple of impeaching or betraying individuals who confided in them, had no hesitation in giving the government such general information as served to enable him to disappoint the purposes of any plot or conspiracy.

To return to our story. In much shorter time than we have spent in reminding the reader of these historical particulars, Joliffe had made his mystic communication; and being duly answered as by one of the initiated, he undid the door, and there entered our old friend Roger

Wildrake, Roundhead in dress as his safety and his dependence on Colonel Everard compelled him to be, but that dress worn in a most Cavalier-like manner, and forming a stronger contrast than usual with the demeanour and language of the wearer, to which it was never very congenial.

His Puritanic hat, the emblem of that of Ralpho in the prints to Hudibras, or, as he called it, his felt umbrella, was set most knowingly on one side of the head, as if it had been a Spanish hat and feather; his straight, square-caped, sad-coloured cloak was flung gaily upon one shoulder, as if it had been of three-piled taffeta, lined with crimson silk; and he paraded his huge calf-skin boots, as if they had been silken hose and Spanish leather shoes, with roses on the instep. In short, the airs which he gave himself, of a most thorough-paced wild gallant and Cavalier, joined to a glistening of self-satisfaction in his eye, and an inimitable swagger in his gait, which completely announced his thoughtless, conceited, and reckless character, formed a most ridiculous contrast to his gravity of attire.

It could not, on the other hand, be denied that, in spite of the touch of ridicule which attached to his character, and the loose morality which he had learned in the dissipation of town pleasures, and afterwards in the disorderly life of a soldier, Wildrake had points about him both to make him feared and respected. He was handsome, even in spite of his air of debauched effrontery; a man of the most decided courage, though his vaunting rendered it sometimes doubtful; and entertained a sincere sense of his political principles, such as they were, though he was often so imprudent in asserting and boasting of them, as, joined with his dependence on Colonel Everard, induced prudent men to doubt his sincerity.

Such as he was, however, he entered the parlour of Victor Lee, where his presence was anything but desirable to the parties present, with a jaunty step, and a consciousness of deserving the best possible reception. This assurance was greatly aided by circumstances which rendered it obvious that if the jocund Cavalier had limited himself to one draught of liquor that evening, in terms of his vow of temperance, it must have been a very deep and long one.

'Save ye, gentlemen, save ye.—Save you, good Sir Henry Lee, though I have scarce the honour to be known to you.—Save you, worthy Doctor, and a speedy resurrection to the fallen Church of England.'

'You are welcome, sir,' said Sir Henry Lee, whose feelings of hospitality, and of the fraternal reception due to a Royalist sufferer, induced him to tolerate this intrusion more than he might have done otherwise. 'If you have fought or suffered for the King, sir, it is an excuse for joining us, and commanding our services in anything in our power—although at present we are a family party.—But I think I saw you in waiting upon Master Markham Everard, who calls himself Colonel Everard.—If your message is from him, you may wish to see me in private?'

'Not at all, Sir Henry, not at all.—It is true, as my ill hap will have it, that, being on the stormy side of the hedge—like all honest men, you understand me, Sir Henry—I am glad, as it were, to gain something from my old friend and comrade's countenance—not by truckling or disowning my principles, sir—I defy such practices; —but, in short, by doing him any kindness in my power, when he is pleased to call on me. So I came down here with a message from him to the old Roundheaded son of a —— (I beg the young lady's pardon, from the crown of her head down to the very toes of her slipper)—and so, sir, chancing as I was stumbling out in the dark, I heard you give a toast, sir, which warmed my heart, sir, and ever will, sir, till death chills it; —and so I made bold to let you know there was an honest man within hearing.'

Such was the self-introduction of Master Wildrake, to which the knight replied by asking him to sit down, and take a glass of sack to his Majesty's glorious restoration. Wildrake, at this hint, squeezed in without ceremony beside the young Scotsman, and not only pledged his landlord's toast, but seconded its import, by volunteering a verse or two of his favourite loyal ditty,—'The King shall enjoy his own again.' The heartiness which he threw into his song opened still further the heart of the old knight, though Albert and Alice looked at each other with looks resentful of the intrusion, and desirous to put an end to it. The Honourable Master Kerneguy either possessed that happy indifference of temper which does not deign to notice such circumstances, or he was able to assume the appearance of it to perfection, as he sat sipping sack, and cracking walnuts, without testifying the least sense that an addition had been made to the party. Wildrake, who liked the liquor and the company, showed no unwillingness to repay his landlord, by being at the expense of the conversation.

'You talk of fighting and suffering, Sir Henry Lee. Lord help us! we have all had our share. All the world knows what Sir Henry Lee has done from Edgehill Field downwards, wherever a loyal sword was drawn or a loyal flag fluttered. Ah, God help us! I have done something too. My name is Roger Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln; not that you are ever like to have heard it before, but I was captain in Lunsford's light horse, and afterwards with Goring. I was a child-eater, sir—a babe-bolter.'

'I have heard of your regiment's exploits, sir; and perhaps you may find I have seen some of them, if we should spend ten minutes together. And I think I have heard of your name too. I beg to drink your health, Captain Wildrake of Squattlesea-mere, Lincolnshire.'

'Sir Henry, I drink yours in this pint bumper, and upon my knee; and I would do as much for that young gentleman'—(looking at Albert) —'and the squire of the green cassock too, holding it for green, as the colours are not to my eyes altogether clear and distinguishable.'

It was a remarkable part of what is called by theatrical folk the by-play of this scene, that Albert was conversing apart with Doctor Rochecliffe in whispers, even more than the divine seemed desirous of encouraging; yet, to whatever their private conversation referred, it did not deprive the young colonel of the power of listening

to what was going forward in the party at large, and interfering from time to time, like a watch-dog, who can distinguish the slightest alarm, even when employed in the engrossing process of taking his food.

'Captain Wildrake,' said Albert, 'we have no objection — I mean, my friend and I—to be communicative on proper occasions; but you, sir, who are so old a sufferer, must needs know that at such casual meetings as this men do not mention their names unless they are specially wanted. It is a point of conscience, sir, to be able to say, if your principal, Captain Everard or Colonel Everard, if he be a colonel, should examine you upon oath, I did not know who the persons were whom I heard drink such and such toasts.'

'Faith, I have a better way of it, worthy sir,' answered Wildrake; 'I never can, for the life of me, remember that there were any such and such toasts drunk at all. It's a strange gift of forgetfulness I have.'

'Well, sir,' replied the younger Lee; 'but we, who have unhappily more tenacious memories, would willingly abide by the more general rule.'

'O, sir,' answered Wildrake, 'with all my heart. I intrude on no man's confidence, d—n me—and I only spoke for civility's sake, having the purpose of drinking your health in a good fashion'—(Then he broke forth into melody)—

'Then let the health go round, a-round, a-round, a-round,
Then let the health go round;
For though your stocking be of silk,
Your knee shall kiss the ground, a-ground, a-ground, a-ground,
Your knee shall kiss the ground.'

'Urge it no farther,' said Sir Henry, addressing his son; 'Master Wildrake is one of the old school—one of the tantivy boys; and we must bear a little, for if they drink hard they fought well. I will never forget how a party came up and rescued us clerks of Oxford, as they called the regiment I belonged to, out of a cursed embroglio during the attack on Brentford. I tell you we were enclosed with the cockneys' pikes both front and rear, and we should have come off but ill had not Lunsford's light horse, the babe-eaters as they called them, charged up to the pike's point, and brought us off.'

'I am glad you thought on that, Sir Henry,' said Wildrake; 'and do you remember what the officer of Lunsford's said?'

'I think I do,' said Sir Henry, smiling.

'Well, then, did not he call out, when the women were coming down, howling like sirens as they were—"Have none of you a plump child that you could give us to break our fast upon?"'

'Truth itself!' said the knight; 'and a great fat woman stepped forward with a baby, and offered it to the supposed cannibal.'

All at the table, Master Kerneguy excepted, who seemed to think that good food of any kind required no apology, held up their hands in token of amazement.

'Ay,' said Wildrake, 'the —— a-hem!—I crave the lady's pardon again, from tip of top-knot to hem of farthingale — but the cursed creature proved to be a parish nurse, who had been paid for the child half-a-year in advance. Gad, I took the babe out of the bitch-wolf's hand; and I have contrived, though God knows I have lived in a skeldering sort of way myself, to breed up bold Breakfast, as I call him, ever since. It was paying dear for a jest, though.'

'Sir, I honour you for your humanity,' said the old knight—'Sir, I thank you for your courage—Sir, I am glad to see you here,' said the good knight, his eyes watering almost to overflowing. 'So you were the wild officer who cut us out of the toils? O, sir, had you but stopped when I called on you, and allowed us to clear the streets of Brentford with our musketeers, we would have been at London Stone that day! But your good will was the same.'

'Ay, truly was it,' said Wildrake, who now sat triumphant and glorious in his easy-chair; 'and here is to all the brave hearts, sir, that fought and fell in that same storm of Brentford. We drove all before us like chaff, till the shops, where they sold strong waters, and other temptations, brought us up. Gad, sir, we, the babe-eaters, had too many acquaintances in Brentford, and our stout Prince Rupert was ever better at making way than drawing off. Gad, sir, for my own poor share, I did but go into the house of a poor widow lady, who maintained a charge of daughters, and whom I had known of old, to get my horse fed, a morsel of meat, and so forth, when these cockney pikes of the artillery ground, as you very well call them, rallied, and came in with their armed heads, as boldly as so many Cotswold rams. I sprang down-stairs, got to my horse,—but, egad, I fancy all my troop had widows and orphan maidens to comfort as well as I, for only five of us got together. We cut our way through successfully; and, Gad, gentlemen, I carried my little Breakfast on the pommel before me; and there was such a hollowing and screeching, as if the whole town thought I was to kill, roast, and eat the poor child, so soon as I got to quarters. But devil a cockney charged up to my bonnie bay, poor lass, to rescue little cake-bread; they only cried haro, and out upon me.'

'Alas! alas!' said the knight, 'we made ourselves seem worse than we were; and we were too bad to deserve God's blessing even in a good cause. But it is needless to look back—we did not deserve victories when God gave them, for we never improved them like good soldiers, or like Christian men; and so we gave these canting scoundrels the advantage of us, for they assumed, out of mere hypocrisy, the discipline and orderly behaviour which we, who drew our swords in a better cause, ought to have practised out of true principle. But here is my hand, Captain. I have often wished to see the honest fellow who charged up so smartly in our behalf, and I reverence you for the care you took of the poor child. I am glad this dilapidated place has still some hospitality to offer you, although we cannot treat you to roasted babes or stewed sucklings—eh, Captain?'

'Troth, Sir Henry, the scandal was sore against us on that score. I remember Lacy, who was an old play-actor, and a lieutenant in ours, made drollery on it in a play which was sometimes acted at Oxford, when our hearts

were something up, called, I think, the Old Troop.' *

So saying, and feeling more familiar as his merits were known, he hitched his chair up against that of the Scottish lad, who was seated next him, and who, in shifting his place, was awkward enough to disturb, in his turn, Alice Lee, who sat opposite, and, a little offended, or at least embarrassed, drew her chair away from the table.

'I crave pardon,' said the Honourable Master Kerneguy; 'but, sir,' to Master Wildrake, 'ye hae e'en garr'd me hurt the young lady's shank.'

'I crave your pardon, sir, and much more that of the fair lady, as is reasonable; though, rat me, sir, if it was I set your chair a-trundling in that way. Zooks, sir, I have brought with me no plague, nor pestilence, nor other infectious disorder, that ye should have started away as if I had been a leper, and discomposed the lady, which I would have prevented with my life, sir. Sir, if ye be northern born, as your tongue bespeaks, egad, it was I ran the risk in drawing near you; so there was small reason for you to bolt.'

'Master Wildrake,' said Albert, interfering, 'this young gentleman is a stranger as well as you, under protection of Sir Henry's hospitality, and it cannot be agreeable for my father to see disputes arise among his guests. You may mistake the young gentleman's quality from his present appearance — this is the Honourable Master Louis Kerneguy, sir, son of my Lord Killstewers of Kincardineshire, one who has fought for the King, young as he is.'

'No dispute shall rise through me, sir—none through me,' said Wildrake; 'your exposition sufficeth, sir.—Master Louis Girnigo, son of my Lord Kilsteer, in Gringardenshire, I am your humble slave, sir, and drink your health, in token that I honour you, and all true Scots who draw their Andrew Ferraras on the right side, sir.'

'I'se beholden to you, and thank you, sir,' said the young man, with some haughtiness of manner, which hardly corresponded with his rusticity; 'and I wuss your health in a ceevil way.'

Most judicious persons would have here dropped the conversation; but it was one of Wildrake's marked peculiarities, that he could never let matters stand when they were well. He continued to plague the shy, proud, and awkward lad with his observations. 'You speak your national dialect pretty strongly, Master Girnigo,' said he, 'but I think not quite the language of the gallants that I have known among the Scottish Cavaliers—I knew, for example, some of the Gordons, and others of good repute, who always put an *f* for the *wh*, as *faat* for *what*, *fan* for *when*, and the like.'

Albert Lee here interposed, and said that the provinces of Scotland, like those of England, had their different modes of pronunciation.

'You are very right, sir,' said Wildrake. 'I reckon myself, now, a pretty good speaker of their cursed jargon—no offence, young gentleman; and yet, when I took a turn with some of Montrose's folk, in the South Hielands, as they call their beastly wildernesses (no offence again), I chanced to be by myself, and to lose my way, when I said to a shepherd-fellow, making my mouth as wide, and my voice as broad as I could, *Whore am I ganging till?*—confound me if the fellow could answer me, unless, indeed, he was sulky, as the bumpkins will be now and then to the gentlemen of the sword.'

This was familiarly spoken, and though partly addressed to Albert, was still more directed to his immediate neighbour, the young Scotsman, who seemed, from bashfulness, or some other reason, rather shy of his intimacy. To one or two personal touches from Wildrake's elbow, administered during his last speech, by way of a practical appeal to him in particular, he only answered, 'Misunderstandings were to be expected when men converse in national deea-lects.'

Wildrake, now considerably drunker than he ought to have been in civil company, caught up the phrase, and repeated it:—'Misunderstanding, sir—misunderstanding, sir?—I do not know how I am to construe that, sir; but, to judge from the information of these scratches on your honourable visnomy, I should augur that you had been of late at misunderstanding with the cat, sir?'

'You are mistaken, then, friend, for it was with the dowg,' answered the Scotsman dryly, and cast a look towards Albert.

'We had some trouble with the watch-dogs in entering so late in the evening,' said Albert, in explanation, 'and this youth had a fall among some rubbish, by which he came by these scratches.'

'And now, dear Sir Henry,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'allow us to remind you of your gout, and our long journey. I do it the rather that my good friend your son has been, during the whole time of supper, putting questions to me aside, which had much better be reserved till to-morrow—May we therefore ask permission to retire to our night's rest?'

'These private committees in a merry meeting,' said Wildrake, 'are a solecism in breeding. They always put me in mind of the cursed committees at Westminster.—But shall we to roost before we rouse the night-owl with a catch?'

'Aha, canst thou quote Shakespeare?' said Sir Henry, pleased at discovering a new good quality in his acquaintance, whose military services were otherwise but just able to counterbalance the intrusive freedom of his conversation. 'In the name of merry Will,' he continued,—'whom I never saw, though I have seen many of his comrades, as Alleyn, Hemmings, and so on,—we will have a single catch, and one rouse about, and then to bed.'

After the usual discussion about the choice of the song, and the parts which each was to bear, they united their voices in trolling a loyal glee, which was popular among the party at the time, and in fact believed to be composed by no less a person than Doctor Rochecliffe himself.

* Note D. Cannibalism imputed to the Cavaliers.

Glee for King Charles.

Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up,
And avaunt, ye base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a health to King Charles!

Though he wanders through dangers,
Unaided, unknown,
Dependent on strangers,
Estranged from his own;
Though 'tis under our breath,
Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honour and faith,
And a health to King Charles!

Let such honours abound
As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
And the hand on the sword;
But the time shall come round,
When, 'mid lords, dukes, and earls,
The loud trumpets shall sound
Here's a health to King Charles!

After this display of loyalty, and a final libation, the party took leave of each other for the night. Sir Henry offered his old acquaintance Wildrake a bed for the evening, who weighed the matter somewhat in this fashion: 'Why, to speak truth, my patron will expect me at the borough—but then he is used to my staying out of doors a-nights. Then there's the devil, that they say haunts Woodstock; but, with the blessing of this reverend Doctor, I defy him and all his works—I saw him not when I slept here twice before, and I am sure if he was absent then, he has not come back with Sir Henry Lee and his family. So I accept your courtesy, Sir Henry, and I thank you, as a Cavalier of Lunsford should thank one of the fighting Clerks of Oxon. God bless the King! I care not who hears it, and confusion to Noll and his red nose!' Off he went accordingly with a bottle-swagger, guided by Joceline, to whom Albert, in the meantime, had whispered, to be sure to quarter him far enough from the rest of the family.

Young Lee then saluted his sister, and, with the formality of those times, asked and received his father's blessing with an affectionate embrace. His page seemed desirous to imitate one part of his example, but was repelled by Alice, who only replied to his offered salute with a curtsey. He next bowed his head in an awkward fashion to her father, who wished him a good night. 'I am glad to see, young man,' he said, 'that you have at least learned the reverence due to age. It should always be paid, sir; because in doing so you render that honour to others which you will expect yourself to receive when you approach the close of your life. More will I speak with you at leisure, on your duties as a page, which office in former days used to be the very school of chivalry; whereas of late, by the disorderly times, it has become little better than a school of wild and disordered licence; which made rare Ben Jonson exclaim'——

'Nay, father,' said Albert, interposing, 'you must consider this day's fatigue, and the poor lad is almost asleep on his legs—to-morrow he will listen with more profit to your kind admonitions.—And you, Louis, remember at least one part of your duty—take the candles and light us—here Joceline comes to show us the way. Once more, good-night, good Doctor Rochecliffe—good-night, all.'

CHAPTER XXI.

Groom. Hail, noble prince.
King Richard. Thanks, noble peer!
The cheapest of us is a groat too dear.
RICHARD II.

ALBERT and his page were ushered by Joceline to what was called the Spanish Chamber, a huge old scrambling bedroom, rather in a dilapidated condition, but furnished with a large standing-bed for the master, and a truckle-bed for the domestic, as was common at a much later period in old English houses, where the gentleman often required the assistance of a groom of the chambers to help him to bed, if the hospitality had been exuberant. The walls were covered with hangings of Cordovan leather, stamped with gold, and representing fights between the Spaniards and Moriscoes, bull-feasts, and other sports peculiar to the Peninsula, from which it took its name of the Spanish Chamber. These hangings were in some places entirely torn down, in others defaced and hanging in tatters. But Albert stopped not to make observations, anxious, it seemed, to get Joceline out of the room; which he achieved by hastily answering his offers of fresh fuel, and more liquor, in the negative, and returning, with equal conciseness, the under-keeper's good wishes for the evening. He at length retired, somewhat unwillingly, and as if he thought that his young master might have bestowed a few more words upon a faithful old retainer after so long absence.

Joliffe was no sooner gone, than, before a single word was spoken between Albert Lee and his page, the former hastened to the door, examined lock, latch, and bolt, and made them fast, with the most scrupulous attention. He superadded to these precautions that of a long screw-bolt, which he brought out of his pocket, and which he screwed on to the staple in such a manner as to render it impossible to withdraw it, or open the door, unless by breaking it down. The page held a light to him during the operation, which his master went through with much exactness and dexterity. But when Albert arose from his knee, on which he had rested during the accomplishment of this task, the manner of the companions was on the sudden entirely changed towards each other. The Honourable Master Kerneguy, from a cubbish lout of a raw Scotsman, seemed to have acquired at once all the grace and ease of motion and manner which could be given by an acquaintance of the earliest and most familiar kind with the best company of the time.

He gave the light he held to Albert with the easy indifference of a superior, who rather graces than troubles his dependent by giving him some slight service to perform. Albert, with the greatest appearance of deference, assumed in his turn the character of torch-bearer, and lighted his page across the chamber, without turning

his back upon him as he did so. He then set the light on the table by the bedside, and, approaching the young man with deep reverence, received from him the soiled green jacket, with the same profound respect as if he had been a first lord of the bedchamber, or other officer of the household of the highest distinction, disrobing his sovereign of the mantle of the Garter. The person to whom this ceremony was addressed endured it for a minute or two with profound gravity, and then, bursting out a-laughing, exclaimed to Albert, 'What a devil means all this formality?—thou complimentest with these miserable rags as if they were silks and sables, and with poor Louis Kerneguy as if he were the King of Great Britain!'

'And if your Majesty's commands, and the circumstances of the time, have made me for a moment seem to forget that you are my sovereign, surely I may be permitted to render my homage as such while you are in your own royal Palace of Woodstock?'

'Truly,' replied the disguised monarch, 'the sovereign and the palace are not ill matched; —these tattered hangings and my ragged jerkin suit each other admirably.—*This* Woodstock!—*this* the bower where the royal Norman revelled with the fair Rosamond Clifford!—Why, it is a place of assignation for owls!' Then, suddenly recollecting himself, with his natural courtesy, he added, as if fearing he might have hurt Albert's feelings—'But the more obscure and retired, it is the fitter for our purpose, Lee; and if it does seem to be a roost for owls, as there is no denying, why, we know it has nevertheless brought up eagles.'

He threw himself as he spoke upon a chair, and indolently, but gracefully, received the kind offices of Albert, who undid the coarse buttonings of the leathern gamashes which defended his legs, and spoke to him the whilst:—'What a fine specimen of the olden time is your father, Sir Henry! It is strange I should not have seen him before;—but I heard my father often speak of him as being among the flower of our real old English gentry. By the mode in which he began to school me, I can guess you had a tight taskmaster of him, Albert—I warrant you never wore hat in his presence, eh?'

'I never cocked it at least in his presence, please your Majesty, as I have seen some youngsters do,' answered Albert; 'indeed, if I had, it must have been a stout beaver to have saved me from a broken head.'

'O, I doubt it not,' replied the king; 'a fine old gentleman—but with that, methinks, in his countenance, that assures you he would not hate the child in sparing the rod.—Hark ye, Albert—Suppose the same glorious Restoration come round—which, if drinking to its arrival can hasten it, should not be far distant,—for in that particular our adherents never neglect their duty,—suppose it come, therefore, and that thy father, as must be of course, becomes an earl, and one of the Privy Council, oddsfish, man, I shall be as much afraid of him as ever was my grandfather Henri Quatre of old Sully.*—Imagine there were such a trinket now about the court as the Fair Rosamond, or La Belle Gabrielle,† what a work there would be of pages and grooms of the chamber, to get the pretty rogue clandestinely shuffled out by the back stairs, like a prohibited commodity, when the step of the Earl of Woodstock was heard in the antechamber!'

'I am glad to see your Majesty so merry after your fatiguing journey.'

'The fatigue was nothing, man,' said Charles; 'a kind welcome and a good meal made amends for all that. But they must have suspected thee of bringing a wolf from the braes of Badenoch‡ along with you, instead of a two-legged being, with no more than the usual allowance of mortal stowage for provisions. I was really ashamed of my appetite; but thou knowest I had ate nothing for twenty-four hours, save the raw egg you stole for me from the old woman's hen-roost—I tell thee I blushed to show myself so ravenous before that high-bred and respectable old gentleman your father, and the very pretty girl your sister—or cousin, is she?'

'She is my sister,' said Albert Lee dryly, and added, in the same breath, 'Your Majesty's appetite suited well enough with the character of a raw northern lad.—Would your Majesty now please to retire to rest?'

'Not for a minute or two,' said the king, retaining his seat. 'Why, man, I have scarce had my tongue unchained to-day; and to talk with that northern twang, and, besides, the fatigue of being obliged to speak every word in character,—Gad, it's like walking as the galley-slaves do on the Continent, with a twenty-four pound shot chained to their legs—they may drag it along, but they cannot move with comfort. And, by the way, thou art slack in paying me my well-deserved tribute of compliments on my counterfeiting.—Did I not play Louis Kerneguy as round as a ring?'

'If your Majesty asks my serious opinion, perhaps I may be forgiven if I say your dialect was somewhat too coarse for a Scottish youth of high birth, and your behaviour perhaps a little too churlish. I thought, too—though I pretend not to be skilful—that some of your Scottish sounded as if it were not genuine.'

'Not genuine?—there is no pleasing thee, Albert.—Why, who should speak genuine Scottish but myself? Was I not their King for a matter of ten months? and if I did not get knowledge of their language, I wonder what else I got by it. Did not east country, and south country, and west country, and Highlands, caw, croak, and shriek about me, as the deep guttural, the broad drawl, and the high, sharp yelp predominated by turns?—Oddsfish, man, have I not been speeched at by their orators, addressed by their senators, rebuked by their kirkmen? Have I not sat on the cutty-stool,§ mon' (again assuming the northern dialect), 'and thought it grace of worthy Mas. John Gillespie, that I was permitted to do penance in mine own privy

* [Maximilian de Béthune, Sieur de Rosny, Duke of Sully, was minister of finance to Henry IV. of France, and personally a man of surly and imperious temper.]

† [Gabrielle d'Estrées, a mistress of Henry IV. of France.]

‡ [A mountainous district in the south-east of Inverness-shire, Scotland.]

§ [A seat in Scottish churches on which offenders against chastity were required to sit, to be publicly rebuked by the minister.]

chamber, instead of the face of the congregation? and wilt thou tell me, after all, that I cannot speak Scotch enough to baffle an Oxon knight and his family?'

'May it please your Majesty,—I began by saying I was no judge of the Scottish language.'

'Pshaw—it is mere envy; just so you said at Norton's that I was too courteous and civil for a young page—now you think me too rude.'

'And there is a medium, if one could find it,' said Albert, defending his opinion in the same tone in which the king attacked him; 'so this morning, when you were in the woman's dress, you raised your petticoats rather unbecomingly high, as you waded through the first little stream; and when I told you of it, to mend the matter, you draggled through the next without raising them at all.'

'O, the devil take the woman's dress!' said Charles; 'I hope I shall never be driven to that disguise again. Why, my ugly face was enough to put gowns, caps, and kirtles out of fashion for ever—the very dogs fled from me—Had I passed any hamlet that had but five huts in it, I could not have escaped the cucking-stool.—I was a libel on womanhood. These leathern conveniences are none of the gayest, but they are *propria quæ maribus;* and right glad am I to be repossessed of them. I can tell you too, my friend, I shall resume all my masculine privileges with my proper habiliments; and, as you say I have been too coarse to-night, I will behave myself like a courtier to Mistress Alice to-morrow. I made a sort of acquaintance with her already, when I seemed to be of the same sex with herself, and found out there are other colonels in the wind besides you, Colonel Albert Lee.'

'May it please your Majesty,' said Albert—and then stopped short, from the difficulty of finding words to express the unpleasant nature of his feelings. They could not escape Charles; but he proceeded without scruple: 'I pique myself on seeing as far into the heart of young ladies as most folk, though God knows they are sometimes too deep for the wisest of us. But I mentioned to your sister, in my character of fortune-teller,—thinking, poor simple man, that a country girl must have no one but her brother to dream about,—that she was anxious about a certain Colonel. I had hit the theme, but not the person; for I alluded to you, Albert; and I presume the blush was too deep ever to be given to a brother. So up she got, and away she flew from me like a lapwing. I can excuse her—for, looking at myself in the well, I think if I had met such a creature as I seemed, I should have called fire and faggot against it.—Now, what think you, Albert—who can this Colonel be, that more than rivals you in your sister's affection?'

Albert, who well knew that the king's mode of thinking, where the fair sex was concerned, was far more gay than delicate, endeavoured to put a stop to the present topic by a grave answer.

'His sister,' he said, 'had been in some measure educated with the son of her maternal uncle, Markham Everard; but, as his father and he himself had adopted the cause of the Roundheads, the families had in consequence been at variance; and any projects which might have been formerly entertained were of course long since dismissed on all sides.'

'You are wrong, Albert, you are wrong,' said the king, pitilessly pursuing his jest. 'You colonels, whether you wear blue or orange sashes, are too pretty fellows to be dismissed so easily, when once you have acquired an interest. But Mistress Alice, so pretty, and who wishes the restoration of the King with such a look and accent, as if she were an angel whose prayers must needs bring it down, must not be allowed to retain any thoughts of a canting Roundhead—What say you—will you give me leave to take her to task about it?—After all, I am the party most concerned in maintaining true allegiance among my subjects; and if I gain the pretty maiden's good will, that of the sweetheart will soon follow. This was jolly King Edward's way—Edward the Fourth, you know. The king-making Earl of Warwick—the Cromwell of his day—dethroned him more than once; but he had the hearts of the merry dames of London, and the purses and veins of the cockneys bled freely, till they brought him home again. How say you?—shall I shake off my northern slough, and speak with Alice in my own character, showing what education and manners have done for me, to make the best amends they can for an ugly face?'

'May it please your Majesty,' said Albert, in an altered and embarrassed tone, 'I did not expect'——

Here he stopped, not able to find words adequate at the same time to express his sentiments, and respectful enough to the king, while in his father's house, and under his own protection.

'And what is it that Master Lee does not expect?' said Charles, with marked gravity on his part.

Again Albert attempted a reply, but advanced no farther than, 'I would hope, if it please your Majesty'—when he again stopped short, his deep and hereditary respect for his sovereign, and his sense of the hospitality due to his misfortunes, preventing his giving utterance to his irritated feelings.

'And what does Colonel Albert Lee hope?' said Charles, in the same dry and cold manner in which he had before spoken.—'No answer?—Now, *I hope* that Colonel Lee does not see in a silly jest anything offensive to the honour of his family, since methinks that were an indifferent compliment to his sister, his father, and himself, not to mention Charles Stuart, whom he calls his King; and *I expect* that I shall not be so hardly construed, as to be supposed capable of forgetting that Mistress Alice Lee is the daughter of my faithful subject and host, and the sister of my guide and preserver.—Come, come, Albert,' he added, changing at once to his naturally frank and unceremonious manner, 'you forget how long I have been abroad, where men, women, and children talk gallantry, morning, noon, and night, with no more serious thought than just to pass away the time; and I forget, too, that you are of the old-fashioned English school, a son after Sir Henry's own heart, and don't understand raillery upon such subjects.—But I ask your pardon, Albert, sincerely, if I have really hurt you.'

So saying, he extended his hand to Colonel Lee, who, feeling he had been rather too hasty in construing the king's jest in an unpleasant sense, kissed it with reverence, and attempted an apology.

'Not a word—not a word,' said the good-natured prince, raising his penitent adherent as he attempted to kneel; 'we understand each other. You are somewhat afraid of the gay reputation which I acquired in Scotland; but I assure you, I will be as stupid as you or your cousin Colonel could desire, in presence of Mistress Alice Lee, and only bestow my gallantry, should I have any to throw away, upon the pretty little waiting-maid who attended at supper—unless you should have monopolized her ear for your own benefit, Colonel Albert?'

'It is monopolized, sure enough, though not by me, if it please your Majesty, but by Joceline Joliffe, the under-keeper, whom we must not disoblige, as we have trusted him so far already, and may have occasion to repose even entire confidence in him. I half think he suspects who Louis Kerneguy may in reality be.'

'You are an engrossing set, you wooers of Woodstock,' said the king, laughing. 'Now, if I had a fancy, as a Frenchman would not fail to have in such a case, to make pretty speeches to the deaf old woman I saw in the kitchen, as a *pis aller* I daresay I should be told that *her* ear was engrossed for Doctor Rochecliffe's sole use?'

'I marvel at your Majesty's good spirits,' said Albert, 'that, after a day of danger, fatigue, and accidents, you should feel the power of amusing yourself thus.'

'That is to say, the groom of the chambers wishes his Majesty would go to sleep?—Well, one word or two on more serious business, and I have done—I have been completely directed by you and Rochecliffe—I have changed my disguise from female to male upon the instant, and altered my destination from Hampshire to take shelter here—Do you still hold it the wiser course?'

'I have great confidence in Doctor Rochecliffe,' replied Albert, 'whose acquaintance with the scattered Royalists enables him to gain the most accurate intelligence. His pride in the extent of his correspondence, and the complication of his plots and schemes for your Majesty's service, is indeed the very food he lives upon; but his sagacity is equal to his vanity. I repose, besides, the utmost faith in Joliffe. Of my father and sister I would say nothing; yet I would not, without reason, extend the knowledge of your Majesty's person farther than it is indispensably necessary.'

'Is it handsome in me,' said Charles, pausing, 'to withhold my full confidence from Sir Henry Lee?'

'Your Majesty heard of his almost death-swoon of last night—what would agitate him most deeply must not be hastily communicated.'

'True; but are we safe from a visit of the red-coats—they have them in Woodstock as well as in Oxford?' said Charles.

'Doctor Rochecliffe says, not unwisely,' answered Lee, 'that it is best sitting near the fire when the chimney smokes; and that Woodstock, so lately in possession of the Sequestrators, and still in the vicinity of the soldiers, will be less suspected, and more carelessly searched, than more distant corners which might seem to promise more safety. Besides,' he added, 'Rochecliffe is in possession of curious and important news concerning the state of matters at Woodstock, highly favourable to your Majesty's being concealed in the palace for two or three days, till shipping is provided. The Parliament, or usurping Council of State, had sent down Sequestrators, whom their own evil conscience, assisted, perhaps, by the tricks of some daring Cavaliers, had frightened out of the Lodge, without much desire to come back again. Then the more formidable usurper, Cromwell, had granted a warrant of possession to Colonel Everard, who had only used it for the purpose of repossessing his uncle in the Lodge, and who kept watch in person at the little borough, to see that Sir Henry was not disturbed.'

'What! Mistress Alice's Colonel?' said the king—'that sounds alarming;—for, grant that he keeps the other fellows at bay, think you not, Master Albert, he will have an hundred errands a-day to bring him here in person?'

'Doctor Rochecliffe says,' answered Lee, 'the treaty between Sir Henry and his nephew binds the latter not to approach the Lodge, unless invited;—indeed, it was not without great difficulty, and strongly arguing the good consequences it might produce to your Majesty's cause, that my father could be prevailed on to occupy Woodstock at all; but be assured he will be in no hurry to send an invitation to the Colonel.'

'And be you assured that the Colonel will come without waiting for one,' said Charles. 'Folk cannot judge rightly where sisters are concerned—they are too familiar with the magnet to judge of its powers of attraction—Everard will be here, as if drawn by cart-ropes—fetters, not to talk of promises, will not hold him—and then, methinks, we are in some danger.'

'I hope not,' said Albert. 'In the first place, I know Markham is a slave to his word; besides, were any chance to bring him here, I think I could pass your Majesty upon him without difficulty as Louis Kerneguy. Then, although my cousin and I have not been on good terms for these some years, I believe him incapable of betraying your Majesty; and lastly, if I saw the least danger of it, I would, were he ten times the son of my mother's sister, run my sword through his body, ere he had time to execute his purpose.'

'There is but another question,' said Charles, 'and I will release you, Albert:—You seem to think yourself secure from search. It may be so; but, in any other country, this tale of goblins which is flying about would bring down priests and ministers of justice to examine the reality of the story, and mobs of idle people to satisfy their curiosity.'

'Respecting the first, sir, we hope and understand that Colonel Everard's influence will prevent any immediate inquiry, for the sake of preserving undisturbed the peace of his uncle's family; and as for any one coming without some sort of authority, the whole neighbours have so much love and fear of my father, and are, besides, so horribly alarmed about the

goblins of Woodstock, that fear will silence curiosity.'

'On the whole, then,' said Charles, 'the chances of safety seem to be in favour of the plan we have adopted, which is all I can hope for in a condition where absolute safety is out of the question. The Bishop recommended Doctor Rochecliffe as one of the most ingenious, boldest, and most loyal sons of the Church of England; you, Albert Lee, have marked your fidelity by a hundred proofs. To you and your local knowledge I submit myself.—And now prepare our arms—alive I will not be taken; yet I will not believe that a son of the King of England, and heir of her throne, could be destined to danger in his own palace, and under the guard of the Loyal Lees.'

Albert Lee laid pistols and swords in readiness by the king's bed and his own; and Charles, after some slight apology, took his place in the larger and better bed, with a sigh of pleasure, as from one who had not lately enjoyed such an indulgence. He bade good-night to his faithful attendant, who deposited himself on his truckle; and both monarch and subject were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

Give Sir Nicholas Threlkeld praise;
Hear it, good man, old in days,
Thou tree of succour and of rest
To this young bird that was distress'd;
Beneath thy branches he did stay;
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
WORDSWORTH.

THE fugitive prince slept, in spite of danger, with the profound repose which youth and fatigue inspire. But the young Cavalier, his guide and guard, spent a more restless night, starting from time to time, and listening; anxious, notwithstanding Doctor Rochecliffe's assurances, to procure yet more particular knowledge concerning the state of things around them, than he had been yet able to collect.

He rose early after daybreak; but although he moved with as little noise as was possible, the slumbers of the hunted prince were easily disturbed. He started up in his bed, and asked if there was any alarm.

'None, please your Majesty,' replied Lee; 'only, thinking on the questions your Majesty was asking last night, and the various chances there are of your Majesty's safety being endangered from unforeseen accidents, I thought of going thus early, both to communicate with Doctor Rochecliffe, and to keep such a look-out as befits the place where are lodged for the time the fortunes of England. I fear I must request of your Majesty, for your own gracious security, that you have the goodness to condescend to secure the door with your own hand after I go out.'

'O, talk not to Majesty, for Heaven's sake, dear Albert!' answered the poor king, endeavouring in vain to put on a part of his clothes, in order to traverse the room.—'When a king's doublet and hose are so ragged that he can no more find his way into them than he could have travelled through the forest of Deane without a guide, good faith, there should be an end of Majesty, until it chances to be better accommodated. Besides, there is the chance of these big words bolting out at unawares, when there are ears to hear them whom we might think dangerous.'

'Your commands shall be obeyed,' said Lee, who had now succeeded in opening the door; from which he took his departure, leaving the king, who had hustled along the floor for that purpose, with his dress wofully ill arranged, to make it fast again behind him, and begging him in no case to open to any one, unless he or Rochecliffe were of the party who summoned him.

Albert then set out in quest of Doctor Rochecliffe's apartment, which was only known to himself and the faithful Joliffe, and had at different times accommodated that steady churchman with a place of concealment, when, from his bold and busy temper, which led him into the most extensive and hazardous machinations on the king's behalf, he had been strictly sought after by the opposite party. Of late, the inquest after him had died entirely away, as he had prudently withdrawn himself from the scene of his intrigues. Since the loss of the battle of Worcester, he had been afloat again, and more active than ever; and had, by friends and correspondents, and especially the Bishop of ——, been the means of directing the king's flight towards Woodstock, although it was not until the very day of his arrival that he could promise him a safe reception at that ancient mansion.

Albert Lee, though he revered both the undaunted spirit and ready resources of the bustling and intriguing churchman, felt he had not been enabled by him to answer some of Charles's questions yesternight, in a way so distinct as one trusted with the king's safety ought to have done; and it was now his object to make himself personally acquainted, if possible, with the various bearings of so weighty a matter, as became a man on whom so much of the responsibility was likely to descend.

Even his local knowledge was scarce adequate to find the doctor's secret apartment, had he not traced his way after a genial flavour of roasted game through divers blind passages, and up and down certain very useless stairs, through cupboards and hatchways, and so forth, to a species of *sanctum sanctorum*, where Joceline Joliffe was ministering to the good doctor a solemn breakfast of wildfowl, with a cup of small beer stirred with a sprig of rosemary, which Doctor Rochecliffe preferred to all strong potations. Beside him sat Bevis on his tail, slobbering and looking amiable, moved by the rare smell of the breakfast, which had quite overcome his native dignity of disposition.

The chamber in which the doctor had established himself was a little octangular room, with walls of great thickness, within which were fabricated various issues, leading in different directions, and communicating with different parts of the building. Around him were packages with arms, and near him one small

barrel, as it seemed, of gunpowder; many papers in different parcels, and several keys for correspondence in cipher; two or three scrolls covered with hieroglyphics were also beside him, which Albert took for plans of nativity; and various models of machinery, in which Doctor Rochecliffe was an adept. There were also tools of various kinds, masks, cloaks, and a dark lantern, and a number of other indescribable trinkets belonging to the trade of a daring plotter in dangerous times. Last, there was a casket with gold and silver coin of different countries, which was left carelessly open, as if it were the least of Doctor Rochecliffe's concern, although his habits in general announced narrow circumstances, if not actual poverty. Close by the divine's plate lay a Bible and Prayer-book, with some proof-sheets, as they are technically called, seemingly fresh from the press. There were also within the reach of his hand a dirk, or Scottish poniard, a powder-horn, and a musketoon, or blunderbuss, with a pair of handsome pocket-pistols. In the midst of this miscellaneous collection, the doctor sat eating his breakfast with great appetite, as little dismayed by the various implements of danger around him, as a workman is when accustomed to the perils of a gunpowder manufactory.

'Soh, young gentleman,' he said, getting up and extending his hand, 'are you come to breakfast with me in good fellowship, or to spoil my meal this morning, as you did my supper last night, by asking untimely questions?'

'I will pick a bone with you with all my heart,' said Albert; 'and if you please, Doctor, I would ask some questions which seem not quite untimely.'

So saying, he sat down and assisted the doctor in giving a very satisfactory account of a brace of wild ducks and a leash of teal. Bevis, who maintained his place with great patience and insinuation, had his share of a collop, which was also placed on the well-furnished board; for, like most high-bred dogs, he declined eating waterfowl.

'Come hither, then, Albert Lee,' said the doctor, laying down his knife and fork, and plucking the towel from his throat, so soon as Joceline was withdrawn; 'thou art still the same lad thou wert when I was thy tutor—never satisfied with having got a grammar rule, but always persecuting me with questions why the rule stood so, and not otherwise—over curious after information which thou couldst not comprehend, as Bevis slobbered and whined for the duck-wing, which he could not eat.'

'I hope you will find me more reasonable, Doctor,' answered Albert; 'and, at the same time, that you will recollect I am not now *sub ferula*, but am placed in circumstances where I am not at liberty to act upon the *ipse dixit* of any man, unless my own judgment be convinced. I shall deserve richly to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, should any misfortune happen by my misgovernment in this business.'

'And it is therefore, Albert, that I would have thee trust the whole to me, without interfering. Thou sayest, forsooth, thou art not *sub ferula;* but recollect that while you have been fighting in the field, I have been plotting in the study—that I know all the combinations of the King's friends, ay, and all the motions of his enemies, as well as a spider knows every mesh of his web. Think of my experience, man. Not a Cavalier in the land but has heard of Rochecliffe the Plotter. I have been a main limb in everything that has been attempted since forty-two—penned declarations, conducted correspondence, communicated with chiefs, recruited followers, commissioned arms, levied money, appointed rendezvouses. I was in the Western Rising;* and before that, in the City Petition, and in Sir John Owen's† stir in Wales; in short, almost in every plot for the King since Tomkins and Challoner's matter.'‡

'But were not all these plots unsuccessful?' said Albert; 'and were not Tomkins and Challoner hanged, Doctor?'

'Yes, my young friend,' answered the doctor gravely, 'as many others have been with whom I have acted; but only because they did not follow my advice implicitly. You never heard that I was hanged myself.'

'The time may come, Doctor,' said Albert; 'the pitcher goes oft to the well—The proverb, as my father would say, is somewhat musty. But I, too, have some confidence in my own judgment; and, much as I honour the Church, I cannot altogether subscribe to passive obedience. I will tell you in one word what points I must have explanation on; and it will remain with you to give it, or to return a message to the King that you will not explain your plan; in which case, if he acts by my advice, he will leave Woodstock, and resume his purpose of getting to the coast without delay.'

'Well, then,' said the doctor, 'thou suspicious monster, make thy demands, and if they be such as I can answer without betraying confidence, I will reply to them.'

'In the first place, then, what is all this story about ghosts, and witchcrafts, and apparitions? and do you consider it as safe for his Majesty to stay in a house subject to such visitations, real or pretended?'

'You must be satisfied with my answer *in verbo sacerdotis*—the circumstances you allude to will not give the least annoyance to Woodstock during the King's residence. I cannot explain further; but for this I will be bound, at the risk of my neck.'

'Then,' said Lee, 'we must take Doctor Rochecliffe's bail that the devil will keep the peace towards our sovereign lord the King—good. Now, there lurked about this house the greater part of yesterday, and perhaps slept here, a fellow called Tomkins—a bitter Independent, and a secretary or clerk, or something or other, to the regicide dog Desborough. The man is well known—a wild ranter in religious opinions,

* [In 1645 the Royalists organized the Western Association of the counties of Cornwall, Devonshire, Somerset, and Dorsetshire, as a counterblast to the Eastern Counties Association of the Parliamentary party.]

† [He made an attempt to stir up North Wales for the King in 1648.]

‡ [In 1643, Challoner, Tomkins, and Waller endeavoured to gather round them all the citizens of London who were desirous of making peace between King and Parliament. King Charles lent his countenance to the movement. Challoner and Tomkins were executed.]

but in private affairs far-sighted, cunning, and interested, even as any rogue of them all.'

'Be assured we will avail ourselves of his crazy fanaticism to mislead his wicked cunning; —a child may lead a hog if it has wit to fasten a cord to the ring in its nose,' replied the doctor.

'You may be deceived,' said Albert; 'the age has many such as this fellow, whose views of the spiritual and temporal world are so different, that they resemble the eyes of a squinting man; one of which, oblique and distorted, sees nothing but the end of his nose, while the other, instead of partaking the same defect, views strongly, sharply, and acutely, whatever is subjected to its scrutiny.'

'But we will put a patch on the better eye,' said the doctor, 'and he shall only be allowed to speculate with the imperfect optic. You must know, this fellow has always seen the greatest number and the most hideous apparitions; he has not the courage of a cat in such matters, though stout enough when he hath temporal antagonists before him. I have placed him under the charge of Joceline Joliffe, who, betwixt plying him with sack and ghost stories, would make him incapable of knowing what was done, if you were to proclaim the King in his presence.'

'But why keep such a fellow here at all?'

'O, sir, content you;—he lies leaguer, as a sort of ambassador for his worthy masters, and we are secure from any intrusion so long as they get all the news of Woodstock from Trusty Tomkins.'

'I know Joceline's honesty well,' said Albert; 'and if he can assure me that he will keep a watch over this fellow, I will so far trust in him. He does not know the depth of the stake, 'tis true, but that my life is concerned will be quite enough to keep him vigilant.—Well, then, I proceed:—What if Markham Everard comes down on us?'

'We have his word to the contrary,' answered Rochecliffe—'his word of honour transmitted by his friend:—Do you think it likely he will break it?'

'I hold him incapable of doing so,' answered Albert; 'and, besides, I think Markham would make no bad use of anything which might come to his knowledge.—Yet God forbid we should be under the necessity of trusting any who ever wore the Parliament's colours in a matter of such dear concernment!'

'Amen!' said the doctor.—'Are your doubts silenced now?'

'I still have an objection,' said Albert, 'to yonder impudent, rakehelly fellow, styling himself a Cavalier, who pushed himself on our company last night, and gained my father's heart by a story of the storm of Brentford, which, I daresay, the rogue never saw.'

'You mistake him, dear Albert,' replied Rochecliffe—'Roger Wildrake, although till of late I only knew him by name, is a gentleman, was bred at the Inns of Court, and spent his estate in the King's service.'

'Or rather in the devil's service,' said Albert. 'It is such fellows as he, who, sunk from the licence of their military habits into idle debauched ruffians, infest the land with riots and robberies, brawl in hedge alehouses, and cellars where strong waters are sold at midnight, and, with their deep oaths, their hot loyalty, and their drunken valour, make decent men abominate the very name of Cavalier.'

'Alas!' said the doctor, 'it is but too true; but what can you expect? When the higher and more qualified classes are broken down and mingled undistinguishably with the lower orders, they are apt to lose the most valuable marks of their quality in the general confusion of morals and manners—just as a handful of silver medals will become defaced and discoloured if jumbled about among the vulgar copper coin. Even the prime medal of all, which we Royalists would so willingly wear next our very hearts, has not, perhaps, entirely escaped some deterioration—But let other tongues than mine speak on that subject.'

Albert Lee paused deeply after having heard these communications on the part of Rochecliffe. 'Doctor,' he said, 'it is generally agreed, even by some who think you may occasionally have been a little overbusy in putting men upon dangerous actions'——

'May God forgive them who entertain so false an opinion of me!' said the doctor.

——'That, nevertheless, you have done and suffered more in the King's behalf than any man of your function.'

'They do me but justice there,' said Doctor Rochecliffe—'absolute justice.'

'I am therefore disposed to abide by your opinion, if, all things considered, you think it safe that we should remain at Woodstock.'

'That is not the question,' answered the divine.

'And what is the question, then?' replied the young soldier.

'Whether any safer course can be pointed out. I grieve to say that the question must be comparative as to the point of option. Absolute safety is—alas the while!—out of the question on all sides. Now, I say Woodstock is, fenced and guarded as at present, by far the most preferable place of concealment.'

'Enough,' replied Albert; 'I give up to you the question, as to a person whose knowledge of such important affairs, not to mention your age and experience, is more intimate and extensive than mine can be.'

'You do well,' answered Rochecliffe; 'and if others had acted with the like distrust of their own knowledge, and confidence in competent persons, it had been better for the age. This makes Understanding bar himself up within his fortalice, and Wit betake himself to his high tower.' (Here he looked around his cell with an air of self-complacence.) 'The wise man foreseeth the tempest, and hideth himself.'

'Doctor,' said Albert, 'let our foresight serve others far more precious than either of us. Let me ask you, if you have well considered whether our precious charge should remain in society with the family, or betake himself to some of the more hidden corners of the house?'

'Hum!' said the doctor, with an air of deep reflection—'I think he will be safest as Louis Kerneguy, keeping himself close beside you'——

'I fear it will be necessary,' added Albert,

'that I scout abroad a little, and show myself in some distant part of the country, lest, coming here in quest of me, they should find higher game.'

'Pray do not interrupt me—Keeping himself close beside you or your father, in or near to Victor Lee's apartment, from which you are aware he can make a ready escape, should danger approach. This occurs to me as best for the present—I hope to hear of the vessel to-day—to-morrow at farthest.'

Albert Lee bade the active but opinionated man good-morrow; admiring how this species of intrigue had become a sort of element in which the doctor seemed to enjoy himself, notwithstanding all that the poet has said concerning the horrors which intervene betwixt the conception and execution of a conspiracy.

In returning from Doctor Rochecliffe's sanctuary, he met with Joceline, who was anxiously seeking him. 'The young Scotch gentleman,' he said, in a mysterious manner, 'has arisen from bed, and, hearing me pass, he called me into his apartment.'

'Well,' replied Albert, 'I will see him presently.'

'And he asked me for fresh linen and clothes. Now, sir, he is like a man who is quite accustomed to be obeyed, so I gave him a suit which happened to be in a wardrobe in the west tower, and some of your linen to conform; and when he was dressed, he commanded me to show him to the presence of Sir Henry Lee and my young lady. I would have said something, sir, about waiting till you came back, but he pulled me good-naturedly by the hair (as, indeed, he has a rare humour of his own), and told me, he was guest to Master Albert Lee, and not his prisoner; so, sir, though I thought you might be displeased with me for giving him the means of stirring abroad, and perhaps being seen by those who should not see him, what could I say?'

'You are a sensible fellow, Joceline, and comprehend always what is recommended to you. This youth will not be controlled, I fear, by either of us; but we must look the closer after his safety. You keep your watch over that prying fellow the steward?'

'Trust him to my care—on that side have no fear. But ah, sir! I would we had the young Scot in his old clothes again, for the riding-suit of yours which he now wears hath set him off in other-guess fashion.'

From the manner in which the faithful dependent expressed himself, Albert saw that he suspected who the Scottish page in reality was; yet he did not think it proper to acknowledge to him a fact of such importance, secure as he was equally of his fidelity, whether explicitly trusted to the full extent, or left to his own conjectures. Full of anxious thought, he went to the apartment of Victor Lee, in which Joliffe told him he would find the party assembled. The sound of laughter, as he laid his hand on the lock of the door, almost made him start, so singularly did it jar with the doubtful and melancholy reflections which engaged his own mind. He entered, and found his father in high good-humour, laughing and conversing freely with his young charge, whose appearance was, indeed, so much changed to the better in externals, that it seemed scarce possible a night's rest, a toilet, and a suit of decent clothes, could have done so much in his favour in so short a time. It could not, however, be imputed to the mere alteration of dress, although that, no doubt, had its effect. There was nothing splendid in that which Louis Kerneguy (we continue to call him by his assumed name) now wore. It was merely a riding-suit of grey cloth, with some silver lace, in the fashion of a country gentleman of the time. But it happened to fit him very well, and to become his very dark complexion, especially as he now held up his head, and used the manners, not only of a well-behaved, but of a highly-accomplished gentleman. When he moved, his clumsy and awkward limp was exchanged for a sort of shuffle, which, as it might be the consequence of a wound in those perilous times, had rather an interesting than an ungainly effect. At least it was as genteel an expression that the party had been over-hard travelled, as the most polite pedestrian could propose to himself.

The features of the Wanderer were harsh as ever, but his red shock peruke, for such it proved, was laid aside, his sable elf-locks were trained, by a little of Joceline's assistance, into curls, and his fine black eyes shone from among the shade of these curls, and corresponded with the animated, though not handsome, character of the whole head. In his conversation, he had laid aside all the coarseness of dialect which he had so strongly affected on the preceding evening; and although he continued to speak a little Scotch, for the support of his character as a young gentleman of that nation, yet it was not in a degree which rendered his speech either uncouth or unintelligible, but merely afforded a certain Doric tinge essential to the personage he represented. No person on earth could better understand the society in which he moved; exile had made him acquainted with life in all its shades and varieties—his spirits, if not uniform, were elastic—he had that species of Epicurean philosophy, which, even in the most extreme difficulties and dangers, can, in an interval of ease, however brief, avail itself of the enjoyments of the moment—he was, in short, in youth and misfortune, as afterwards in his regal condition, a good-humoured but hard-hearted voluptuary—wise, save where his passions intervened—beneficent, save when prodigality had deprived him of the means, or prejudice of the wish, to confer benefits—his faults such as might often have drawn down hatred, but that they were mingled with so much urbanity, that the injured person felt it impossible to retain the full sense of his wrongs.

Albert Lee found the party, consisting of his father, sister, and the supposed page, seated by the breakfast-table, at which he also took his place. He was a pensive and anxious beholder of what passed, while the page, who had already completely gained the heart of the good old Cavalier, by mimicking the manner in which the Scottish divines preached in favour of Ma gude Lord Marquis of Argyle and the Solemn League and Covenant, was now endeavouring to interest the fair Alice by such anecdotes, partly

of warlike and perilous adventure, as possessed the same degree of interest for the female ear which they have had ever since Desdemona's * days. But it was not only of dangers by land and sea that the disguised page spoke; but much more, and much oftener, on foreign revels, banquets, balls, where the pride of France, of Spain, or of the Low Countries, was exhibited in the eyes of their most eminent beauties. Alice being a very young girl, who, in consequence of the Civil War, had been almost entirely educated in the country, and often in great seclusion, it was certainly no wonder that she should listen with willing ears and a ready smile to what the young gentleman, their guest and her brother's *protégé*, told with so much gaiety, and mingled with such a shade of dangerous adventure, and occasionally of serious reflection, as prevented the discourse from being regarded as merely light and frivolous.

In a word, Sir Henry Lee laughed, Alice smiled from time to time, and all were satisfied but Albert, who would himself, however, have been scarce able to allege a sufficient reason for his depression of spirits.

The materials of breakfast were at last removed, under the active superintendence of the neat-handed Phœbe, who looked over her shoulder, and lingered more than once, to listen to the fluent discourse of their new guest, whom, on the preceding evening, she had, while in attendance at supper, accounted one of the most stupid inmates to whom the gates of Woodstock had been opened since the times of Fair Rosamond.

Louis Kerneguy then, when they were left only four in the chamber, without the interruption of domestics, and the successive bustle occasioned by the discussion and removal of the morning meal, became apparently sensible that his friend and ostensible patron Albert ought not altogether to be suffered to drop to leeward in the conversation, while he was himself successfully engaging the attention of those members of his family to whom he had become so recently known. He went behind his chair, therefore, and, leaning on the back, said with a good-humoured tone, which made his purpose entirely intelligible,—

'Either my good friend, guide, and patron has heard worse news this morning than he cares to tell us, or he must have stumbled over my tattered jerkin and leathern hose, and acquired, by contact, the whole mass of stupidity which I threw off last night with those most dolorous garments. Cheer up, my dear Colonel-Albert, if your affectionate page may presume to say so—you are in company with those whose society, dear to strangers, must be doubly so to you. Oddsfish, man, cheer up! I have seen you gay on a biscuit and a mouthful of water-cresses—don't let your heart fail you on Rhenish wine and venison.'

'Dear Louis,' said Albert, rousing himself into exertion, and somewhat ashamed of his own silence, 'I have slept worse, and been astir earlier than you.'

'Be it so,' said his father; 'yet I hold it no good excuse for your sullen silence. Albert, you have met your sister and me, so long separated from you, so anxious on your behalf, almost like mere strangers, and yet you are returned safe to us, and you find us well.'

'Returned, indeed—but for safety, my dear father, that word must be a stranger to us Worcester folk for some time. However, it is not my own safety about which I am anxious.'

'About whose, then, should you be anxious?—All accounts agree that the King is safe out of the dogs' jaws.'

'Not without some danger, though,' muttered Louis, thinking of his encounter with Bevis on the preceding evening.

'No, not without danger, indeed,' echoed the knight; 'but, as old Will says,—

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason dares not peep at what it would.

No, no—thank God, that's cared for; our Hope and Fortune is escaped, so all news affirm, escaped from Bristol—if I thought otherwise, Albert, I should be as sad as you are. For the rest of it, I have lurked a month in this house when discovery would have been death, and that is no longer since than after Lord Holland and the Duke of Buckingham's rising † at Kingston; and hang me, if I thought once of twisting my brow into such a tragic fold as yours, but cocked my hat at misfortune as a Cavalier should.'

'If I might put in a word,' said Louis, 'it would be to assure Colonel Albert Lee that I verily believe the King would think his own hap, wherever he may be, much the worse that his best subjects were seized with dejection on his account.'

'You answer boldly on the King's part, young man,' said Sir Henry.

'O, my father was meikle about the King's hand,' answered Louis, recollecting his present character.

'No wonder, then,' said Sir Henry, 'that you have so soon recovered your good spirits and good breeding, when you heard of his Majesty's escape. Why, you are no more like the lad we saw last night, than the best hunter I ever had was like a dray-horse.'

'O, there is much in rest, and food, and grooming,' answered Louis. 'You would hardly know the tired jade you dismounted from last night, when she is brought out prancing and neighing the next morning, rested, refreshed, and ready to start again—especially if the brute hath some good blood, for such pick up unco fast.'

'Well, then, but since thy father was a courtier, and thou hast learned, I think, something of the trade, tell us a little, Master Kerneguy, of him we love to hear most about—the King; we are all safe and secret, you need not be afraid. He was a hopeful youth; I trust his flourishing blossom now gives promise of fruit?'

As the knight spoke, Louis bent his eyes on the ground, and seemed at first uncertain what to answer. But, admirable at extricating himself from such dilemmas, he replied, 'that he

* [It was by relating such tales that Shakespeare's Othello won the heart of Desdemona.]

† [In Surrey in 1648.]

really could not presume to speak on such a subject in the presence of his patron, Colonel Albert Lee, who must be a much better judge of the character of King Charles than he could pretend to be.'

Albert was accordingly next assailed by the knight, seconded by Alice, for some account of his Majesty's character.

'I will speak but according to facts,' said Albert; 'and then I must be acquitted of partiality. If the King had not possessed enterprise and military skill, he never would have attempted the expedition to Worcester;—had he not had personal courage, he had not so long disputed the battle that Cromwell almost judged it lost. That he possesses prudence and patience, must be argued from the circumstances attending his flight; and that he has the love of his subjects is evident, since, necessarily known to many, he has been betrayed by none.'

'For shame, Albert!' replied his sister; 'is that the way a good Cavalier doles out the character of his prince, applying an instance at every concession, like a pedlar measuring linen with his rod?—Out upon you!—no wonder you were beaten, if you fought as coldly for your King as you now talk for him.'

'I did my best to trace a likeness from what I have seen and known of the original, sister Alice,' replied her brother.—'If you would have a fancy portrait, you must get an artist of more imagination than I have to draw it for you.'

'I will be that artist myself,' said Alice, 'and, in *my* portrait, our monarch shall show all that he ought to be, having such high pretensions—all that he must be, being so loftily descended—all that I am sure he is, and that every loyal heart in the kingdom ought to believe him.'

'Well said, Alice,' quoth the old knight—'Look thou upon this picture, and on this!—Here is our young friend shall judge. I wager my best nag—that is, I would wager him had I one left—that Alice proves the better painter of the two.—My son's brain is still misty, I think, since his defeat—he has not got the smoke of Worcester out of it. Plague on thee!—a young man, and cast down for one beating! Had you been banged twenty times like me, it had been time to look grave.—But come, Alice, forward; the colours are mixed on your pallet—forward with something that shall show like one of Vandyck's living portraits, placed beside the dull, dry presentation there of our ancestor, Victor Lee.'

Alice, it must be observed, had been educated by her father in the notions of high and even exaggerated loyalty, which characterized the Cavaliers, and she was really an enthusiast in the royal cause. But, besides, she was in good spirits at her brother's happy return, and wished to prolong the gay humour in which her father had of late scarcely ever indulged.

'Well, then,' she said, 'though I am no Apelles,* I will try to paint an Alexander, such as I hope, and am determined to believe, exists in the person of our exiled sovereign, soon, I trust, to be restored. And I will not go farther than his own family. He shall have all the chivalrous courage, all the warlike skill, of Henry of France, his grandfather, in order to place him on the throne; all his benevolence, love of his people, patience even of unpleasing advice, sacrifice of his own wishes and pleasures to the commonweal, that, seated there, he may be blessed while living, and so long remembered when dead, that for ages after it shall be thought sacrilege to breathe an aspersion against the throne which he has occupied! Long after he is dead, while there remains an old man who has seen him, were the condition of that survivor no higher than a groom or a menial, his age shall be provided for at the public charge, and his grey hairs regarded with more distinction than an earl's coronet, because he remembers the Second Charles, the monarch of every heart in England!'

While Alice spoke, she was hardly conscious of the presence of any one save her father and brother; for the page withdrew himself somewhat from the circle, and there was nothing to remind her of him. She gave the reins, therefore, to her enthusiasm; and as the tears glittered in her eye, and her beautiful features became animated, she seemed like a descended cherub proclaiming the virtues of a patriot monarch. The person chiefly interested in her description held himself back, as we have said, and concealed his own features, yet so as to preserve a full view of the beautiful speaker.

Albert Lee, conscious in whose presence this eulogium was pronounced, was much embarrassed; but his father, all whose feelings were flattered by the panegyric, was in rapture.

'So much for the *King*, Alice,' he said; 'and now for the *Man*.'

'For the man,' replied Alice, in the same tone, 'need I wish him more than the paternal virtues of his unhappy father, of whom his worst enemies have recorded, that if moral virtues and religious faith were to be selected as the qualities which merited a crown, no man could plead the possession of them in a higher or more indisputable degree. Temperate, wise, and frugal, yet munificent in rewarding merit—a friend to letters and the muses, but a severe discourager of the misuse of such gifts—a worthy gentleman—a kind master—the best friend—the best father—the best Christian'——Her voice began to falter, and her father's handkerchief was already at his eyes.

'He was, girl, he was!' exclaimed Sir Henry; 'but no more on't, I charge ye—no more on't—enough; let his son but possess his virtues, with better advisers and better fortunes, and he will be all that England, in her warmest wishes, could desire.'

There was a pause after this, for Alice felt as if she had spoken too frankly and too zealously for her sex and youth. Sir Henry was occupied in melancholy recollections on the fate of his late sovereign; while Kerneguy and his supposed patron felt embarrassed, perhaps from a consciousness that the real Charles fell far short of his ideal character, as designed in such glowing colours. In some cases, exaggerated or unappropriate praise becomes the most severe satire.

But such reflections were not of a nature to be long willingly cherished by the person to

* [One of the greatest of the ancient Greek painters.]

whom they might have been of great advantage. He assumed a tone of raillery, which is, perhaps, the readiest mode of escaping from the feelings of self-reproof. 'Every Cavalier,' he said, 'should bend his knee to thank Mistress Alice Lee for having made such a flattering portrait of the King their master, by laying under contribution for his benefit the virtues of all his ancestors; only there was one point he would not have expected a female painter to have passed over in silence. When she made him, in right of his grandfather and father, a muster of royal and individual excellences, why could she not have endowed him at the same time with his mother's personal charms? Why should not the son of Henrietta Maria, the finest woman of her day, add the recommendations of a handsome face and figure to his internal qualities? He had the same hereditary title to good looks as to mental qualifications; and the picture, with such an addition, would be perfect in its way—and God send it might be a resemblance!'

'I understand you, Master Kerneguy,' said Alice; 'but I am no fairy, to bestow, as those do in the nursery tales, gifts which Providence has denied. I am woman enough to have made inquiries on the subject, and I know the general report is, that the King, to have been the son of such handsome parents, is unusually hard-favoured.'

'Good God, sister!' said Albert, starting impatiently from his seat.

'Why, you yourself told me so,' said Alice, surprised at the emotion he testified; 'and you said'——

'This is intolerable,' muttered Albert; 'I must out to speak with Joceline without delay—Louis' (with an imploring look to Kerneguy), 'you will surely come with me?'

'I would with all my heart,' said Kerneguy, smiling maliciously; 'but you see how I suffer still from lameness.—Nay, nay, Albert,' he whispered, resisting young Lee's attempt to prevail on him to leave the room, 'can you suppose I am fool enough to be hurt by this?—On the contrary, I have a desire of profiting by it.'

'May God grant it!' said Lee to himself, as he left the room—'it will be the first lecture you ever profited by; and the devil confound the plots and plotters who made me bring you to this place!' So saying, he carried his discontent forth into the Park.

CHAPTER XXIII.

> For there, they say, he daily doth frequent
> With unrestrained loose companions;
> While he, young, wanton, and effeminate boy,
> Takes on the point of honour, to support
> So dissolute a crew.
>
> RICHARD II.

THE conversation which Albert had in vain endeavoured to interrupt, flowed on in the same course after he had left the room. It entertained Louis Kerneguy; for personal vanity, or an over-sensitiveness to deserved reproof, were not among the faults of his character, and were indeed incompatible with an understanding, which, combined with more strength of principle, steadiness of exertion, and self-denial, might have placed Charles high on the list of English monarchs. On the other hand, Sir Henry listened with natural delight to the noble sentiments uttered by a being so beloved as his daughter. His own parts were rather steady than brilliant; and he had that species of imagination which is not easily excited without the action of another, as the electrical globe only scintillates when rubbed against its cushion. He was well pleased, therefore, when Kerneguy pursued the conversation, by observing that Mistress Alice Lee had not explained how the same good fairy that conferred moral qualities, could not also remove corporeal blemishes.

'You mistake, sir,' said Alice. 'I confer nothing. I do but attempt to paint our king such as I *hope* he is—such as I am sure he *may* be, should he himself desire to be so. The same general report which speaks of his countenance as unprepossessing, describes his talents as being of the first order. He has, therefore, the means of arriving at excellence, should he cultivate them sedulously and employ them usefully—should he rule his passions and be guided by his understanding. Every good man cannot be wise; but it is in the power of every wise man, if he pleases, to be as eminent for virtue as for talent.'

Young Kerneguy rose briskly, and took a turn through the room; and ere the knight could make any observation on the singular vivacity in which he had indulged, he threw himself again into his chair, and said, in rather an altered tone of voice—'It seems, then, Mistress Alice Lee, that the good friends who have described this poor King to you, have been as unfavourable in their account of his morals as of his person?'

'The truth must be better known to you, sir,' said Alice, 'than it can be to me. Some rumours there have been which accuse him of a licence, which, whatever allowance flatterers make for it, does not, to say the least, become the son of the Martyr—I shall be happy to have these contradicted on good authority.'

'I am surprised at your folly,' said Sir Henry Lee, 'in hinting at such things, Alice; a pack of scandal, invented by the rascals who have usurped the government—a thing devised by the enemy.'

'Nay, sir,' said Kerneguy, laughing, 'we must not let our zeal charge the enemy with more scandal than they actually deserve. Mistress Alice has put the question to me. I can only answer, that no one can be more devotedly attached to the King than I myself,—that I am very partial to his merits and blind to his defects; and that, in short, I would be the last man in the world to give up his cause where it was tenable. Nevertheless, I must confess that if all his grandfather of Navarre's morals have not descended to him, this poor King has somehow inherited a share of the specks that were thought to dim the lustre of that great prince—that Charles is a little soft-hearted, or so, where beauty is concerned.—Do not blame him too severely, pretty Mistress Alice; when a man's hard fate has driven him among thorns,

it were surely hard to prevent him from trifling with the few roses he may find among them?'

Alice, who probably thought the conversation had gone far enough, rose while Master Kerneguy was speaking, and was leaving the room before he had finished, without apparently hearing the interrogation with which he concluded. Her father approved of her departure, not thinking the turn which Kerneguy had given to the discourse altogether fit for her presence; and, desirous civilly to break off the conversation, 'I see,' he said, 'this is about the time, when, as Will says, the household affairs will call my daughter hence; I will therefore challenge you, young gentleman, to stretch your limbs in a little exercise with me, either at single rapier, or rapier and poniard, backsword, spadroon, or your national weapons of broadsword and target; for all or any of which I think we shall find implements in the hall.'

It would be too high a distinction, Master Kerneguy said, for a poor page to be permitted to try a passage of arms with a knight so renowned as Sir Henry Lee, and he hoped to enjoy so great an honour before he left Woodstock; but at the present moment his lameness continued to give him so much pain, that he should shame himself in the attempt.

Sir Henry then offered to read him a play of Shakespeare, and for this purpose turned up King Richard II. But hardly had he commenced with

Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,

when the young gentleman was seized with such an uncontrollable fit of the cramp as could only be relieved by immediate exercise. He therefore begged permission to be allowed to saunter abroad for a little while, if Sir Henry Lee considered he might venture without danger.

'I can answer for the two or three of our people that are still left about the place,' said Sir Henry; 'and I know my son has disposed them so as to be constantly on the watch. If you hear the bell toll at the Lodge, I advise you to come straight home by the way of the King's Oak, which you see in yonder glade towering above the rest of the trees. We will have some one stationed there to introduce you secretly into the house.'

The page listened to these cautions with the impatience of a schoolboy, who, desirous of enjoying his holiday, hears without marking the advice of tutor or parent, about taking care not to catch cold, and so forth.

The absence of Alice Lee had removed all which had rendered the interior of the Lodge agreeable, and the mercurial young page fled with precipitation from the exercise and amusement which Sir Henry had proposed. He girded on his rapier, and threw his cloak, or rather that which belonged to his borrowed suit, about him, bringing up the lower part so as to muffle the face and show only the eyes over it, which was a common way of wearing them in those days, both in streets, in the country, and in public places, when men had a mind to be private, and to avoid interruption from salutations and greetings in the market-place. He hurried across the open space which divided the front of the Lodge from the wood, with the haste of a bird escaped from the cage, which, though joyful at its liberation, is at the same time sensible of its need of protection and shelter. The wood seemed to afford these to the human fugitive, as it might have done to the bird in question.

When under the shadow of the branches, and within the verge of the forest, covered from observation, yet with the power of surveying the front of the Lodge, and all the open ground before it, the supposed Louis Kerneguy meditated on his escape.

'What an infliction—to fence with a gouty old man, who knows not, I daresay, a trick of the sword which was not familiar in the days of old Vincent Saviolo!* or, as a change of misery, to hear him read one of those wildernesses of scenes which the English call a play, from prologue to epilogue—from Enter the first to the final *Exeunt omnes*—an unparalleled horror—a penance which would have made a dungeon darker, and added dulness even to Woodstock!'

Here he stopped and looked around, then continued his meditations—'So, then, it was here that the gay old Norman secluded his pretty mistress—I warrant, without having seen her, that Rosamond Clifford was never half so handsome as that lovely Alice Lee. And what a soul there is in the girl's eye!—with what abandonment of all respects, save that expressing the interest of the moment, she poured forth her tide of enthusiasm! Were I to be long here, in spite of prudence, and half-a-dozen very venerable obstacles beside, I should be tempted to try to reconcile her to the indifferent visage of this same hard-favoured prince.—Hard-favoured?—it is a kind of treason for one who pretends to so much loyalty, to say so of the King's features, and in my mind deserves punishment.—Ah, pretty Mistress Alice! many a Mistress Alice before you has made dreadful exclamations on the irregularities of mankind, and the wickedness of the age, and ended by being glad to look out for apologies for their own share in them. But then her father—the stout old Cavalier—my father's old friend—should such a thing befall, it would break his heart.—Break a pudding's-end—he has more sense. If I give his grandson a title to quarter the arms of England, what matter if a bar sinister is drawn across them?—Pshaw! far from an abatement, it is a point of addition—the heralds in their next visitation will place him higher in the roll for it. Then, if he did wince a little at first, does not the old traitor deserve it;—first, for his disloyal intention of punching mine anointed body black and blue with his vile foils—and secondly, his atrocious complot with Will Shakespeare, a fellow as much out of date as himself, to read me to death with five acts of a historical play, or chronicle, "being the piteous Life and Death of Richard the Second"? Oddsfish, my own life is piteous enough, as I think; and my death may match it, for aught I see coming yet. Ah, but then the brother—my friend—my guide—my guard—So far as this little proposed intrigue concerns

* [A celebrated Italian authority on the art of fencing, whose book was translated into English in 1595.]

him, such practising would be thought not quite fair. But your bouncing, swaggering, revengeful brothers exist only on the theatre. Your dire revenge, with which a brother persecuted a poor fellow who had seduced his sister, or been seduced by her, as the case might be, as relentlessly as if he had trodden on his toes without making an apology, is entirely out of fashion, since Dorset killed the Lord Bruce many a long year since.* Pshaw! when a king is the offender, the bravest man sacrifices nothing by pocketing a little wrong which he cannot personally resent; and in France there is not a noble house where each individual would not cock his hat an inch higher, if they could boast of such a left-handed alliance with the Grand Monarque.'

Such were the thoughts which rushed through the mind of Charles, at his first quitting the Lodge of Woodstock, and plunging into the forest that surrounded it. His profligate logic, however, was not the result of his natural disposition, nor received without scruple by his sound understanding. It was a train of reasoning which he had been led to adopt from his too close intimacy with the witty and profligate youth of quality by whom he had been surrounded. It arose from the evil communication with Villiers, Wilmot, Sedley,† and others, whose genius was destined to corrupt that age, and the monarch on whom its character afterwards came so much to depend. Such men, bred amidst the licence of civil war, and without experiencing that curb which in ordinary times the authority of parents and relations imposes upon the headlong passions of youth, were practised in every species of vice, and could recommend it as well by precept as by example, turning into pitiless ridicule all those nobler feelings which withhold men from gratifying lawless passion. The events of the king's life had also favoured his reception of this Epicurean doctrine. He saw himself, with the highest claims to sympathy and assistance, coldly treated by the courts which he visited, rather as a permitted suppliant than an exiled monarch. He beheld his own rights and claims treated with scorn and indifference; and, in the same proportion, he was reconciled to the hard-hearted and selfish course of dissipation, which promised him immediate indulgence. If this was obtained at the expense of the happiness of others, should he of all men be scrupulous upon the subject, since he treated others only as the world treated him?

But although the foundations of this unhappy system had been laid, the prince was not at this early period so fully devoted to it as he was found to have become, when a door was unexpectedly opened for his restoration. On the contrary, though the train of gay reasoning which we have above stated, as if it had found vent in uttered language, did certainly arise in his mind, as that which would have been suggested by his favourite counsellors on such occasions, he recollected that what might be passed over as a peccadillo in France or the Netherlands, or turned into a diverting novel or pasquinade by the wits of his own wandering court, was likely to have the aspect of horrid ingratitude and infamous treachery among the English gentry, and would inflict a deep, perhaps an incurable wound upon his interest, among the more aged and respectable part of his adherents. Then it occurred to him—for his own interest did not escape him, even in this mode of considering the subject—that he was in the power of the Lees, father and son, who were always understood to be at least sufficiently punctilious on the score of honour; and if they should suspect such an affront as his imagination had conceived, they could be at no loss to find means of the most ample revenge, either by their own hands, or by those of the ruling faction.

'The risk of re-opening the fatal window at Whitehall, and renewing the tragedy of the Man in the Mask, were a worse penalty,' was his final reflection, 'than the old stool of the Scottish penance; and pretty though Alice Lee is, I cannot afford to intrigue at such a hazard. So, farewell, pretty maiden! unless, as sometimes has happened, thou hast a humour to throw thyself at thy King's feet, and then I am too magnanimous to refuse thee my protection. Yet, when I think of the pale, clay-cold figure of the old man, as he lay last night extended before me, and imagine the fury of Albert Lee, raging with impatience, his hand on a sword which only his loyalty prevents him from plunging into his sovereign's heart—nay, the picture is too horrible! Charles must for ever change his name to Joseph, even if he were strongly tempted; which may Fortune in mercy prohibit!'

To speak the truth of a prince, more unfortunate in his early companions, and the callousness which he acquired by his juvenile adventures and irregular mode of life, than in his natural disposition, Charles came the more readily to this wise conclusion, because he was by no means subject to those violent and engrossing passions, to gratify which the world has been thought well lost. His amours, like many of the present day, were rather matters of habit and fashion, than of passion and affection; and, in comparing himself in this respect to his grandfather, Henry IV., he did neither his ancestor nor himself perfect justice. He was, to parody the words of a bard, himself actuated by the stormy passions which an intriguer often only stimulates,—

> None of those who loved so kindly,
> None of those who loved so blindly.

An amour was with him a matter of amusement, a regular consequence, as it seemed to him, of the ordinary course of things in society. He was not at the trouble to practise seductive arts, because he had seldom found occasion to make use of them; his high rank, and the profligacy of a part of the female society with which he had mingled, rendering them unnecessary.

* This melancholy story may be found in the *Guardian*. An intrigue of Lord Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, was the cause of the fatal duel [which took place at Bergen-op-Zoom, in August 1613.]

† [George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester; Sir Charles Sedley—courtiers of Charles II., after his restoration.]

Added to this, he had, for the same reason, seldom been crossed by the obstinate interference of relations, or even of husbands, who had generally seemed not unwilling to suffer such matters to take their course.

So that, notwithstanding his total looseness of principle, and systematic disbelief in the virtue of women, and the honour of men, as connected with the character of their female relatives, Charles was not a person to have studiously introduced disgrace into a family, where a conquest might have been violently disputed, attained with difficulty, and accompanied with general distress, not to mention the excitation of all fiercer passions against the author of the scandal.

But the danger of the king's society consisted in his being much of an unbeliever in the existence of such cases as were likely to be embittered by remorse on the part of the principal victim, or rendered perilous by the violent resentment of her connections or relatives. He had even already found such things treated on the Continent as matters of ordinary occurrence, subject, in all cases where a man of high influence was concerned, to an easy arrangement; and he was really, generally speaking, sceptical on the subject of severe virtue in either sex, and apt to consider it as a veil assumed by prudery in women, and hypocrisy in men, to extort a higher reward for their compliance.

While we are discussing the character of his disposition to gallantry, the Wanderer was conducted, by the walk he had chosen, through several whimsical turns, until at last it brought him under the windows of Victor Lee's apartment, where he descried Alice watering and arranging some flowers placed on the oriel window, which was easily accessible by daylight, although at night he had found it a dangerous attempt to scale it. But not Alice only, her father also showed himself near the window, and beckoned him up. The family party seemed now more promising than before, and the fugitive prince was weary of playing battledore and shuttlecock with his conscience, and much disposed to let matters go as chance should determine.

He climbed lightly up the broken ascent, and was readily welcomed by the old knight, who held activity in high honour. Alice also seemed glad to see the lively and interesting young man; and by her presence, and the unaffected mirth with which she enjoyed his sallies, he was animated to display those qualities of wit and humour, which nobody possessed in a higher degree.

His satire delighted the old gentleman, who laughed till his eyes ran over as he heard the youth, whose claims to his respect he little dreamed of, amusing him with successive imitations of the Scottish Presbyterian clergymen, of the proud and poor Hidalgo of the North, of the fierce and overweening pride and Celtic dialect of the mountain chief, of the slow and more pedantic Lowlander, with all of which his residence in Scotland had made him familiar. Alice also laughed and applauded, amused herself, and delighted to see that her father was so; and the whole party were in the highest glee, when Albert Lee entered, eager to find Louis Kerneguy, and to lead him away to a private colloquy with Doctor Rochecliffe, whose zeal, assiduity, and wonderful possession of information had constituted him their master-pilot in those difficult times.

It is unnecessary to introduce the reader to the minute particulars of their conference. The information obtained was so far favourable, that the enemy seemed to have had no intelligence of the king's route towards the south, and remained persuaded that he had made his escape from Bristol, as had been reported, and as had indeed been proposed; but the master of the vessel prepared for the king's passage had taken the alarm, and sailed without his royal freight. His departure, however, and the suspicion of the service in which he was engaged, served to make the belief general, that the king had gone off along with him.

But though this was cheering, the doctor had more unpleasant tidings from the sea-coast, alleging great difficulties in securing a vessel, to which it might be fit to commit a charge so precious; and above all, requesting his Majesty might on no account venture to approach the shore, until he should receive advice that all the previous arrangements had been completely settled.

No one was able to suggest a safer place of residence than that which he at present occupied. Colonel Everard was deemed certainly not personally unfriendly to the king; and Cromwell, as was supposed, reposed in Everard an unbounded confidence. The interior presented numberless hiding-places, and secret modes of exit, known to no one but the ancient residents of the Lodge—nay, far better to Rochecliffe than to any of them; as, when rector at the neighbouring town, his prying disposition as an antiquary had induced him to make very many researches among the old ruins — the results of which he was believed, in some instances, to have kept to himself.

To balance these conveniences, it was no doubt true that the Parliamentary Commissioners were still at no great distance, and would be ready to resume their authority upon the first opportunity. But no one supposed such an opportunity was likely to occur; and all believed, as the influence of Cromwell and the army grew more and more predominant, that the disappointed Commissioners would attempt nothing in contradiction to his pleasure, but wait with patience an indemnification in some other quarter for their vacated commissions. Report, through the voice of Master Joseph Tomkins, stated that they had determined, in the first place, to retire to Oxford, and were making preparations accordingly. This promised still further to insure the security of Woodstock. It was therefore settled that the king, under the character of Louis Kerneguy, should remain an inmate of the Lodge, until a vessel should be procured for his escape, at the port which might be esteemed the safest and most convenient.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The deadliest snakes are those which, twined 'mongst flowers,
Blend their bright colouring with the varied blossoms,
Their fierce eyes glittering like the spangled dewdrop;
In all so like what nature has most harmless,
That sportive innocence, which dreads no danger,
Is poison'd unawares.
OLD PLAY.

CHARLES (we must now give him his own name) was easily reconciled to the circumstances which rendered his residence at Woodstock advisable. No doubt he would much rather have secured his safety by making an immediate escape out of England; but he had been condemned already to many uncomfortable lurking-places, and more disagreeable disguises, as well as to long and difficult journeys, during which, between pragmatical officers of justice belonging to the prevailing party, and parties of soldiers whose officers usually took on them to act on their own warrant, risk of discovery had more than once become very imminent. He was glad, therefore, of comparative repose, and of comparative safety.

Then it must be considered, that Charles had been entirely reconciled to the society at Woodstock since he had become better acquainted with it. He had seen that, to interest the beautiful Alice, and procure a great deal of her company, nothing more was necessary than to submit to the humours and cultivate the intimacy of the old Cavalier, her father. A few bouts at fencing, in which Charles took care not to put out his more perfect skill and full youthful strength and activity—the endurance of a few scenes from Shakespeare, which the knight read with more zeal than taste—a little skill in music, in which the old man had been a proficient—the deference paid to a few old-fashioned opinions, at which Charles laughed in his sleeve—were all-sufficient to gain for the disguised prince an interest in Sir Henry Lee, and to conciliate in an equal degree the good-will of his lovely daughter.

Never were there two young persons who could be said to commence this species of intimacy with such unequal advantages. Charles was a libertine who, if he did not in cold blood resolve upon prosecuting his passion for Alice to a dishonourable conclusion, was at every moment liable to be provoked to attempt the strength of a virtue, in which he was no believer. Then Alice, on her part, hardly knew even what was implied by the word libertine or seducer. Her mother had died early in the commencement of the Civil War, and she had been bred up chiefly with her brother and cousin; so that she had an unfearing and unsuspicious frankness of manner, upon which Charles was not unwilling or unlikely to put a construction favourable to his own views. Even Alice's love for her cousin—the first sensation which awakens the most innocent and simple mind to feelings of shyness and restraint towards the male sex in general—had failed to excite such an alarm in *her* bosom. They were nearly related; and Everard, though young, was several years her elder, and had, from her infancy, been an object of her respect as well as of her affection. When this early and childish intimacy ripened into youthful love, confessed and returned, still it differed in some shades from the passion existing between lovers originally strangers to each other, until their affections have been united in the ordinary course of courtship. Their love was fonder, more familiar, more perfectly confidential; purer, too, perhaps, and more free from starts of passionate violence or apprehensive jealousy.

The possibility that any one could have attempted to rival Everard in her affection, was a circumstance which never occurred to Alice; and that this singular Scottish lad, whom she laughed with on account of his humour, and laughed at for his peculiarities, should be an object of danger or of caution, never once entered her imagination. The sort of intimacy to which she admitted Kerneguy was the same to which she would have received a companion of her own sex, whose manners she did not always approve, but whose society she found always amusing.

It was natural that the freedom of Alice Lee's conduct, which arose from the most perfect indifference, should pass for something approaching to encouragement in the royal gallant's apprehension, and that any resolutions he had formed against being tempted to violate the hospitality of Woodstock should begin to totter, as opportunities for doing so became more frequent.

These opportunities were favoured by Albert's departure from Woodstock the very day after his arrival. It had been agreed, in full council with Charles and Rochecliffe, that he should go to visit his uncle Everard in the county of Kent, and, by showing himself there, obviate any cause of suspicion which might arise from his residence at Woodstock, and remove any pretext for disturbing his father's family on account of their harbouring one who had been so lately in arms. He had also undertaken, at his own great personal risk, to visit different points on the sea-coast, and ascertain the security of different places for providing shipping for the king's leaving England.

These circumstances were alike calculated to procure the king's safety, and facilitate his escape. But Alice was thereby deprived of the presence of her brother, who would have been her most watchful guardian, but who had set down the king's light talk upon a former occasion to the gaiety of his humour, and would have thought he had done his sovereign great injustice, had he seriously suspected him of such a breach of hospitality as a dishonourable pursuit of Alice would have implied.

There were, however, two of the household at Woodstock, who appeared not so entirely reconciled with Louis Kerneguy or his purposes. The one was Bevis, who seemed, from their first unfriendly rencontre, to have kept up a pique against their new guest, which no advances on the part of Charles were able to soften. If the page was by chance left alone with his young mistress, Bevis chose always to be of the party; came close by Alice's chair, and growled audibly when the gallant drew near her. 'It is a pity,' said the disguised prince, 'that your Bevis is

not a bulldog, that we might dub him a Roundhead at once—He is too handsome, too noble, too aristocratic, to nourish those inhospitable prejudices against a poor houseless Cavalier. I am convinced the spirit of Pym or Hampden* has transmigrated into the rogue, and continues to demonstrate his hatred against royalty and all its adherents.'

Alice would then reply, that Bevis was loyal in word and deed, and only partook her father's prejudices against the Scots, which, she could not but acknowledge, were tolerably strong.

'Nay, then,' said the supposed Louis, 'I must find some other reason, for I cannot allow Sir Bevis's resentment to rest upon national antipathy. So we will suppose that some gallant Cavalier, who wended to the wars and never returned, has adopted this shape to look back upon the haunts he left so unwillingly, and is jealous at seeing even poor Louis Kerneguy drawing near to the lady of his lost affections.'—He approached her chair as he spoke, and Bevis gave one of his deep growls.

'In that case you had best keep your distance,' said Alice, laughing, 'for the bite of a dog, possessed by the ghost of a jealous lover, cannot be very safe.' And the king carried on the dialogue in the same strain—which, while it led Alice to apprehend nothing more serious than the apish gallantry of a fantastic boy, certainly induced the supposed Louis Kerneguy to think that he had made one of those conquests which often and easily fall to the share of sovereigns. Notwithstanding the acuteness of his apprehension, he was not sufficiently aware that the royal road to female favour is only open to monarchs when they travel in grand costume, and that when they woo incognito, their path of courtship is liable to the same windings and obstacles which obstruct the course of private individuals.

There was, besides Bevis, another member of the family who kept a look-out upon Louis Kerneguy, and with no friendly eye. Phœbe Mayflower, though her experience extended not beyond the sphere of the village, yet knew the world much better than her mistress, and besides, she was five years older. More knowing, she was more suspicious. She thought that odd-looking Scotch boy made more up to her young mistress than was proper for his condition of life; and, moreover, that Alice gave him a little more encouragement than Parthenia would have afforded to any such Jack-a-dandy, in the absence of Argalus—for the volume treating of the loves of these celebrated Arcadians was then the favourite study of swains and damsels throughout merry England. Entertaining such suspicions, Phœbe was at a loss how to conduct herself on the occasion, and yet resolved she would not see the slightest chance of the course of Colonel Everard's true love being obstructed, without attempting a remedy. She had a peculiar favour for Markham herself; and, moreover, he was, according to her phrase, as handsome and personable a young man as was in Oxfordshire; and this Scottish scarecrow was no more to be compared to him than chalk was to cheese. And yet she allowed that Master Girnigy had a wonderfully well-oiled tongue, and that such gallants were not to be despised. What was to be done?—she had no facts to offer, only vague suspicion, and was afraid to speak to her mistress, whose kindness, great as it was, did not, nevertheless, encourage familiarity.

She sounded Joceline; but he was, she knew not why, so deeply interested about this unlucky lad, and held his importance so high, that she could make no impression on him. To speak to the old knight would have been to raise a general tempest. The worthy chaplain, who was, at Woodstock, grand referee on all disputed matters, would have been the damsel's most natural resource, for he was peaceful as well as moral by profession, and politic by practice. But it happened he had given Phœbe unintentional offence by speaking of her under the classical epithet of *Rustica Fidele*, the which epithet, as she understood it not, she held herself bound to resent as contumelious, and, declaring she was not fonder of a *fiddle* than other folk, had ever since shunned all intercourse with Doctor Rochecliffe which she could easily avoid.

Master Tomkins was always coming and going about the house under various pretexts; but he was a Roundhead, and she was too true to the Cavaliers to introduce any of the enemy as parties to their internal discords; besides, he had talked to Phœbe herself in a manner which induced her to decline everything in the shape of familiarity with him. Lastly, Cavaliero Wildrake might have been consulted; but Phœbe had her own reasons for saying, as she did with some emphasis, that Cavaliero Wildrake was an impudent London rake. At length she resolved to communicate her suspicions to the party having most interest in verifying or confuting them.

'I'll let Master Markham Everard know that there is a wasp buzzing about his honeycomb,' said Phœbe; 'and, moreover, that I know that this young Scotch scapegrace shifted himself out of a woman's into a man's dress at Goody Green's, and gave Goody Green's Dolly a gold piece to say nothing about it; and no more she did to any one but me, and she knows best herself whether she gave change for the gold or not—but Master Louis is a saucy jackanapes, and like enough to ask it.'

Three or four days elapsed while matters continued in this condition—the disguised prince sometimes thinking on the intrigue which Fortune seemed to have thrown in his way for his amusement, and taking advantage of such opportunities as occurred to increase his intimacy with Alice Lee; but much oftener harassing Doctor Rochecliffe with questions about the possibility of escape, which the good man finding himself unable to answer, secured his leisure against royal importunity, by retreating into the various unexplored recesses of the Lodge, known perhaps only to himself, who had been for nearly a score of years employed in writing the Wonders of Woodstock.

It chanced on the fourth day, that some

* [John Pym and John Hampden, champions of the Parliament against the arbitrary rule of Charles I.]

trifling circumstance had called the knight abroad; and he had left the young Scotsman, now familiar in the family, along with Alice, in the parlour of Victor Lee. Thus situated, he thought the time not unpropitious for entering upon a strain of gallantry, of a kind which might be called experimental, such as is practised by the Croats* in skirmishing, when they keep bridle in hand, ready to attack the enemy, or canter off without coming to close quarters, as circumstances may recommend. After using for nearly ten minutes a sort of metaphysical jargon, which might, according to Alice's pleasure, have been interpreted either into gallantry, or the language of serious pretension, and when he supposed her engaged in fathoming his meaning, he had the mortification to find, by a single and brief question, that he had been totally unattended to, and that Alice was thinking on anything at the moment rather than the sense of what he had been saying. She asked him if he could tell what it was o'clock, and this with an air of real curiosity concerning the lapse of time, which put coquetry wholly out of the question.

'I will go look at the sun-dial, Mistress Alice,' said the gallant, rising and colouring, through a sense of the contempt with which he thought himself treated.

'You will do me a pleasure, Master Kerneguy,' said Alice, without the least consciousness of the indignation she had excited.

Master Louis Kerneguy left the room accordingly, not, however, to procure the information required, but to vent his anger and mortification, and to swear, with more serious purpose than he had dared to do before, that Alice should rue her insolence. Good-natured as he was, he was still a prince, unaccustomed to contradiction, far less to contempt, and his self-pride felt, for the moment, wounded to the quick. With a hasty step he plunged into the Chase, only remembering his own safety so far as to choose the deeper and sequestered avenues, where, walking on with the speedy and active step which his recovery from fatigue now permitted him to exercise according to his wont, he solaced his angry purposes, by devising schemes of revenge on the insolent country coquette, from which no consideration of hospitality was in future to have weight enough to save her.

The irritated gallant passed

> The dial-stone, aged and green,

without deigning to ask it a single question; nor could it have satisfied his curiosity if he had, for no sun happened to shine at the moment. He then hastened forward, muffling himself in his cloak, and assuming a stooping and slouching gait, which diminished his apparent height. He was soon involved in the deep and dim alleys of the wood, into which he had insensibly plunged himself, and was traversing it at a great rate, without having any distinct idea in what direction he was going, when suddenly his course was arrested, first by a loud hollo, and then by a summons to stand, accompanied by what seemed still more startling and extraordinary, the touch of a cane upon his shoulder, imposed in a good-humoured but somewhat imperious manner.

There were few symptoms of recognition which would have been welcome at this moment; but the appearance of the person who had thus arrested his course was least of all that he could have anticipated as timely or agreeable. When he turned, on receiving the signal, he beheld himself close to a young man, nearly six feet in height, well made in joint and limb, but the gravity of whose apparel, although handsome and gentlemanlike, and a sort of precision in his habit, from the cleanness and stiffness of his band to the unsullied purity of his Spanish leather shoes, bespoke a love of order which was foreign to the impoverished and vanquished Cavaliers, and proper to the habits of those of the victorious party, who could afford to dress themselves handsomely; and whose rule—that is, such as regarded the higher and more respectable classes—enjoined decency and sobriety of garb and deportment. There was yet another weight against the prince in the scale, and one still more characteristic of the inequality in the comparison under which he seemed to labour. There was strength in the muscular form of the stranger who had brought him to this involuntary parley, authority and determination in his brow, a long rapier on the left, and a poniard or dagger on the right side of his belt, and a pair of pistols stuck into it, which would have been sufficient to give the unknown the advantage (Louis Kerneguy having no weapon but his sword), even had his personal strength approached nearer than it did to that of the person by whom he was thus suddenly stopped.

Bitterly regretting the thoughtless fit of passion that brought him into his present situation, but especially the want of the pistols he had left behind, and which do so much to place bodily strength and weakness upon an equal footing, Charles yet availed himself of the courage and presence of mind in which few of his unfortunate family had for centuries been deficient. He stood firm and without motion, his cloak still wrapped round the lower part of his face, to give time for explanation, in case he was mistaken for some other person.

This coolness produced its effect; for the other party said, with doubt and surprise on his part, 'Joceline Joliffe, is it not?—if I know not Joceline Joliffe, I should at least know my own cloak.'

'I am not Joceline Joliffe, as you may see, sir,' said Kerneguy calmly, drawing himself erect to show the difference of size, and dropping the cloak from his face and person.

'Indeed!' replied the stranger in surprise; 'then, Sir Unknown, I have to express my regret at having used my cane in intimating that I wished you to stop. From that dress, which I certainly recognise for my own, I concluded you must be Joceline, in whose custody I had left my habit at the Lodge.'

'If it had been Joceline, sir,' replied the supposed Kerneguy, with perfect composure, 'methinks you should not have struck so hard.'

The other party was obviously confused by the steady calmness with which he was encountered.

*[A Slav people dwelling in the Balkan Peninsula, south-east of Austria, celebrated as irregular cavalry.]

The sense of politeness dictated, in the first place, an apology for a mistake, when he thought he had been tolerably certain of the person. Master Kerneguy was not in a situation to be punctilious; he bowed gravely, as indicating his acceptance of the excuse offered, then turned, and walked, as he conceived, towards the Lodge; though he had traversed the woods, which were cut with various alleys in different directions, too hastily to be certain of the real course which he wished to pursue.

He was much embarrassed to find that this did not get him rid of the companion whom he had thus involuntarily acquired. Walked he slow, walked he fast, his friend in the genteel but Puritanic habit, strong in person, and well armed, as we have described him, seemed determined to keep him company, and, without attempting to join, or enter into conversation, never suffered him to outstrip his surveillance for more than two or three yards. The Wanderer mended his pace; but although he was then, in his youth, as afterwards in his riper age, one of the best walkers in Britain, the stranger, without advancing his pace to a run, kept fully equal to him, and his persecution became so close and constant, and inevitable, that the pride and fear of Charles were both alarmed, and he began to think that, whatever the danger might be of a single-handed rencontre, he would nevertheless have a better bargain of this tall satellite if they settled the debate betwixt them in the forest, than if they drew near any place of habitation, where the man in authority was likely to find friends and concurrents.

Betwixt anxiety, therefore, vexation, and anger, Charles faced suddenly round on his pursuer, as they reached a small narrow glade, which led to the little meadow over which presided the King's Oak, the ragged and scathed branches and gigantic trunk of which formed a vista to the little wild avenue.

'Sir,' said he to his pursuer, 'you have already been guilty of one piece of impertinence towards me. You have apologised; and, knowing no reason why you should distinguish me as an object of incivility, I have accepted your excuse without scruple. Is there anything remains to be settled betwixt us, which causes you to follow me in this manner? If so, I shall be glad to make it a subject of explanation or satisfaction, as the case may admit of. I think you can owe me no malice; for I never saw you before to my knowledge. If you can give any good reason for asking it, I am willing to render you personal satisfaction. If your purpose is merely impertinent curiosity, I let you know that I will not suffer myself to be dogged in my private walks by any one.'

'When I recognise my own cloak on another man's shoulders,' replied the stranger dryly, 'methinks I have a natural right to follow and see what becomes of it; for know, sir, though I have been mistaken as to the wearer, yet I am confident I had as good a right to stretch my cane across the cloak you are muffled in, as ever had any one to brush his own garments. If, therefore, we are to be friends, I must ask, for instance, how you came by that cloak, and where you are going with it? I shall otherwise make bold to stop you, as one who has sufficient commission to do so.'

'O, unhappy cloak,' thought the Wanderer, 'ay, and thrice unhappy the idle fancy that sent me here with it wrapped around my nose, to pick quarrels and attract observation, when quiet and secrecy were peculiarly essential to my safety!'

'If you will allow me to guess, sir,' continued the stranger, who was no other than Markham Everard, 'I will convince you that you are better known than you think for.'

'Now, Heaven forbid!' prayed the party addressed, in silence, but with as much devotion as ever he applied to a prayer in his life. Yet even in this moment of extreme urgency his courage and composure did not fail; and he recollected it was of the utmost importance not to seem startled, and to answer so as, if possible, to lead the dangerous companion with whom he had met, to confess the extent of his actual knowledge or suspicions concerning him.

'If you know me, sir,' he said, 'and are a gentleman, as your appearance promises, you cannot be at a loss to discover to what accident you must attribute my wearing these clothes, which you say are yours.'

'O, sir,' replied Colonel Everard, his wrath in no sort turned away by the mildness of the stranger's answer—'we have learned our Ovid's Metamorphoses,* and we know for what purposes young men of quality travel in disguise—we know that even female attire is resorted to on certain occasions—We have heard of Vertumnus and Pomona.'†

The monarch, as he weighed these words, again uttered a devout prayer that this ill-looking affair might have no deeper root than the jealousy of some admirer of Alice Lee, promising to himself that, devotee as he was to the fair sex, he would make no scruple of renouncing the fairest of Eve's daughters in order to get out of the present dilemma.

'Sir,' he said, 'you seem to be a gentleman. I have no objection to tell you, as such, that I also am of that class.'

'Or somewhat higher, perhaps?' said Everard.

'A gentleman,' replied Charles, 'is a term which comprehends all ranks entitled to armorial bearings—A duke, a lord, a prince, is no more than a gentleman; and if in misfortune, as I am, he may be glad if that general term of courtesy is allowed him.'

'Sir,' replied Everard, 'I have no purpose to entrap you to any acknowledgment fatal to your own safety,—nor do I hold it my business to be active in the arrest of private individuals, whose perverted sense of national duty may have led them into errors, rather to be pitied than punished by candid men. But if those who have brought civil war and disturbance into their native country, proceed to carry dishonour and disgrace into the bosom of families — if they attempt to carry on their private debaucheries to the injury of the hospitable roofs which afford them refuge from the

* [A Latin poem describing love adventures of the gods.]

† [Vertumnus, an Etruscan and Roman divinity, when in love with Pomona, the goddess of the fruit-trees, assumed divers shapes in order to gain access to her.]

consequences of their public crimes, do you think, my lord, that we shall bear it with patience?'

'If it is your purpose to quarrel with me,' said the prince, 'speak it out at once like a gentleman. You have the advantage, no doubt, of arms; but it is not that odds which will induce me to fly from a single man. If, on the other hand, you are disposed to hear reason, I tell you, in calm words, that I neither suspect the offence to which you allude, nor comprehend why you give me the title of my lord.'

'You deny, then, being the Lord Wilmot?' said Everard.

'I may do so most safely,' said the prince.

'Perhaps you rather style yourself Earl of Rochester? We heard that the issuing of some such patent by the King of Scots was a step which your ambition proposed.'

'Neither lord or earl am I, as sure as I have a Christian soul to be saved. My name is'——

'Do not degrade yourself by unnecessary falsehood, my lord; and that to a single man, who, I promise you, will not invoke public justice to assist his own good sword, should he see cause to use it. Can you look at that ring, and deny that you are Lord Wilmot?'

He handed to the disguised prince a ring which he took from his purse, and his opponent instantly knew it for the same he had dropped into Alice's pitcher at the fountain, obeying only, though imprudently, the gallantry of the moment, in giving a pretty gem to a handsome girl, whom he had accidentally frightened.

'I know the ring,' he said; 'it has been in my possession. How it should prove me to be Lord Wilmot, I cannot conceive; and beg to say, it bears false witness against me.'

'You shall see the evidence,' answered Everard; and, resuming the ring, he pressed a spring ingeniously contrived in the collet of the setting, on which the stone flew back, and showed within it the cipher of Lord Wilmot beautifully engraved in miniature, with a coronet.—'What say you now, sir?'

'That probabilities are no proofs,' said the prince; 'there is nothing here save what can be easily accounted for. I am the son of a Scottish nobleman, who was mortally wounded and made prisoner at Worcester fight. When he took leave, and bade me fly, he gave me the few valuables he possessed, and that among others. I have heard him talk of having changed rings with Lord Wilmot, on some occasion in Scotland, but I never knew the trick of the gem which you have shown me.'

In this, it may be necessary to say, Charles spoke very truly; nor would he have parted with it in the way he did, had he suspected it would be easily recognised. He proceeded after a minute's pause:—'Once more, sir—I have told you much that concerns my safety—if you are generous, you will let me pass, and I may do you on some future day as good service. If you mean to arrest me, you must do so here, and at your own peril, for I will neither walk farther your way, nor permit you to dog me on mine. If you let me pass, I will thank you; if not, take to your weapon.'

'Young gentleman,' said Colonel Everard, 'whether you be actually the gay young nobleman for whom I took you, you have made me uncertain; but, intimate as you say your family has been with him, I have little doubt that you are proficient in the school of debauchery of which Wilmot and Villiers are professors, and their hopeful master a graduated student. Your conduct at Woodstock, where you have rewarded the hospitality of the family by meditating the most deadly wound to their honour, has proved you too apt a scholar in such an academy. I intended only to warn you on this subject—it will be your own fault if I add chastisement to admonition.'

'Warn me, sir!' said the prince indignantly, 'and chastisement! This is presuming more on my patience than is consistent with your own safety—Draw, sir.'—So saying, he laid his hand on his sword.

'My religion,' said Everard, 'forbids me to be rash in shedding blood—Go home, sir—be wise—consult the dictates of honour as well as prudence. Respect the honour of the House of Lee, and know there is one nearly allied to it, by whom your motions will be called to severe account.'

'Aha!' said the prince, with a bitter laugh, 'I see the whole matter now—we have our Roundheaded Colonel, our Puritan cousin, before us—the man of texts and morals, whom Alice Lee laughs at so heartily. If your religion, sir, prevents you from giving satisfaction, it should prevent you from offering insult to a person of honour.'

The passions of both were now fully up—they drew mutually, and began to fight, the colonel relinquishing the advantage he could have obtained by the use of his firearms. A thrust of the arm, or a slip of the foot, might, at the moment, have changed the destinies of Britain, when the arrival of a third party broke off the combat.

CHAPTER XXV.

Stay—for the King has thrown his warder down.
RICHARD II.

THE combatants whom we left engaged at the end of the last chapter, made mutual passes at each other with apparently equal skill and courage. Charles had been too often in action, and too long a party as well as a victim to civil war, to find anything new or surprising in being obliged to defend himself with his own hands; and Everard had been distinguished, as well for his personal bravery as for the other properties of a commander. But the arrival of a third party prevented the tragic conclusion of a combat, in which the success of either party must have given him much cause for regretting his victory.

It was the old knight himself, who arrived, mounted upon a forest pony, for the war and sequestration had left him no steed of a more dignified description. He thrust himself between the combatants, and commanded them on their lives to hold. So soon as a glance

from one to the other had ascertained to him whom he had to deal with, he demanded 'whether the devils of Woodstock, whom folk talked about, had got possession of them both, that they were tilting at each other within the verge of the royal liberties? Let me tell both of you,' he said, 'that while old Henry Lee is at Woodstock, the immunities of the Park shall be maintained as much as if the King were still on the throne. None shall fight duellos here, excepting the stags in their season. Put up, both of you, or I shall lug out as thirdsman, and prove perhaps the worst devil of the three!—As Will says,—

> I'll so maul you and your toasting-irons,
> That you shall think the devil has come from hell.'

The combatants desisted from their encounter, but stood looking at each other sullenly, as men do in such a situation, each unwilling to seem to desire peace more than the other, and averse, therefore, to be the first to sheathe his sword.

'Return your weapons, gentlemen, upon the spot,' said the knight yet more peremptorily, 'one and both of you, or you will have something to do with me, I promise you. You may be thankful times are changed. I have known them such, that your insolence might have cost each of you your right hand, if not redeemed with a round sum of money. Nephew, if you do not mean to alienate me for ever, I command you to put up. Master Kerneguy, you are my guest. I request of you not to do me the insult of remaining with your sword drawn where it is my duty to see peace observed.'

'I obey you, Sir Henry,' said the king, sheathing his rapier—'I hardly indeed know wherefore I was assaulted by this gentleman. I assure you, none respects the King's person or privileges more than myself—though the devotion is somewhat out of fashion.'

'We may find a place to meet, sir,' replied Everard, 'where neither the royal person nor privileges can be offended.'

'Faith, very hardly, sir,' said Charles, unable to suppress the rising jest—'I mean, the King has so few followers, that the loss of the least of them might be some small damage to him; but, risking all that, I will meet you wherever there is fair field for a poor Cavalier to get off in safety, if he has the luck in fight.'

Sir Henry Lee's first idea had been fixed upon the insult offered to the royal demesne; he now began to turn them towards the safety of his kinsman, and of the young Royalist, as he deemed him. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I must insist on this business being put to a final end. Nephew Markham, is this your return for my condescension in coming back to Woodstock on your warrant, that you should take an opportunity to cut the throat of my guest?'

'If you knew his purpose as well as I do,'—said Markham, and then paused, conscious that he might only incense his uncle without convincing him, as anything he might say of Kerneguy's addresses to Alice was likely to be imputed to his own jealous suspicions—he looked on the ground, therefore, and was silent.

'And you, Master Kerneguy,' said Sir Henry, 'can you give me any reason why you seek to take the life of this young man, in whom, though unhappily forgetful of his loyalty and duty, I must yet take some interest, as my nephew by affinity?'

'I was not aware the gentleman enjoyed that honour, which certainly would have protected him from my sword,' answered Kerneguy. 'But the quarrel is his; nor can I tell any reason why he fixed it upon me, unless it were the difference of our political opinions.'

'You know the contrary,' said Everard; 'you know that I told you you were safe from me as a fugitive Royalist—and your last words showed you were at no loss to guess my connection with Sir Henry. That, indeed, is of little consequence. I should debase myself did I use the relationship as a means of protection from you, or any one.'

As they thus disputed, neither choosing to approach the real cause of quarrel, Sir Henry looked from the one to the other, with a peace-making countenance, exclaiming—

> —'Why, what an intricate impeach is this?
> I think you both have drunk of Circe's* cup.

Come, my young masters, allow an old man to mediate between you. I am not short-sighted in such matters—The mother of mischief is no bigger than a gnat's wing; and I have known fifty instances in my own day, when, as Will says—

> Gallants have been confronted hardily,
> In single opposition, hand to hand,

in which, after the field was fought, no one could remember the cause of quarrel.—Tush! a small thing will do it—the taking of the wall—or the gentle rub of the shoulder in passing each other, or a hasty word, or a misconceived gesture—Come, forget your cause of quarrel, be what it will—you have had your breathing, and though you put up your rapiers unblooded, that was no default of yours, but by command of your elder, and one who had right to use authority. In Malta, where the duello is punctiliously well understood, the persons engaged in a single combat are bound to halt on the command of a knight, or priest, or lady, and the quarrel so interrupted is held as honourably terminated, and may not be revived.—Nephew, it is, I think, impossible that you can nourish spleen against this young gentleman for having fought for his King. Hear my honest proposal, Markham—You know I bear no malice, though I have some reason to be offended with you—Give the young man your hand in friendship, and we will back to the Lodge, all three together, and drink a cup of sack in token of reconciliation.'

Markham Everard found himself unable to resist this approach towards kindness on his uncle's part. He suspected, indeed, what was partly the truth, that it was not entirely from reviving goodwill, but also that his uncle thought, by such attention, to secure his neutrality at least, if not his assistance, for the safety of the fugitive Royalist. He was sensible that he was placed in an awkward predicament; and that he might

* [An ancient enchantress; those who drank of the cup she offered became converted into animals—swine, wolves, etc.]

incur the suspicions of his own party, for holding intercourse even with a near relation, who harboured such guests. But, on the other hand, he thought his services to the Commonwealth had been of sufficient importance to outweigh whatever envy might urge on that topic. Indeed, although the Civil War had divided families much, and in many various ways, yet, when it seemed ended by the triumph of the republicans, the rage of political hatred began to relent, and the ancient ties of kindred and friendship regained at least a part of their former influence. Many reunions were formed; and those who, like Everard, adhered to the conquering party, often exerted themselves for the protection of their deserted relatives.

As these things rushed through his mind, accompanied with the prospect of a renewed intercourse with Alice Lee, by means of which he might be at hand to protect her against every chance, either of injury or insult, he held out his hand to the supposed Scottish page, saying at the same time, 'That for his part, he was very ready to forget the cause of quarrel, or rather, to consider it as arising out of a misapprehension, and to offer Master Kerneguy such friendship as might exist between honourable men, who had embraced different sides in politics.'

Unable to overcome the feeling of personal dignity, which prudence recommended to him to forget, Louis Kerneguy in return bowed low, but without accepting Everard's proffered hand.

'He had no occasion,' he said, 'to make any exertions to forget the cause of quarrel, for he had never been able to comprehend it; but, as he had not shunned the gentleman's resentment, so he was now willing to embrace and return any degree of his favour, with which he might be pleased to honour him.'

Everard withdrew his hand with a smile, and bowed in return to the salutation of the page, whose stiff reception of his advances he imputed to the proud, pettish disposition of a Scotch boy, trained up in extravagant ideas of family consequence and personal importance, which his acquaintance with the world had not yet been sufficient to dispel.

Sir Henry Lee, delighted with the termination of the quarrel, which he supposed to be in deep deference to his own authority, and not displeased with the opportunity of renewing some acquaintance with his nephew, who had, notwithstanding his political demerits, a warmer interest in his affections than he was, perhaps, himself aware of, said, in a tone of consolation, 'Never be mortified, young gentlemen. I protest it went to my heart to part you, when I saw you stretching yourselves so handsomely, and in fair love of honour, without any malicious or bloodthirsty thoughts. I promise you, had it not been for my duty as Ranger here, and sworn to the office, I would rather have been your umpire than your hindrance.—But a finished quarrel is a forgotten quarrel; and your tilting should have no further consequence excepting the appetite it may have given you.'

So saying, he urged forward his pony, and moved in triumph towards the Lodge by the nearest alley. His feet almost touching the ground, the ball of his toe just resting in the stirrup,—the forepart of the thigh brought round to the saddle,—the heels turned outwards, and sunk as much as possible,—his body precisely erect,—the reins properly and systematically divided in his left hand, his right holding a riding-rod diagonally pointed towards the horse's left ear,—he seemed a champion of the *manège*, fit to have reined Bucephalus * himself. His youthful companions, who attended on either hand like equerries, could scarcely suppress a smile at the completely adjusted and systematic posture of the rider, contrasted with the wild and diminutive appearance of the pony, with its shaggy coat, and long tail and mane, and its keen eyes sparkling like red coals from amongst the mass of hair which fell over its small countenance. If the reader has the Duke of Newcastle's book on horsemanship (*splendida moles!*), he may have some idea of the figure of the good knight, if he can conceive such a figure as one of the cavaliers there represented, seated, in all the graces of his art, on a Welsh or Exmoor pony, in its native savage state, without grooming or discipline of any kind; the ridicule being greatly enhanced by the disproportion of size betwixt the animal and its rider.

Perhaps the knight saw their wonder, for the first words he said after they left the ground were, 'Pixie, though small, is mettlesome, gentlemen' (here he contrived that Pixie should himself corroborate the assertion, by executing a gambade),—'he is diminutive but full of spirit;—indeed, save that I am somewhat too large for an elfin horseman' (the knight was upwards of six feet high), 'I should remind myself, when I mount him, of the Fairy King, as described by Mike Drayton: †—

> Himself he on an earwig set,
> Yet scarce upon his back could get,
> So oft and high he did curvet,
> Ere he himself did settle.
> He made him stop, and turn, and bound,
> To gallop, and to trot the round,
> He scarce could stand on any ground,
> He was so full of mettle.'

'My old friend Pixie,' said Everard, stroking the pony's neck; 'I am glad that he has survived all these bustling days—Pixie must be above twenty years old, Sir Henry?'

'Above twenty years, certainly. Yes, Nephew Markham, war is a whirlwind in a plantation, which only spares what is least worth leaving. Old Pixie and his old master have survived many a tall fellow and many a great horse—neither of them good for much themselves. Yet, as Will says, an old man can do somewhat. So Pixie and I still survive.'

So saying, he again contrived that Pixie should show some remnants of activity.

'Still survive?' said the young Scot, completing the sentence which the good knight had left unfinished—'ay. still survive,

> To witch the world with noble horsemanship.'

Everard coloured, for he felt the irony; but not so his uncle, whose simple vanity never permitted him to doubt the sincerity of the compliment.

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* [The favourite war-horse of Alexander the Great.]

† [In the poem *Nymphidia; the Court of Fairy.*]

'Are you avised of that?' he said. 'In King James's time, indeed, I have appeared in the tilt-yard, and there you might have said—

You saw young Harry with his beaver up.

As to seeing *old* Harry, why'——Here the knight paused, and looked as a bashful man in labour of a pun—'As to old Harry—why, you might as well see the *devil*. You take me, Master Kerneguy—the devil, you know, is my namesake—ha—ha—ha?—Cousin Everard, I hope your precision is not startled by an innocent jest?'

He was so delighted with the applause of both his companions, that he recited the whole of the celebrated passage referred to, and concluded with defying the present age, bundle all its wits, Donne, Cowley, Waller, and the rest of them together, to produce a poet of a tenth part of the genius of old Will.

'Why, we are said to have one of his descendants among us—Sir William D'Avenant,' said Louis Kerneguy; 'and many think him as clever a fellow.'

'What!' exclaimed Sir Henry—'Will D'Avenant, whom I knew in the North, an officer under Newcastle, when the Marquis lay before Hull?—why, he was an honest Cavalier, and wrote good doggerel enough; but how came he akin to Will Shakespeare, I trow?'

'Why,' replied the young Scot, 'by the surer side of the house, and after the old fashion, if D'Avenant speaks truth. It seems that his mother was a good-looking, laughing, buxom mistress of an inn between Stratford and London, at which Will Shakespeare often quartered as he went down to his native town; and that, out of friendship and gossipred, as we say in Scotland, Will Shakespeare became godfather to Will D'Avenant; and not contented with this spiritual affinity, the younger Will is for establishing some claim to a natural one, alleging that his mother was a great admirer of wit, and there were no bounds to her complaisance for men of genius.'*

'Out upon the hound!' said Colonel Everard; 'would he purchase the reputation of descending from poet, or from prince, at the expense of his mother's good fame?—his nose ought to be slit.'

'That would be difficult,' answered the disguised prince, recollecting the peculiarity of the bard's countenance.†

'Will D'Avenant the son of Will Shakespeare!' said the knight, who had not yet recovered his surprise at the enormity of the pretension; 'why, it reminds me of a verse in the puppet-show of Phaeton, where the hero complains to his mother—

Besides, by all the village boys I am sham'd;
You the Sun's son, you rascal, you be d—d!‡

I never heard such unblushing assurance in my life!—Will D'Avenant the son of the brightest and best poet that ever was, is, or will be?—But I crave your pardon, nephew—You, I believe, love no stage plays.'

'Nay, I am not altogether so precise as you would make me, uncle. I have loved them perhaps too well in my time, and now I condemn them not altogether, or in gross, though I approve not their excesses and extravagances.—I cannot, even in Shakespeare, but see many things both scandalous to decency and prejudicial to good manners—many things which tend to ridicule virtue, or to recommend vice,—at least to mitigate the hideousness of its features. I cannot think these fine poems are a useful study, and especially for the youth of either sex, in which bloodshed is pointed out as the chief occupation of the men, and intrigue as the sole employment of the women.'

In making these observations, Everard was simple enough to think that he was only giving his uncle an opportunity of defending a favourite opinion, without offending him by a contradiction which was so limited and mitigated.—But here, as on other occasions, he forgot how obstinate his uncle was in his views, whether of religion, policy, or taste, and that it would be as easy to convert him to the Presbyterian form of government, or engage him to take the adjuration oath, as to shake his belief in Shakespeare. There was another peculiarity in the good knight's mode of arguing, which Everard, being himself of a plain and downright character, and one whose religious tenets were in some degree unfavourable to the suppressions and simulations often used in society, could never perfectly understand. Sir Henry, sensible of his natural heat of temper, was wont scrupulously to guard against it, and would for some time, when, in fact, much offended, conduct a debate with all the external appearance of composure, till the violence of his feelings would rise so high as to overcome and bear away the artificial barriers opposed to it, and rush down upon the adversary with accumulating wrath. It thus frequently happened that, like a wily old general, he retreated in the face of his disputant in good order and by degrees, with so moderate a degree of resistance, as to draw on his antagonist's pursuit to the spot, where at length, making a sudden and unexpected attack, with horse, foot, and artillery at once, he seldom failed to confound the enemy, though he might not overthrow him.

It was on this principle, therefore, that, hearing Everard's last observation, he disguised his angry feelings, and answered, with a tone where politeness was called in to keep guard upon passion, 'That undoubtedly the Presbyterian gentry had given, through the whole of these unhappy times, such proofs of a humble, unaspiring, and unambitious desire of the public good, as entitled them to general credit for the sincerity of those very strong scruples which they entertained against works, in which the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue,—sentiments which might convert hardened sinners, and be placed with propriety in the mouths of dying saints and martyrs, happened, from the rudeness

* This gossiping tale is to be found in the variorum Shakespeare. D'Avenant did not much mind throwing out hints, in which he sacrificed his mother's character to his desire of being held a descendant from the admirable Shakespeare.

† D'Avenant actually wanted the nose, the foundation of many a jest of the day.

‡ We observe this couplet in Fielding's farce of *Tumble-down-Dick*, founded on the same classical story. As it was current in the time of the Commonwealth, it must have reached the author of *Tom Jones* by tradition—for no one will suspect the present Author of making the anachronism.

and coarse taste of the times, to be mixed with some broad jests, and similar matter, which lay not much in the way, excepting of those who painfully sought such stuff out, that they might use it in vilifying what was in itself deserving of the highest applause. But what he wished especially to know from his nephew was, whether any of those gifted men, who had expelled the learned scholars and deep divines of the Church of England from the pulpit, and now flourished in their stead, received any inspiration from the muses (if he might use so profane a term without offence to Colonel Everard), or whether they were not as sottishly and brutally averse from elegant letters, as they were from humanity and common sense?'

Colonel Everard might have guessed, by the ironical tone in which this speech was delivered, what storm was mustering within his uncle's bosom—nay, he might have conjectured the state of the old knight's feelings from his emphasis on the word colonel, by which epithet, as that which most connected his nephew with the party he hated, he never distinguished Everard, unless when his wrath was rising; while, on the contrary, when disposed to be on good terms with him, he usually called him kinsman, or Nephew Markham. Indeed, it was under a partial sense that this was the case, and in the hope to see his cousin Alice, that the colonel forbore making any answer to the harangue of his uncle, which had concluded just as the old knight had alighted at the door of the Lodge, and was entering the hall, followed by his two attendants.

Phœbe at the same time made her appearance in the hall, and received orders to bring some 'beverage' for the gentlemen. The Hebe* of Woodstock failed not to recognise and welcome Everard by an almost imperceptible curtsey; but she did not serve her interest, as she designed, when she asked the knight, as a question of course, whether he commanded the attendance of Mistress Alice. A stern *No* was the decided reply; and the ill-timed interference seemed to increase his previous irritation against Everard for his depreciation of Shakespeare. 'I would insist,' said Sir Henry, resuming the obnoxious subject, 'were it fit for a poor disbanded Cavalier to use such a phrase towards a commander of the conquering army,—upon knowing whether the convulsion which has sent us saints and prophets without end, has not also afforded us a poet with enough both of gifts and grace to outshine poor old Will, the oracle and idol of us blinded and carnal Cavaliers?'

'Surely, sir,' replied Colonel Everard; 'I know verses written by a friend of the Commonwealth, and those, too, of a dramatic character, which, weighed in an impartial scale, might equal even the poetry of Shakespeare, and which are free from the fustian and indelicacy with which that great bard was sometimes content to feed the coarse appetites of his barbarous audience.'

'Indeed!' said the knight, keeping down his wrath with difficulty. 'I should like to be acquainted with this masterpiece of poetry! —May we ask the name of this distinguished person?'

'It must be Vicars, or Withers,† at least,' said the feigned page.

'No, sir,' replied Everard, 'nor Drummond of Hawthornden, nor Lord Stirling‡ neither. And yet the verses will vindicate what I say, if you will make allowance for indifferent recitation, for I am better accustomed to speak to a battalion than to those who love the muses. The speaker is a lady benighted, who, having lost her way in a pathless forest, at first expresses herself agitated by the supernatural fears to which her situation gave rise.'

'A play, too, and written by a Roundhead author!' said Sir Henry in surprise.

'A dramatic production at least,' replied his nephew; and began to recite simply, but with feeling, the lines now so well known, but which had then obtained no celebrity, the fame of the author resting upon the basis rather of his polemical and political publications, than on the poetry doomed in after days to support the eternal structure of his immortality.

> 'These thoughts may startle, but will not astound
> The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
> By a strong-siding champion, Conscience.'

'My own opinion, Nephew Markham, my own opinion,' said Sir Henry, with a burst of admiration; 'better expressed, but just what I said when the scoundrelly Roundheads pretended to see ghosts at Woodstock—Go on, I prithee.'

Everard proceeded:—

> 'O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemish'd form of Chastity!
> I see ye visibly, and now believe
> That he, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
> To keep my life and honour unassail'd.—
> Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
> Turn forth her silver lining on the night?'

'The rest has escaped me,' said the reciter; 'and I marvel I have been able to remember so much.'

Sir Henry Lee, who had expected some effusion very different from those classical and beautiful lines, soon changed the scornful expression of his countenance, relaxed his contorted upper lip, and, stroking down his beard with his left hand, rested the forefinger of the right upon his eyebrow, in sign of profound attention. After Everard had ceased speaking, the old man sighed as at the end of a strain of sweet music. He then spoke in a gentler manner than formerly.

'Cousin Markham,' he said, 'these verses flow sweetly, and sound in my ears like the well-touched warbling of a lute. But thou knowest I am something slow of apprehending the full meaning of that which I hear for the first time. Repeat me these verses again, slowly and deliberately; for I always love to hear poetry twice, the first time for sound, and the latter time for sense.'

* [The Greek goddess of youth, cupbearer in the gods home, Olympus.]

† [John Vicars, a Presbyterian zealot of the Civil Wars, and George Wither, poet and satirist.]

‡ [Two Scottish poets, admirers of Charles I.]

Thus encouraged, Everard recited again the lines with more hardihood and better effect; the knight distinctly understanding, and from his looks and motions, highly applauding them.

'Yes!' he broke out, when Everard was again silent—'Yes, I *do* call that poetry—though it were even written by a Presbyterian, or an Anabaptist either. Ay, there were good and righteous people to be found even amongst the offending towns which were destroyed by fire. And certainly I have heard, though with little credence (begging your pardon, Cousin Everard), that there are men among you who have seen the error of their ways in rebelling against the best and kindest of masters, and bringing it to that pass that he was murdered by a gang yet fiercer than themselves. Ay, doubtless, the gentleness of spirit, and the purity of mind, which dictated those beautiful lines, has long ago taught a man so amiable to say, I have sinned, I have sinned. Yes, I doubt not so sweet a harp has been broken, even in remorse, for the crimes he was witness to; and now he sits drooping for the shame and sorrow of England,—all his noble rhymes, as Will says,

Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh

Dost thou not think so, Master Kerneguy?'

'Not I, Sir Henry,' answered the page, somewhat maliciously.

'What, dost not believe the author of these lines must needs be of the better file, and leaning to our persuasion?'

'I think, Sir Henry, that the poetry qualifies the auther to write a play on the subject of Dame Potiphar and her recusant lover; and as for his calling—that last metaphor of the cloud in a black coat or cloak, with silver lining, would have dubbed him a tailor with me, only that I happen to know that he is a schoolmaster by profession, and by political opinions qualified to be poet-laureate to Cromwell; for what Colonel Everard has repeated with such unction, is the production of no less celebrated a person than John Milton.'

'John Milton!' exclaimed Sir Henry in astonishment—'What! John Milton, the blasphemous and bloody-minded author of the *Defensio Populi Anglicani!**—the advocate of the infernal High Court of Fiends; the creature and parasite of that grand impostor, that loathsome hypocrite, that detestable monster, that prodigy of the universe, that disgrace of mankind, that landscape of iniquity, that sink of sin, and that compendium of baseness, Oliver Cromwell!'

'Even the same John Milton,' answered Charles; 'schoolmaster to little boys, and tailor to the clouds, which he furnishes with suits of black, lined with silver, at no other expense than that of common sense.'

'Markham Everard,' said the old knight, 'I will never forgive thee—never, never. Thou hast made me speak words of praise respecting one whose offal should fatten the region-kites. Speak not to me, sir, but begone! Am I, your kinsman and benefactor, a fit person to be juggled out of my commendation and eulogy, and brought to bedaub such a whitened sepulchre as the sophist Milton?'

'I profess,' said Everard, 'this is hard measure, Sir Henry. You pressed me—you defied me to produce poetry as good as Shakespeare's. I only thought of the verses, not of the politics of Milton.'

'O yes, sir,' replied Sir Henry, 'we well know your power of making distinctions; you could make war against the King's prerogative, without having the least design against his person. O, Heaven forbid! But Heaven will hear and judge you.—Set down the beverage, Phœbe'—(this was added by way of parenthesis to Phœbe, who entered with refreshment)—'Colonel Everard is not thirsty.—You have wiped your mouths, and said you have done no evil. But though you have deceived man, yet God you cannot deceive. And you shall wipe no lips in Woodstock, either after meat or drink, I promise you.'

Charged thus at once with the faults imputed to his whole religious sect and political party, Everard felt too late of what imprudence he had been guilty in giving the opening, by disputing his uncle's taste in dramatic poetry. He endeavoured to explain—to apologise.

'I mistook your purpose, honoured sir, and thought you really desired to know something of our literature; and in repeating what you deemed not unworthy your hearing, I profess I thought I was doing you pleasure, instead of stirring your indignation.'

'O ay!' returned the knight, with unmitigated rigour of resentment—'profess—profess—Ay, that is the new phrase of asseveration, instead of the profane adjuration of courtiers and Cavaliers—O, sir, *profess* less and *practise* more—and so good day to you.—Master Kerneguy, you will find beverage in my apartment.'

While Phœbe stood gaping in admiration at the sudden quarrel which had arisen, Colonel Everard's vexation and resentment was not a little increased by the nonchalance of the young Scotsman, who, with his hands thrust into his pockets (with a courtly affectation of the time), had thrown himself into one of the antique chairs, and, though habitually too polite to laugh aloud, and possessing that art of internal laughter by which men of the world learn to indulge their mirth without incurring quarrels, or giving direct offence, was at no particular trouble to conceal that he was exceedingly amused by the result of the colonel's visit to Woodstock. Colonel Everard's patience, however, had reached bounds which it was very likely to surpass; for, though differing widely in politics, there was a resemblance betwixt the temper of the uncle and nephew.

'Damnation!' exclaimed the colonel, in a tone which became a Puritan as little as did the exclamation itself.

'Amen!' said Louis Kerneguy, but in a tone so soft and gentle, that the ejaculation seemed rather to escape him than to be designedly uttered.

'Sir,' said Everard, striding towards him in that sort of humour, when a man, full of resentment, would not unwillingly find an object on which to discharge it.

* [Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* was a justification of the execution of Charles I., written in reply to a pamphlet by the Dutch scholar Salmasius.]

'*Plait-il?*' said the page, in the most equable tone, looking up in his face with the most unconscious innocence.

'I wish to know, sir,' retorted Everard, 'the meaning of that which you said just now?'

'Only a pouring out of the spirit, worthy sir,' returned Kerneguy—'a small skiff despatched to heaven on my own account, to keep company with your holy petition just now expressed.'

'Sir, I have known a merry gentleman's bones broke for such a smile as you wear just now,' replied Everard.

'There, look you now!' answered the malicious page, who could not weigh even the thoughts of his safety against the enjoyment of his jest—'If you had stuck to your *professions*, worthy sir, you must have choked by this time; but your round execration bolted like a cork from a bottle of cider, and now allows your wrath to come foaming out after it, in the honest unbaptized language of common ruffians.'

'For Heaven's sake, Master Girnegy,' said Phœbe, 'forbear giving the Colonel these bitter words! And do you, good Colonel Markham, scorn to take offence at his hands—he is but a boy.'

'If the Colonel or you choose, Mistress Phœbe, you shall find me a man—I think the gentleman can say something to the purpose already.—Probably he may recommend to you the part of the Lady in Comus; and I only hope his own admiration of John Milton will not induce him to undertake the part of Samson Agonistes, and blow up this old house with execrations, or pull it down in wrath about our ears.'

'Young man,' said the colonel, still in towering passion, 'if you respect my principles for nothing else, be grateful to the protection which, but for them, you would not easily attain.'

'Nay, then,' said the attendant, 'I must fetch those who have more influence with you than I have,' and away tripped Phœbe; while Kerneguy answered Everard in the same provoking tone of calm indifference,—

'Before you menace me with a thing so formidable as your resentment, you ought to be certain whether I may not be compelled by circumstances to deny you the opportunity you seem to point at.'

At this moment Alice, summoned no doubt by her attendant, entered the hall hastily.

'Master Kerneguy,' she said, 'my father requests to see you in Victor Lee's apartment.'

Kerneguy arose and bowed, but seemed determined to remain till Everard's departure, so as to prevent any explanation betwixt the cousins.

'Markham,' said Alice hurriedly—'Cousin Everard—I have but a moment to remain here—for God's sake do you instantly begone!—be cautious and patient—but do not tarry here—my father is fearfully incensed.'

'I have had my uncle's word for that, madam,' replied Everard, 'as well as his injunction to depart, which I will obey without delay. I was not aware that you would have seconded so harsh an order quite so willingly; but I go, madam, sensible I leave those behind whose company is more agreeable.'

'Unjust — ungenerous — ungrateful!' said Alice; but, fearful her words might reach ears for which they were not designed, she spoke them in a voice so feeble, that her cousin, for whom they were intended, lost the consolation they were calculated to convey.

He bowed coldly to Alice, as taking leave, and said, with an air of that constrained courtesy which sometimes covers, among men of condition, the most deadly hatred, 'I believe, Master Kerneguy, that I must make it convenient at present to suppress my own peculiar opinions on the matter which we have hinted at in our conversation, in which case I will send a gentleman who, I hope, may be able to conquer yours.'

The supposed Scotsman made him a stately, and at the same time a condescending bow, said he should expect the honour of his commands, offered his hand to Mistress Alice, to conduct her back to her father's apartment, and took a triumphant leave of his rival.

Everard, on the other hand, stung beyond his patience, and, from the grace and composed assurance of the youth's carriage, still conceiving him to be either Wilmot, or some of his compeers in rank and profligacy, returned to the town of Woodstock, determined not to be outbearded, even though he should seek redress by means which his principles forbade him to consider as justifiable.

CHAPTER XXVI.

—— Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny—it hath been
The untimely emptying of many a throne,
And fall of many kings——
MACBETH.

WHILE Colonel Everard retreated in high indignation from the little refection which Sir Henry Lee had in his good-humour offered, and withdrawn under the circumstances of provocation which we have detailed, the good old knight, scarce recovered from his fit of passion, partook of it with his daughter and guest, and shortly after, recollecting some sylvan task (for, though to little efficient purpose, he still regularly attended to his duties as Ranger), he called Bevis, and went out, leaving the two young people together.

'Now,' said the amorous prince to himself, 'that Alice is left without her lion, it remains to see whether she is herself of a tigress breed.—So, Sir Bevis has left his charge,' he said aloud; 'I thought the knights of old, those stern guardians of which he is so fit a representative, were more rigorous in maintaining a vigilant guard.'

'Bevis,' said Alice, 'knows that his attendance on me is totally needless; and, moreover, he has other duties to perform, which every true knight prefers to dangling the whole morning by a lady's sleeve.'

'You speak treason against all true affection,' said the gallant; 'a lady's lightest wish should to a true knight be more binding than aught excepting the summons of his sovereign. I wish, Mistress Alice, you would but intimate your slightest desire to me, and you should see how I have practised obedience.'

'You never brought me word what o'clock it was this morning,' replied the young lady, 'and there I sat questioning of the wings of Time, when I should have remembered that gentlemen's gallantry can be quite as fugitive as Time himself. How do you know what your disobedience may have cost me and others? Pudding and pasty may have been burned to a cinder, for, sir, I practise the old domestic rule of visiting the kitchen; or I may have missed prayers, or I may have been too late for an appointment, simply by the negligence of Master Louis Kerneguy failing to let me know the hour of the day.'

'O,' replied Kerneguy, 'I am one of those lovers who cannot endure absence—I must be eternally at the feet of my fair enemy—such, I think, is the title with which romances teach us to grace the fair and cruel to whom we devote our hearts and lives.—Speak for me, good lute,' he added, taking up the instrument, 'and show whether I know not my duty.'

He sung, but with more taste than execution, the air of a French rondelai, to which some of the wits or sonnetteers in his gay and roving train had adapted English verses.

An hour with thee!—When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern grey,
O, what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and turmoil, cark and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old?—
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon,
What shall repay the faithful swain
His labour on the sultry plain,
And, more than cave or sheltering bough,
Cool feverish blood and throbbing brow?—
One hour with thee!

One hour with thee!—When sun is set,
O, what can teach me to forget
The thankless labours of the day;
The hopes, the wishes flung away;
The increasing wants and lessening gains,
The master's pride, who scorns my pains?—
One hour with thee!

'Truly, there is another verse,' said the songster; 'but I sing it not to you, Mistress Alice, because some of the prudes of the court liked it not.'

'I thank you, Master Louis,' answered the young lady, 'both for your discretion in singing what has given me pleasure, and in forbearing what might offend me. Though a country girl, I pretend to be so far of the court mode, as to receive nothing which does not pass current among the better class there.'

'I would,' answered Louis, 'that you were so well confirmed in their creed, as to let all pass with you to which court ladies would give currency.'

'And what would be the consequence?' said Alice, with perfect composure.

'In that case,' said Louis, embarrassed like a general who finds that his preparations for attack do not seem to strike either fear or confusion into the enemy—'in that case you would forgive me, fair Alice, if I spoke to you in a warmer language than that of mere gallantry—if I told you how much my heart was interested in what you consider as idle jesting—if I seriously owned it was in your power to make me the happiest or the most miserable of human beings.'

'Master Kerneguy,' said Alice, with the same unshaken nonchalance, 'let us understand each other. I am little acquainted with high-bred manners, and I am unwilling, I tell you plainly, to be accounted a silly country girl, who, either from ignorance or conceit, is startled at every word of gallantry addressed to her by a young man, who, for the present, has nothing better to do than coin and circulate such false compliments. But I must not let this fear of seeming rustic and awkwardly timorous carry me too far; and, being ignorant of the exact limits, I will take care to stop within them.'

'I trust, madam,' said Kerneguy, 'that, however severely you may be disposed to judge of me, your justice will not punish me too severely for an offence, of which your charms are alone the occasion?'

'Hear me out, sir, if you please,' resumed Alice. 'I have listened to you when you spoke *en berger*—nay, my complaisance has been so great as to answer you *en bergère*—for I do not think anything except ridicule can come of dialogues between Lindor* and Jeanneton;† and the principal fault of the style is its extreme and tiresome silliness and affectation. But when you begin to kneel, offer to take my hand, and speak with a more serious tone, I must remind you of our real characters. I am the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, sir; and you are, or profess to be, Master Louis Kerneguy, my brother's page, and a fugitive for shelter under my father's roof, who incurs danger by the harbour he affords you, and whose household, therefore, ought not to be disturbed by your unpleasing importunities.'

'I would to Heaven, fair Alice,' said the king, 'that your objections to the suit which I am urging, not in jest, but most seriously, as that on which my happiness depends, rested only on the low and precarious station of Louis Kerneguy!—Alice, thou hast the soul of thy family, and must needs love honour. I am no more the needy Scottish page, whom I have, for my own purposes, personated, than I am the awkward lout, whose manners I adopted on the first night of our acquaintance. This hand, poor as I seem, can confer a coronet.'

'Keep it,' said Alice, 'for some more ambitious damsel, my lord—for such I conclude is your title, if this romance be true—I would not accept your hand, could you confer a duchy.'

'In one sense, lovely Alice, you have neither overrated my power nor my affection. It is your King—it is Charles Stuart who speaks to you!—he can confer duchies, and if beauty can merit them, it is that of Alice Lee. Nay, nay—rise—do not kneel—it is for your sovereign to kneel to thee, Alice, to whom he is a thousand times more devoted than the wanderer Louis dared venture to profess himself. My Alice has, I know, been trained up in those principles of love and obedience to her sovereign, that she cannot, in conscience or in mercy, inflict on him

* [The literary type of a love-smitten Spaniard.]
† [The typical simpleton of the pastoral romances.]

such a wound as would be implied in the rejection of his suit.'

In spite of all Charles's attempts to prevent her, Alice had persevered in kneeling on one knee, until she had touched with her lip the hand with which he attempted to raise her. But this salutation ended, she stood upright, with her arms folded on her bosom—her looks humble, but composed, keen, and watchful, and so possessed of herself, so little flattered by the communication which the king had supposed would have been overpowering, that he scarce knew in what terms next to urge his solicitation.

'Thou art silent—thou art silent,' he said, 'my pretty Alice. Has the King no more influence with thee than the poor Scottish page?'

'In one sense, every influence,' said Alice; 'for he commands my best thoughts, my best wishes, my earnest prayers, my devoted loyalty, which, as the men of the House of Lee have been ever ready to testify with the sword, so are the women bound to seal, if necessary, with their blood. But beyond the duties of a true and devoted subject, the King is even less to Alice Lee than poor Louis Kerneguy. The page could have tendered an honourable union—the monarch can but offer a contaminated coronet.'

'You mistake, Alice—you mistake,' said the king eagerly. 'Sit down and let me speak to you—sit down—What is't you fear?'

'I fear nothing, my liege,' answered Alice. 'What *can* I fear from the King of Britain—I, the daughter of his loyal subject, and under my father's roof? But I remember the distance betwixt us; and, though I might trifle and jest with mine equal, to my King I must only appear in the dutiful posture of a subject, unless where his safety may seem to require that I do not acknowledge his dignity.'

Charles, though young, being no novice in such scenes, was surprised to encounter resistance of a kind which had not been opposed to him in similar pursuits, even in cases where he had been unsuccessful. There was neither anger, nor injured pride, nor disorder, nor disdain, real or affected, in the manners and conduct of Alice. She stood, as it seemed, calmly prepared to argue on the subject, which is generally decided by passion—showed no inclination to escape from the apartment, but appeared determined to hear with patience the suit of the lover—while her countenance and manner intimated that she had this complaisance only in deference to the commands of the king.

'She is ambitious,' thought Charles; 'it is by dazzling her love of glory, not by mere passionate entreaties, that I must hope to be successful.—I pray you be seated, my fair Alice,' he said; 'the lover entreats—the King commands you.'

'The King,' said Alice, 'may permit the relaxation of the ceremonies due to royalty, but he cannot abrogate the subject's duty, even by express command. I stand here while it is your Majesty's pleasure to address—a patient listener, as in duty bound.'

'Know, then, simple girl,' said the king, 'that in accepting my proffered affection and protection, you break through no law either of virtue or morality. Those who are born to royalty are deprived of many of the comforts of private life—chiefly that which is, perhaps, the dearest and most precious, the power of choosing their own mates for life. Their formal weddings are guided upon principles of political expedience only, and those to whom they are wedded are frequently, in temper, person, and disposition, the most unlikely to make them happy. Society has commiseration, therefore, towards us, and binds our unwilling and often unhappy wedlocks with chains of a lighter and more easy character than those which fetter other men, whose marriage ties, as more voluntarily assumed, ought, in proportion, to be more strictly binding. And therefore, ever since the time that old Henry built these walls, priests and prelates, as well as nobles and statesmen, have been accustomed to see a Fair Rosamond rule the heart of an affectionate monarch, and console him for the few hours of constraint and state which he must bestow upon some angry and jealous Eleanor. To such a connection the world attaches no blame; they rush to the festival to admire the beauty of the lovely Esther, while the imperious Vashti is left to queen it in solitude; they throng the palace to ask her protection, whose influence is more in the State an hundred times than that of the proud consort; her offspring rank with the nobles of the land, and vindicate by their courage, like the celebrated Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, their descent from royalty and from love. From such connections our richest ranks of nobles are recruited; and the mother lives, in the greatness of her posterity, honoured and blest, as she died lamented and wept in the arms of love and friendship.'

'Did Rosamond so die, my lord?' said Alice. 'Our records say she was poisoned by the injured Queen—poisoned, without time allowed to call to God for the pardon of her many faults. Did her memory so live? I have heard that when the Bishop purified the church at Godstowe, her monument was broken open by his orders, and her bones thrown out into unconsecrated ground.'

'Those were rude old days, sweet Alice,' answered Charles; 'queens are not now so jealous, nor bishops so rigorous. And know, besides, that in the lands to which I would lead the loveliest of her sex, other laws obtain, which remove from such ties even the slightest show of scandal. There is a mode of matrimony which, fulfilling all the rites of the Church, leaves no stain on the conscience; yet, investing the bride with none of the privileges peculiar to her husband's condition, infringes not upon the duties which the King owes to his subjects. So that Alice Lee may, in all respects, become the real and lawful wife of Charles Stuart, except that their private union gives her no title to be Queen of England.'

'My ambition,' said Alice, 'will be sufficiently gratified to see Charles king, without aiming to share either his dignity in public, or his wealth and regal luxury in private.'

'I understand thee, Alice,' said the king, hurt but not displeased. 'You ridicule me, being a fugitive, for speaking like a king. It is a habit, I admit, which I have learned, and of which even misfortune cannot cure me. But my case is not so desperate as you may suppose.

My friends are still many in these kingdoms; my allies abroad are bound, by regard to their own interest, to espouse my cause. I have hopes given me from Spain, from France, and from other nations; and I have confidence that my father's blood has not been poured forth in vain, nor is doomed to dry up without due vengeance. My trust is in Him from whom princes derive their titles, and, think what thou wilt of my present condition, I have perfect confidence that I shall one day sit on the throne of England.'

'May God grant it!' said Alice; 'and that he *may* grant it, noble prince, deign to consider whether you now pursue a conduct likely to conciliate his favour. Think of the course you recommend to a motherless maiden, who has no better defence against your sophistry than what a sense of morality, together with the natural feeling of female dignity, inspires. Whether the death of her father, which would be the consequence of her imprudence;—whether the despair of her brother, whose life has been so often in peril to save that of your Majesty;—whether the dishonour of the roof which has sheltered you, will read well in your annals, or are events likely to propitiate God, whose controversy with your House has been but too visible, or recover the affections of the people of England, in whose eyes such actions are an abomination, I leave to your own royal mind to consider.'

Charles paused, struck with a turn to the conversation which placed his own interests more in collision with the gratification of his present passion than he had supposed.

'If your Majesty,' said Alice, curtseying deeply, 'has no further commands for my attendance, may I be permitted to withdraw?'

'Stay yet a little, strange and impracticable girl,' said the king, 'and answer me but one question:—Is it the lowness of my present fortunes that makes my suit contemptible?'

'I have nothing to conceal, my liege,' she said, 'and my answer shall be as plain and direct as the question you have asked. If I could have been moved to an act of ignominious, insane, and ungrateful folly, it could only arise from my being blinded by that passion, which I believe is pleaded as an excuse for folly and for crime much more often than it has a real existence. I must, in short, have been in love, as it is called—and that might have been with my equal, but surely never with my sovereign, whether such only in title, or in possession of his kingdom.'

'Yet loyalty was ever the pride, almost the ruling passion, of your family, Alice,' said the king.

'And could I reconcile that loyalty,' said Alice, 'with indulging my sovereign, by permitting him to prosecute a suit dishonourable to himself as to me? Ought I, as a faithful subject, to join him in a folly which might throw yet another stumbling-block in the path to his restoration, and could only serve to diminish his security, even if he were seated upon his throne?'

'At this rate,' said Charles discontentedly, 'I had better have retained my character of the page, than assumed that of a sovereign, which it seems is still more irreconcilable with my wishes.'

'My candour shall go still farther,' said Alice. 'I could have felt as little for Louis Kerneguy as for the heir of Britain; for such love as I have to bestow (and it is not such as I read of in romance, or hear poured forth in song) has been already conferred on another object. This gives your Majesty pain—I am sorry for it—but the wholesomest medicines are often bitter.'

'Yes,' answered the king, with some asperity, 'and physicians are reasonable enough to expect their patients to swallow them, as if they were honeycomb. It is true, then, that whispered tale of the cousin Colonel; and the daughter of the Loyal Lee has set her heart upon a rebellious fanatic?'

'My love was given ere I knew what these words fanatic and rebel meant. I recalled it not, for I am satisfied that, amidst the great distractions which divide the kingdom, the person to whom you allude has chosen his part, erroneously perhaps, but conscientiously—he, therefore, has still the highest place in my affection and esteem. More he cannot have, and will not ask, until some happy turn shall reconcile these public differences, and my father be once more reconciled to him. Devoutly do I pray that such an event may occur by your Majesty's speedy and unanimous restoration!'

'You have found out a reason,' said the king pettishly, 'to make me detest the thought of such a change—nor have you, Alice, any sincere interest to pray for it. On the contrary, do you not see that your lover, walking side by side with Cromwell, may, or rather must, share his power? nay, if Lambert* does not anticipate him, he may trip up Oliver's heels, and reign in his stead. And think you not he will find means to overcome the pride of the Loyal Lees, and achieve a union, for which things are better prepared than that which Cromwell is said to meditate betwixt one of his brats and the no less loyal heir of Fauconberg?'†

'Your Majesty,' said Alice, 'has found a way at length to avenge yourself—if what I have said deserves vengeance.'

'I could point out a yet shorter road to your union,' said Charles, without minding her distress, or perhaps enjoying the pleasure of retaliation. 'Suppose that you sent your Colonel word that there was one Charles Stuart here, who had come to disturb the saints in their peaceful government, which they had acquired by prayer and preaching, pike and gun,—and suppose he had the art to bring down a half-score of troopers, quite enough, as times go, to decide the fate of this heir of royalty,—think you not the possession of such a prize as this might obtain from the Rumpers, or from Cromwell, such a reward as might overcome your father's objections to a Roundhead's alliance, and place the fair Alice and her cousin Colonel in full possession of their wishes?'

'My liege,' said Alice, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling,—for she too had her share of the hereditary temperament of her family,—'this

* [John Lambert, one of the most conspicuous soldiers of the Parliamentary party, was at first a warm supporter of Cromwell, but afterwards became estranged from him.]

† [Thomas Belasyse, the son and grandson of Royalists, went over to Cromwell, and married his third daughter, Mary.]

passes my patience. I have heard, without expressing anger, the most ignominious persuasions addressed to myself, and I have vindicated myself for refusing to be the paramour of a fugitive prince, as if I had been excusing myself from accepting a share of an actual crown. But do you think I can hear all who are dear to me slandered without emotion or reply? I will not, sir; and were you seated with all the terrors of your father's Star Chamber* around you, you should hear me defend the absent and the innocent. Of my father I will say nothing, but that if he is now without wealth, without state, almost without a sheltering home and needful food, it is because he spent all in the service of the King. He needed not to commit any act of treachery or villany to obtain wealth—he had an ample competence in his own possessions. For Markham Everard—he knows no such thing as selfishness—he would not, for broad England, had she the treasures of Peru in her bosom, and a paradise on her surface, do a deed that would disgrace his own name, or injure the feelings of another — kings, my liege, may take a lesson from him. My liege, for the present I take my leave.'

'Alice, Alice—stay!' exclaimed the king. 'She is gone.—This must be virtue—real, disinterested, overawing virtue—or there is no such thing on earth. Yet Wilmot and Villiers will not believe a word of it, but add the tale to the other Wonders of Woodstock. 'Tis a rare wench! and I profess, to use the Colonel's obtestation, that I know not whether to forgive and be friends with her, or study a dire revenge. If it were not for that accursed cousin—that Puritan Colonel—I could forgive everything else to so noble a wench. But a Roundheaded rebel preferred to me—the preference avowed to my face, and justified with the assertion that a king might take a lesson from him—it is gall and wormwood. If the old man had not come up this morning as he did, the king should have taken or given a lesson, and a severe one. It was a mad rencontre to venture upon with my rank and responsibility—and yet this wench has made me so angry with her, and so envious of him, that if an opportunity offered, I should scarce be able to forbear him.—Ha! whom have we here?'

The interjection at the conclusion of this royal soliloquy was occasioned by the unexpected entrance of another personage of the drama.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Benedick. Shall I speak a word in your ear?
Claudio. God bless me from a challenge.
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

As Charles was about to leave the apartment, he was prevented by the appearance of Wildrake, who entered with an unusual degree of swagger in his gait, and of fantastic importance on his brow. 'I crave your pardon, fair sir,' he said; 'but, as they say in my country, when doors are open, dogs enter. I have knocked and called in the hall to no purpose; so, knowing the way to this parlour, sir,—for I am a light partisan, and the road I once travel I never forget,—I ventured to present myself unannounced.'

'Sir Henry Lee is abroad, sir, I believe, in the Chase,' said Charles coldly, for the appearance of this somewhat vulgar debauchee was not agreeable to him at the moment, 'and Master Albert Lee has left the Lodge for two or three days.'

'I am aware of it, sir,' said Wildrake; 'but I have no business at present with either.'

'And with whom is your business?' said Charles; 'that is, if I may be permitted to ask—since I think it cannot in possibility be with me.'

'Pardon me in turn, sir,' answered the Cavalier; 'in no possibility can it be imparted to any other but yourself, if you be, as I think you are, though in something better habit, Master Louis Girnigo, the Scottish gentleman who waits upon Master Albert Lee.'

'I am all you are like to find for him,' answered Charles.

'In truth,' said the Cavalier, 'I do perceive a difference, but rest and better clothing will do much; and I am glad of it, since I would be sorry to have brought a message, such as I am charged with, to a tatterdemalion.'

'Let us get to the business, sir, if you please,' said the king—'you have a message for me, you say?'

'True, sir,' replied Wildrake; 'I am the friend of Colonel Markham Everard, sir, a tall man, and a worthy person in the field, although I could wish him a better cause—A message I have to you, it is certain, in a slight note, which I take the liberty of presenting with the usual formalities.' So saying, he drew his sword, put the billet he mentioned upon the point, and, making a profound bow, presented it to Charles.

The disguised monarch accepted of it, with a grave return of the salute, and said, as he was about to open the letter, 'I am not, I presume, to expect friendly contents in an epistle presented in so hostile a manner?'

'A-hem, sir,' replied the ambassador, clearing his voice, while he arranged a suitable answer, in which the mild strain of diplomacy might be properly maintained; 'not utterly hostile, I suppose, sir, is the invitation, though it be such as must be construed in the commencement rather bellicose and pugnacious. I trust, sir, we shall find that a few thrusts will make a handsome conclusion of the business; and so, as my old master used to say, *Pax nascitur ex bello.* For my own poor share, I am truly glad to have been graced by my friend Markham Everard in this matter—the rather as I feared the Puritan principles with which he is imbued (I will confess the truth to you, worthy sir), might have rendered him unwilling, from certain scruples, to have taken the gentlemanlike and honourable mode of righting himself in such a case as the present. And as I render a friend's duty to my friend, so I humbly hope, Master Louis Girnigo, that I do no injustice to you in preparing the way for the

* [A law court that existed from the time of Henry VII. to that of Charles I., and made, in the reign of this last sovereign, the instrument of much arbitrary tyranny.]

proposed meeting, where, give me leave to say, I trust that, if no fatal accident occur, we shall be all better friends when the skirmish is over than we were before it began.'

'I should suppose so, sir, in any case,' said Charles, looking at the letter; 'worse than mortal enemies we can scarce be, and it is that footing upon which this billet places us.'

'You say true, sir,' said Wildrake; 'it is, sir, a cartel, introducing to a single combat, for the pacific object of restoring a perfect good understanding betwixt the survivors—in case that fortunately that word can be used in the plural after the event of the meeting.'

'In short, we only fight, I suppose,' replied the king, 'that we may come to a perfectly good and amicable understanding?'

'You are right again, sir; and I thank you for the clearness of your apprehension,' said Wildrake.—'Ah, sir, it is easy to do with a person of honour and of intellect in such a case as this. And I beseech you, sir, as a personal kindness to myself, that, as the morning is like to be frosty, and myself am in some sort rheumatic—as war will leave its scars behind, sir,—I say, I will entreat of you to bring with you some gentleman of honour, who will not disdain to take part of what is going forward—a sort of pot-luck, sir—with a poor old soldier like myself—that we may take no harm by standing unoccupied during such cold weather.'

'I understand, sir,' replied Charles; 'if this matter goes forward, be assured I will endeavour to provide you with a suitable opponent.'

'I shall remain greatly indebted to you, sir,' said Wildrake; 'and I am by no means curious about the quality of my antagonist.—It is true I write myself esquire and gentleman, and should account myself especially honoured by crossing my sword with that of Sir Henry or Master Albert Lee; but, should that not be convenient, I will not refuse to present my poor person in opposition to any gentleman who has served the King, which I always hold as a sort of letters of nobility in itself, and therefore would on no account decline the duello with such a person.'

'The King is much obliged to you, sir,' said Charles, 'for the honour you do his faithful subjects.'

'O, sir, I am scrupulous on that point—very scrupulous.—When there is a Roundhead in question, I consult the Herald's books, to see that he is entitled to bear arms, as is Master Markham Everard, without which, I promise you, I had borne none of his cartel. But a Cavalier is with me a gentleman, of course—Be his birth ever so low, his loyalty has ennobled his condition.'

'It is well, sir,' said the king. 'This paper requests me to meet Master Everard at six tomorrow morning, at the tree called the King's Oak.—I object neither to place nor time. He proffers the sword, at which, he says, we possess some equality—I do not decline the weapon; for company, two gentlemen—I shall endeavour to procure myself an associate, and a suitable partner for you, sir, if you incline to join in the dance.'

'I kiss your hand, sir, and rest yours, under a sense of obligation,' answered the envoy.

'I thank you, sir,' continued the king; 'I will therefore be ready at place and time, and suitably furnished; and I will either give your friend such satisfaction with my sword as he requires, or will render him such cause for not doing so as he will be contented with.'

'You will excuse me, sir,' said Wildrake, 'if my mind is too dull, under the circumstances, to conceive any alternative that can remain betwixt two men of honour in such a case, excepting—sa—sa'— He threw himself into a fencing position, and made a pass with his sheathed rapier, but not directed towards the person of the king, whom he addressed.

'Excuse me, sir,' said Charles, 'if I do not trouble your intellects with the consideration of a case which may not occur.—But, for example, I may plead urgent employment on the part of the public.'—This he spoke in a low and mysterious tone of voice, which Wildrake appeared perfectly to comprehend; for he laid his forefinger on his nose with what he meant for a very intelligent and apprehensive nod.

'Sir,' said he, 'if you be engaged in any affair for the King, my friend shall have every reasonable degree of patience—Nay, I will fight him myself in your stead, merely to stay his stomach, rather than you should be interrupted.—And, sir, if you can find room in your enterprise for a poor gentleman that has followed Lunsford and Goring, you have but to name day, time, and place of rendezvous; for truly, sir, I am tired of the scald hat, cropped hair, and undertaker's cloak, with which my friend has bedizened me, and would willingly ruffle it out once more in the King's cause, when whether I be banged or hanged, I care not.'

'I shall remember what you say, sir, should an opportunity occur,' said the king; 'and I wish his Majesty had many such subjects.—I presume our business is now settled?'

'When you shall have been pleased, sir, to give me a trifling scrap of writing, to serve for my credentials—for such, you know, is the custom—your written cartel hath its written answer.'

'That, sir, will I presently do,' said Charles, 'and in good time—here are the materials.'

'And, sir,' continued the envoy—'Ahi! ahem!—if you have interest in the household for a cup of sack—I am a man of few words, and am somewhat hoarse with much speaking—moreover, a serious business of this kind always makes one thirsty.—Besides, sir, to part with dry lips argues malice, which God forbid should exist in such an honourable conjuncture.'

'I do not boast much influence in the house, sir,' said the king; 'but if you would have the condescension to accept of this broad piece towards quenching your thirst at the George'——

'Sir,' said the Cavalier (for the times admitted of this strange species of courtesy, nor was Wildrake a man of such peculiar delicacy as keenly to dispute the matter), 'I am once again beholden to you. But I see not how it consists with my honour to accept of such accommodation, unless you were to accompany and partake?'

'Pardon me, sir,' replied Charles, 'my safety recommends that I remain rather private at present.'

'Enough said,' Wildrake observed; 'poor Cavaliers must not stand on ceremony. I see, sir, you understand cutter's law—when one tall fellow has coin, another must not be thirsty. I wish you, sir, a continuance of health and happiness until to-morrow, at the King's Oak, at six o'clock.'

'Farewell, sir,' said the king, and added, as Wildrake went down the stair whistling 'Hey for Cavaliers,' to which air his long rapier, jarring against the steps and banisters, bore no unsuitable burden—'Farewell, thou too just emblem of the state to which war, and defeat, and despair have reduced many a gallant gentleman.'

During the rest of the day there occurred nothing peculiarly deserving of notice. Alice sedulously avoided showing towards the disguised prince any degree of estrangement or shyness which could be discovered by her father, or by any one else. To all appearance the two young persons continued on the same footing in every respect. Yet she made the gallant himself sensible that this apparent intimacy was assumed merely to save appearances, and in no way designed as retracting from the severity with which she had rejected his suit. The sense that this was the case, joined to his injured self-love, and his enmity against a successful rival, induced Charles early to withdraw himself to a solitary walk in the Wilderness, where, like Hercules in the emblem of Thebes, divided betwixt the personifications of Virtue and of Pleasure, he listened alternately to the voice of Wisdom and of passionate Folly.

Prudence urged to him the importance of his own life to the future prosecution of the great object in which he had for the present miscarried—the restoration of monarchy in England, the rebuilding of the throne, the regaining the crown of his father, the avenging his death, and restoring to their fortunes and their country the numerous exiles, who were suffering poverty and banishment on account of their attachment to his cause. Pride, too, or rather a just and natural sense of dignity, displayed the unworthiness of a prince descending to actual personal conflict with a subject of any degree, and the ridicule which would be thrown on his memory, should he lose his life for an obscure intrigue by the hand of a private gentleman. What would his sage counsellors, Nicholas and Hyde—what would his kind and wise governor, the Marquis of Hertford, say to such an act of rashness and folly? Would it not be likely to shake the allegiance of the staid and prudent persons of the Royalist party, since wherefore should they expose their lives and estates to raise to the government of a kingdom a young man who could not command his own temper? To this was to be added, the consideration that even his success would add double difficulties to his escape, which already seemed sufficiently precarious. If, stopping short of death, he merely had the better of his antagonist, how did he know that he might not seek revenge by delivering up to the government the malignant, Louis Kerneguy, whose real character could not in that case fail to be discovered?

These considerations strongly recommended to Charles that he should clear himself of the challenge without fighting; and the reservation under which he had accepted it afforded him some opportunity of doing so.

But Passion also had her arguments, which she addressed to a temper rendered irritable by recent distress and mortification. In the first place, if he was a prince, he was also a gentleman, entitled to resent as such, and obliged to give or claim the satisfaction expected on occasion of differences among gentlemen. With Englishmen, she urged, he could never lose interest by showing himself ready, instead of sheltering himself under his royal birth and pretensions, to come frankly forward and maintain what he had done or said on his own responsibility. In a free nation, it seemed as if he would rather gain than lose in the public estimation, by a conduct which could not but seem gallant and generous. Then a character for courage was far more necessary to support his pretensions than any other kind of reputation; and the lying under a challenge, without replying to it, might bring his spirit into question. What would Villiers and Wilmot say of an intrigue, in which he had allowed himself to be shamefully baffled by a country girl, and had failed to revenge himself on his rival? The pasquinades which they would compose, the witty sarcasms which they would circulate on the occasion, would be harder to endure than the grave rebukes of Hertford, Hyde, and Nicholas. This reflection, added to the stings of youthful and awakened courage, at length fixed his resolution, and he returned to Woodstock determined to keep his appointment, come of it what might.

Perhaps there mingled with his resolution a secret belief that such a rencontre would not prove fatal. He was in the flower of his youth, active in all his exercises, and no way inferior to Colonel Everard, as far as the morning's experiment had gone, in that of self-defence. At least, such recollection might pass through his royal mind, as he hummed to himself a well-known ditty, which he had picked up during his residence in Scotland—

> A man may drink and not be drunk;
> A man may fight and not be slain;
> A man may kiss a bonnie lass,
> And yet be welcome back again.

Meanwhile the busy and all-directing Doctor Rochecliffe had contrived to intimate to Alice that she must give him a private audience, and she found him by appointment in what was called the study, once filled with ancient books, which, long since converted into cartridges, had made more noise in the world at their final exit, than during the space which had intervened betwixt that and their first publication. The doctor seated himself in a high-backed leathern easy-chair, and signed to Alice to fetch a stool and sit down beside him.

'Alice,' said the old man, taking her hand affectionately, 'thou art a good girl, a wise girl, a virtuous girl, one of those whose price is above rubies—not that *rubies* is the proper translation—but remind me to tell you of that another time. Alice, thou knowest who this Louis Kerneguy is—nay, hesitate not to me—I know everything—I am well aware of the whole matter.' Thou knowest this honoured house holds the fortunes

of England.' Alice was about to answer. 'Nay, speak not, but listen to me, Alice—How does he bear himself towards you?'

Alice coloured with the deepest crimson. 'I am a country-bred girl,' she said, 'and his manners are too court-like for me.'

'Enough said—I know it all. Alice, he is exposed to a great danger to-morrow, and you must be the happy means to prevent him.'

'I prevent him!—how, and in what manner?' said Alice, in surprise. 'It is my duty, as a subject, to do anything—anything that may become my father's daughter'——

Here she stopped, considerably embarrassed.

'Yes,' continued the doctor, 'to-morrow he hath made an appointment—an appointment with Markham Everard; the hour and place are set—six in the morning, by the King's Oak. If they meet, one will probably fall.'

'Now, may God forfend they should meet,' said Alice, turning as suddenly pale as she had previously reddened. 'But harm cannot come of it; Everard will never lift his sword against the King.'

'For that,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'I would not warrant. But if that unhappy young gentleman shall have still some reserve of the loyalty which his general conduct entirely disavows, it would not serve us here; for he knows not the King, but considers him merely as a Cavalier, from whom he has received injury.'

'Let him know the truth, Doctor Rochecliffe, let him know it instantly,' said Alice; '*he* lift hand against the King, a fugitive and defenceless! He is incapable of it. My life on the issue, he becomes most active in his preservation.'

'That is the thought of a maiden, Alice,' answered the doctor; 'and, as I fear, of a maiden whose wisdom is misled by her affections. It were worse than treason to admit a rebel officer, the friend of the arch-traitor Cromwell, into so great a secret. I dare not answer for such rashness. Hammond* was trusted by his father, and you know what came of it.'

'Then let my father know. He will meet Markham, or send to him, representing the indignity done to him by attacking his guest.'

'We dare not let your father into the secret who Louis Kerneguy really is. I did but hint the possibility of Charles taking refuge at Woodstock, and the rapture into which Sir Henry broke out, the preparations for accommodation and defence which he began to talk of, plainly showed that the mere enthusiasm of his loyalty would have led to a risk of discovery. It is you, Alice, who must save the hopes of every true Royalist.'

'I!' answered Alice; 'it is impossible—Why cannot my father be induced to interefere, as in behalf of his friend and guest, though he know him as no other than Louis Kerneguy?'

'You have forgot your father's character, my young friend,' said the doctor; 'an excellent man, and the best of Christians, till there is a clashing of swords, and then he starts up the complete martialist, as deaf to every pacific reasoning as if he were a game-cock.'

'You forget, Doctor Rochecliffe,' said Alice, 'that this very morning, if I understand the thing aright, my father prevented them from fighting.'

'Ay,' answered the doctor, 'because he deemed himself bound to keep the peace in the Royal Park; but it was done with such regret, Alice, that, should he find them at it again, I am clear to foretell he will only so far postpone the combat as to conduct them to some unprivileged ground, and there bid them tilt and welcome, while he regaled his eyes with a scene so pleasing. No, Alice, it is you, and you only, who can help us in this extremity.'

'I see no possibility,' said she, again colouring, 'how I can be of the least use.'

'You must send a note,' answered Doctor Rochecliffe, 'to the King—a note such as all women know how to write better than any man can teach them—to meet you at the precise hour of the rendezvous. He will not fail you, for I know his unhappy foible.'

'Doctor Rochecliffe,' said Alice gravely,—'you have known me from infancy,—What have you seen in me to induce you to believe that I should ever follow such unbecoming counsel?'

'And if you have known *me* from infancy,' retorted the doctor, 'what have you seen of *me* that you should suspect me of giving counsel to my friend's daughter, which it would be misbecoming in her to follow? You cannot be fool enough, I think, to suppose that I mean you should carry your complaisance farther than to keep him in discourse for an hour or two, till I have all in readiness for his leaving this place, from which I can frighten him by the terrors of an alleged search!—So, C. S. mounts his horse and rides off, and Mistress Alice Lee has the honour of saving him.'

'Yes, at the expense of her own reputation,' said Alice, 'and the risk of an eternal stain on my family. You say you know all. What can the King think of my appointing an assignation with him after what has passed, and how will it be possible to disabuse him respecting the purpose of my doing so?'

'I will disabuse him, Alice; I will explain the whole.'

'Doctor Rochecliffe,' said Alice, 'you propose what is impossible. You can do much by your ready wit and great wisdom; but if new-fallen snow were once sullied, not all your art could wash it white again; and it is altogether the same with a maiden's reputation.'

'Alice, my dearest child,' said the doctor, 'bethink you that if I recommend this means of saving the life of the King, at least rescuing him from instant peril, it is because I see no other of which to avail myself. If I bid you assume, even for a moment, the semblance of what is wrong, it is but in the last extremity, and under circumstances which cannot return—I will take the surest means to prevent all evil report which can arise from what I recommend.'

'Say not so, doctor,' said Alice; 'better undertake to turn back the Isis than to stop the

* [After his escape from Hampton Court in November 1647, Charles I. threw himself upon the protection of the Parliamentary officer, Robert Hammond, who kept strict guard over the king until the end of November in the following year, when the army forcibly took possession of him.]

course of calumny. The King will make boast to his whole licentious court, of the ease with which, but for a sudden alarm, he could have brought off Alice Lee as a paramour—the mouth which confers honour on others will then be the means to deprive me of mine. Take a fitter course, one more becoming your own character and profession. Do not lead him to fail in an engagement of honour, by holding out the prospect of another engagement equally dishonourable, whether false or true. Go to the King himself, speak to him, as the servants of God have a right to speak even to earthly sovereigns. Point out to him the folly and the wickedness of the course he is about to pursue—urge upon him that he fear the sword, since wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword. Tell him that the friends who died for him in the field at Worcester, on the scaffolds, and on the gibbets, since that bloody day—that the remnant who are in prison, scattered, fled, and ruined on his account, deserve better of him and his father's race, than that he should throw away his life in an idle brawl—Tell him that it is dishonest to venture that which is not his own, dishonourable to betray the trust which brave men have reposed in his virtue and in his courage.'

Doctor Rochecliffe looked on her with a melancholy smile, his eyes glistening as he said, 'Alas! Alice, even I could not plead that just cause to him so eloquently or so impressively as thou dost. But, alack! Charles would listen to neither. It is not from priests or women, he would say, that men should receive counsel in affairs of honour.'

'Then hear me, Doctor Rochecliffe—I will appear at the place of rendezvous, and I will prevent the combat—do not fear that I can do what I say—at a sacrifice, indeed, but not that of my reputation. My heart may be broken'—she endeavoured to stifle her sobs with difficulty—'for the consequence; but not in the imagination of a man, and far less that man her sovereign, shall a thought of Alice Lee be associated with dishonour.' She hid her face in her handkerchief, and burst out into unrestrained tears.

'What means this hysterical passion?' said Doctor Rochecliffe, surprised and somewhat alarmed by the vehemence of her grief—'Maiden, I must have no concealments; I must know.'

'Exert your ingenuity, then, and discover it,' said Alice—for a moment put out of temper at the doctor's pertinacious self-importance—'Guess my purpose, as you can guess at everything else. It is enough to have to go through my task, I will not endure the distress of telling it over, and that to one who—forgive me, dear Doctor—might not think my agitation on this occasion fully warranted.'

'Nay, then, my young mistress, you must be ruled,' said Rochecliffe; 'and if I cannot make you explain yourself, I must see whether your father can gain so far on you.' So saying, he arose somewhat displeased, and walked towards the door.

'You forget what you yourself told me, Doctor Rochecliffe,' said Alice, 'of the risk of communicating this great secret to my father.'

'It is too true,' he said, stopping short and turning round; 'and I think, wench, thou art too smart for me, and I have not met many such. But thou art a good girl, and wilt tell me thy device of free will—it concerns my character and influence with the King, that I should be fully acquainted with whatever is *actum atque tractatum*, done and treated of in this matter.'

'Trust your character to me, good Doctor,' said Alice, attempting to smile; 'it is of firmer stuff than those of women, and will be safer in my custody than mine could have been in yours. And thus much I condescend—you shall see the whole scene—you shall go with me yourself, and much will I feel emboldened and heartened by your company.'

'That is something,' said the doctor, though not altogether satisfied with this limited confidence. 'Thou wert ever a clever wench, and I will trust thee; indeed, trust thee I find I must, whether voluntarily or no.'

'Meet me, then,' said Alice, 'in the Wilderness to-morrow. But first tell me, are you well assured of time and place?—a mistake were fatal.'

'Assure yourself my information is entirely accurate,' said the doctor, resuming his air of consequence, which had been a little diminished during the latter part of their conference.

'May I ask,' said Alice, 'through what channel you acquired such important information?'

'You may ask, unquestionably,' he answered, now completely restored to his supremacy; 'but whether I will answer or not is a very different question. I conceive neither your reputation nor my own is interested in your remaining in ignorance on that subject. So I have my secrets as well as you, mistress; and some of them, I fancy, are a good deal more worth knowing.'

'Be it so,' said Alice quietly; 'if you will meet me in the Wilderness by the broken dial at half-past five exactly, we will go together to-morrow and watch them as they come to the rendezvous. I will on the way get the better of my present timidity, and explain to you the means I design to employ to prevent mischief. You can perhaps think of making some effort which may render my interference, unbecoming and painful as it must be, altogether unnecessary.'

'Nay, my child,' said the doctor; 'if you place yourself in my hands, you will be the first that ever had reason to complain of my want of conduct, and you may well judge you are the very last (one excepted) whom I would see suffer for want of counsel. At half-past five, then, at the dial in the Wilderness—and God bless our undertaking!'

Here their interview was interrupted by the sonorous voice of Sir Henry Lee, which shouted their names, 'Daughter Alice—Doctor Rochecliffe,' through passage and gallery.

'What do you here,' said he, entering, 'sitting like two crows in a mist, when we have such rare sport below? Here is this wild crack-brained boy Louis Kerneguy, now making me laugh till my sides are fit to split, and now playing on his guitar sweetly enough to win a lark from the heavens.—Come away with you, come away. It is hard work to laugh alone.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

This is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
JOHN HOME.

THE sun had risen on the broad boughs of the forest, but without the power of penetrating into its recesses, which hung rich with heavy dewdrops, and were beginning on some of the trees to exhibit the varied tints of autumn; it being the season when Nature, like a prodigal whose race is well-nigh run, seems desirous to make up in profuse gaiety and variety of colours, for the short space which her splendour has then to endure. The birds were silent—and even robin redbreast, whose chirruping song was heard among the bushes near the Lodge, emboldened by the largesses with which the good old knight always encouraged his familiarity, did not venture into the recesses of the wood, where he encountered the sparrow-hawk, and other enemies of a similar description, preferring the vicinity of the dwellings of man, from whom he, almost solely among the feathered tribes, seems to experience disinterested protection.

The scene was therefore at once lovely and silent, when the good Doctor Rochecliffe, wrapped in a scarlet roquelaure, which had seen service in its day, muffling his face more from habit than necessity, and supporting Alice on his arm (she also defended by a cloak against the cold and damp of the autumn morning), glided through the tangled and long grass of the darkest alleys, almost ankle-deep in dew, towards the place appointed for the intended duel. Both so eagerly maintained the consultation in which they were engaged, that they were alike insensible of the roughness and discomforts of the road, though often obliged to force their way through brushwood and coppice, which poured down on them all the liquid pearls with which they were loaded, till the mantles they were wrapped in hung lank by their sides, and clung to their shoulders heavily charged with moisture. They stopped when they had attained a station under the coppice, and, shrouded by it, from which they could see all that passed on the little esplanade before the King's Oak, whose broad and scathed form, contorted and shattered limbs, and frowning brows, made it appear like some ancient war-worn champion, well selected to be the umpire of a field of single combat.

The first person who appeared at the rendezvous was the gay Cavalier, Roger Wildrake. He also was wrapped in his cloak, but had discarded his Puritanic beaver, and wore in its stead a Spanish hat, with a feather and gilt hatband, all of which had encountered bad weather and hard service; but, to make amends for the appearance of poverty by the show of pretension, the castor was accurately adjusted after what was rather profanely called the d—me cut, used among the more desperate Cavaliers. He advanced hastily, and exclaimed aloud—'First in the field after all, by Jove, though I bilked Everard in order to have my morning draught. It has done me much good,' he added, smacking his lips.—'Well, I suppose I should search the ground ere my principal comes up, whose Presbyterian watch trudges as slow as his Presbyterian step.'

He took his rapier from under his cloak, and seemed about to search the thickets around.

'I will prevent him,' whispered the doctor to Alice. 'I will keep faith with you—you shall not come on the scene—*nisi dignus vindice nodus*—I'll explain that another time. *Vindex* is feminine as well as masculine, so the quotation is defensible.—Keep you close.'

So saying, he stepped forward on the esplanade, and bowed to Wildrake.

'Master Louis Kerneguy,' said Wildrake, pulling off his hat; but instantly discovering his error, he added, 'But no—I beg your pardon, sir—Fatter, shorter, older.—Master Kerneguy's friend, I suppose, with whom I hope to have a turn by and by.—And why not now, sir, before our principals come up? just a snack to stay the orifice of the stomach till the dinner is served, sir? What say you?'

'To open the orifice of the stomach more likely, or to give it a new one,' said the doctor.

'True, sir,' said Roger, who seemed now in his element; 'you say well—that is as thereafter may be.—But come, sir, you wear your face muffled. I grant you, it is honest men's fashion at this unhappy time; the more is the pity. But we do all above board—we have no traitors here. I'll get into my gears first, to encourage you, and show you that you have to deal with a gentleman, who honours the King, and is a match fit to fight with any who follow him, as doubtless you do, sir, since you are the friend of Master Louis Kerneguy.'

All this while, Wildrake was busied undoing the clasps of his square-caped cloak.

'Off—off, ye lendings,' he said, 'borrowings I should more properly call you—

Via the curtain which shadow'd Borgia.'

So saying, he threw the cloak from him, and appeared *in cuerpo*, in a most Cavalier-like doublet, of greasy crimson satin, pinked and slashed with what had been once white tiffany; breeches of the same; and nether-stocks, or, as we now call them, stockings, darned in many places, and which, like those of Poins,* had been once peach-coloured. A pair of pumps, ill calculated for a walk through the dew, and a broad shoulder-belt of tarnished embroidery, completed his equipment.

'Come, sir!' he exclaimed; 'make haste, off with your slough—Here I stand, tight and true—as loyal a lad as ever stuck rapier through a Roundhead.—Come, sir, to your tools!' he continued; 'we may have half-a-dozen thrusts before they come yet, and shame them for their tardiness.—Pshaw!' he exclaimed, in a most disappointed tone, when the doctor, unfolding his cloak, showed his clerical dress; 'Tush! it's but the parson after all!'

Wildrake's respect for the Church, however, and his desire to remove one who might possibly interrupt a scene to which he looked forward with peculiar satisfaction, induced him presently to assume another tone.

* [A companion of Sir John Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*]

'I beg pardon,' he said, 'my dear Doctor—I kiss the hem of your cassock—I do, by the Thundering Jove—I beg your pardon again.—But I am happy I have met with you—They are raving for your presence at the Lodge—to marry, or christen, or bury, or confess, or something very urgent.—For Heaven's sake, make haste!'

'At the Lodge?' said the doctor; 'why, I left the Lodge this instant—I was there later, I am sure, than you could be, who came the Woodstock road.'

'Well,' replied Wildrake, 'it is at Woodstock they want you.—Rat it, did I say the Lodge?—No, no—Woodstock—Mine host cannot be hanged—his daughter married—his bastard christened, or his wife buried—without the assistance of a *real* clergyman.—Your Holdenoughs won't do for them.—He's a true man mine host; so, as you value your function, make haste.'

'You will pardon me, Master Wildrake,' said the doctor—'I wait for Master Louis Kerneguy.'

'The devil you do!' exclaimed Wildrake. 'Why, I always knew the Scots could do nothing without their minister; but, d—n it, I never thought they put them to this use neither. But I have known jolly customers in Orders, who understood to handle the sword as well as their prayer-book. You know the purpose of our meeting, Doctor. Do you come only as a ghostly comforter—or as a surgeon, perhaps—or do you ever take bilboa in hand?—Sa—sa!'

Here he made a fencing demonstration with his sheathed rapier.

'I have done so, sir, on necessary occasion,' said Doctor Rochecliffe.

'Good sir, let this stand for a necessary one,' said Wildrake. 'You know my devotion for the Church. If a divine of your skill would do me the honour to exchange but three passes with me, I should think myself happy for ever.'

'Sir,' said Rochecliffe, smiling, 'were there no other objection to what you propose, I have not the means—I have no weapon.'

'What? you want the *de quoi?* that is unlucky indeed. But you have a stout cane in your hand—what hinders our trying a pass (my rapier being sheathed, of course) until our principals come up? My pumps are full of this frost-dew; and I shall be a toe or two out of pocket, if I am to stand still all the time they are stretching themselves; for I fancy, Doctor, you are of my opinion, that the matter will not be a fight of cock-sparrows.'

'My business here is to make it, if possible, be no fight at all,' said the divine.

'Now, rat me, Doctor, but that is too spiteful,' said Wildrake; 'and were it not for my respect for the Church, I could turn Presbyterian to be revenged.'

'Stand back a little, if you please, sir,' said the doctor; 'do not press forward in that direction.'—For Wildrake, in the agitation of his movements, induced by his disappointment, approached the spot where Alice remained still concealed.

'And wherefore not, I pray you, Doctor,' said the Cavalier.

But on advancing a step he suddenly stopped short, and muttered to himself, with a round oath of astonishment, 'A petticoat in the coppice, by all that is reverend, and at this hour in the morning—*Whew—ew—ew!*'—He gave vent to his surprise in a long low interjectional whistle; then turning to the doctor, with his finger on the side of his nose, 'You're sly, Doctor, d—d sly! But why not give me a hint of your—your commodity there—your contraband goods? Gad, sir, I am not a man to expose the eccentricities of the Church.'

'Sir,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'you are impertinent; and if time served, and it were worth my while, I would chastise you.'

And the doctor, who had served long enough in the wars to have added some of the qualities of a captain of horse to those of a divine, actually raised his cane, to the infinite delight of the rake, whose respect for the Church was by no means able to subdue his love of mischief.

'Nay, Doctor,' said he, 'if you wield your weapon backsword-fashion, in that way, and raise it as high as your head, I shall be through you in a twinkling.' So saying, he made a pass with his sheathed rapier, not precisely at the Doctor's person, but in that direction; when Rochecliffe, changing the direction of his cane from the broadsword guard to that of the rapier, made the Cavalier's sword spring ten yards out of his hand, with all the dexterity of my friend Francalanza.* At this moment both the principal parties appeared on the field.

Everard exclaimed angrily to Wildrake, 'Is this your friendship? In Heaven's name, what make you in that fool's jacket, and playing the pranks of a jack-pudding?' while his worthy second, somewhat crestfallen, held down his head like a boy caught in roguery, and went to pick up his weapon, stretching his head, as he passed, into the coppice, to obtain another glimpse, if possible, of the concealed object of his curiosity.

Charles, in the meantime, still more surprised at what he beheld, called out on his part—'What! Doctor Rochecliffe become literally one of the Church militant, and tilting with my friend, Cavalier Wildrake? May I use the freedom to ask him to withdraw, as Colonel Everard and I have some private business to settle?'

It was Doctor Rochecliffe's cue, on this important occasion, to have armed himself with the authority of his sacred office, and used a tone of interference which might have overawed even a monarch, and made him feel that his monitor spoke by a warrant higher than his own. But the indiscreet latitude he had just given to his own passion, and the levity in which he had been detected, were very unfavourable to his assuming that superiority, to which so uncontrollable a spirit as that of Charles, wilful as a prince, and capricious as a wit, was at all likely to submit. The doctor did, however, endeavour to rally his dignity, and replied, with the gravest, and at the same time the most respectful, tone he could assume, that he also had business of the most urgent nature, which prevented him from complying with Master Kerneguy's wishes, and leaving that spot.

'Excuse this untimely interruption,' said Charles, taking off his hat and bowing to

* [A fencing-master in Edinburgh—1826.]

Colonel Everard, 'which I will immediately put an end to.'

Everard gravely returned his salute, and was silent.

'Are you mad, Doctor Rochecliffe?' said Charles—'or are you deaf?—or have you forgotten your mother-tongue? I desired you to leave this place.'

'I am not mad,' said the divine, rousing up his resolution, and regaining the natural firmness of his voice—'I would prevent others from being so; I am not deaf—I would pray others to hear the voice of reason and religion; I have not forgotten my mother-tongue—but I have come hither to speak the language of the Master of kings and princes.'

'To fence with broomsticks, I should rather suppose,' said the king—'Come, Doctor Rochecliffe, this sudden fit of assumed importance befits you as little as your late frolic. You are not, I apprehend, either a Catholic priest or a Scotch Mass-John, to claim devoted obedience from your hearers, but a Church of England man, subject to the rules of that Communion—and to its HEAD.' In speaking the last words, the king lowered his voice to a low and impressive whisper. Everard, observing this, drew back, the natural generosity of his temper directing him to avoid overhearing private discourse, in which the safety of the speakers might be deeply concerned. They continued, however, to observe great caution in their forms of expression.

'Master Kerneguy,' said the clergyman, 'it is not I who assume authority or control over your wishes—God forbid; I do but tell you what reason, Scripture, religion, and morality alike prescribe for your rule of conduct.'

'And I, Doctor,' said the king, smiling, and pointing to the unlucky cane, 'will take your example rather than your precept. If a reverend clergyman will himself fight a bout at single-stick, what right can he have to interfere in gentlemen's quarrels?—Come, sir, remove yourself, and do not let your present obstinacy cancel former obligations.'

'Bethink yourself,' said the divine,—'I can say one word which will prevent all this.'

'Do it,' replied the king, 'and in doing so belie the whole tenor and actions of an honourable life—abandon the principles of your Church, and become a perjured traitor and an apostate, to prevent another person from discharging his duty as a gentleman! This were indeed killing your friend to prevent the risk of his running himself into danger. Let the Passive Obedience, which is so often in your mouth, and no doubt in your head, put your feet for once into motion, and step aside for ten minutes. Within that space your assistance may be needed, either as body-curer or soul-curer.'

'Nay, then,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'I have but one argument left.'

While this conversation was carried on apart, Everard had almost forcibly detained by his own side his follower, Wildrake, whose greater curiosity and lesser delicacy would otherwise have thrust him forward, to get, if possible, into the secret. But when he saw the doctor turn into the coppice, he whispered eagerly to Everard—'A gold Carolus to a Commonwealth farthing, the Doctor has not only come to preach a peace, but has brought the principal conditions along with him!'

Everard made no answer; he had already unsheathed his sword; and Charles hardly saw Rochecliffe's back fairly turned, than he lost no time in following his example. But, ere they had done more than salute each other, with the usual courteous flourish of their weapons, Doctor Rochecliffe again stood between them, leading in his hand Alice Lee, her garments dank with dew, and her long hair heavy with moisture, and totally uncurled. Her face was extremely pale, but it was the paleness of desperate resolution, not of fear. There was a dead pause of astonishment—the combatants rested on their swords—and even the forwardness of Wildrake only vented itself in half-suppressed ejaculations, as, 'Well done, Doctor—this beats the "parson among the pease"—No less than your patron's daughter—And Mistress Alice, whom I thought a very snowdrop, turned out a dog-violet after all—a Lindabrides,* by heavens, and altogether one of ourselves!'

Excepting these unheeded mutterings, Alice was the first to speak.

'Master Everard,' she said—'Master Kerneguy, you are surprised to see me here—Yet why should I not tell the reason at once? Convinced that I am, however guiltlessly, the unhappy cause of your misunderstanding, I am too much interested to prevent fatal consequences to pause upon any step which may end it.—Master Kerneguy, have my wishes, my entreaties, my prayers—have your noble thoughts—the recollections of your own high duties, no weight with you in this matter? Let me entreat you to consult reason, religion, and common sense, and return your weapon.'

'I am obedient as an Eastern slave, madam,' answered Charles, sheathing his sword; 'but I assure you, the matter about which you distress yourself is a mere trifle, which will be much better settled betwixt Colonel Everard and myself in five minutes, than with the assistance of the whole Convocation of the Church, with a female parliament to assist their reverend deliberations.—Master Everard, will you oblige me by walking a little farther?—We must change ground, it seems.'

'I am ready to attend you, sir,' said Everard, who had sheathed his sword so soon as his antagonist did so.

'I have then no interest with you, sir,' said Alice, continuing to address the king—'Do you not fear I should use the secret in my power to prevent this affair going to extremity? Think you this gentleman, who raises his hand against you, if he knew'——

'If he knew that I were Lord Wilmot, madam, you would say?—Accident has given him proof to that effect, with which he is already satisfied, and I think you would find it difficult to induce him to embrace a different opinion.'

Alice paused, and looked on the king with great indignation, the following words dropping from her mouth by intervals, as if they burst

* A sort of cant name for a female of no reputation—[derived from a character in an old Spanish romance].

forth one by one in spite of feelings that would have restrained them—'Cold—selfish—ungrateful—unkind!—Woe to the land which'——Here she paused with marked emphasis, then added—'which shall number thee, or such as thee, among her nobles and rulers!'

'Nay, fair Alice,' said Charles, whose good-nature could not but feel the severity of this reproach, though too slightly to make all the desired impression, 'you are too unjust to me—too partial to a happier man. Do not call me unkind; I am but here to answer Master Everard's summons. I could neither decline attending, nor withdraw now I am here, without loss of honour; and my loss of honour would be a disgrace which must extend to many—I cannot fly from Master Everard—it would be too shameful. If he abides by his message, it must be decided as such affairs usually are. If he retreats or yields it up, I will, for your sake, waive punctilio. I will not even ask an apology for the trouble it has afforded me, but let all pass as if it were the consequence of some unhappy mistake, the grounds of which shall remain on my part uninquired into.—This I will do for your sake, and it is much for a man of honour to condescend so far—You *know* that the condescension from me in particular is great indeed. Then do not call me ungenerous, or ungrateful, or unkind, since I am ready to do all which, as a man, I can do, and more perhaps than as a man of honour I ought to do.

'Do you hear this, Markham Everard,' exclaimed Alice—'do you hear this?—The dreadful option is left entirely at your disposal. You were wont to be temperate in passion, religious, forgiving—will you, for a mere punctilio, drive on this private and unchristian broil to a murderous extremity? Believe me, if you *now*, contrary to all the better principles of your life, give the reins to your passions, the consequences may be such as you will rue for your lifetime, and even, if Heaven have not mercy, rue after your life is finished.'

Markham Everard remained for a moment gloomily silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground. At length he looked up, and answered her—'Alice, you are a soldier's daughter—a soldier's sister. All your relations, even including one whom you then entertained some regard for, have been made soldiers by these unhappy discords. Yet you have seen them take the field—in some instances on contrary sides, to do their duty where their principles called them, without manifesting this extreme degree of interest. Answer me—and your answer shall decide my conduct—Is this youth, so short while known, already of more value to you than those dear connections, father, brother, and kinsman, whose departure to battle you saw with comparative indifference?—Say *this*, and it shall be enough—I leave the ground, never to see you or this country again.'

'Stay, Markham, stay; and believe me when I say that, if I answer your question in the affirmative, it is because Master Kerneguy's safety comprehends more, much more, than that of any of those you have mentioned.'

'Indeed! I did not know a coronet had been so superior in value to the crest of a private gentleman,' said Everard; 'yet I have heard that many women think so.'

'You apprehend me amiss,' said Alice, perplexed between the difficulty of so expressing herself as to prevent immediate mischief, and at the some time anxious to combat the jealousy and disarm the resentment which she saw arising in the bosom of her lover. But she found no words fine enough to draw the distinction, without leading to a discovery of the king's actual character, and perhaps, in consequence, to his destruction.—'Markham,' she said, 'have compassion on me. Press me not at this moment; believe me, the honour and happiness of my father, of my brother, and of my whole family, are interested in Master Kerneguy's safety, are inextricably concerned in this matter resting where it now does.'

'O, ay—I doubt not,' said Everard; 'the House of Lee ever looked up to nobility, and valued in their connections the fantastic loyalty of a courtier beyond the sterling and honest patriotism of a plain country gentleman. For them, the thing is in course. But on your part, you, Alice—O! on your part, whom I have loved so dearly—who has suffered me to think that my affection was not unrepaid—Can the attractions of an empty title, the idle court compliments of a mere man of quality, during only a few hours, lead you to prefer a libertine lord to such a heart as mine?'

'No, no—believe me, no,' said Alice, in the extremity of distress.

'Put your answer, which seems so painful, in one word, and say for *whose* safety it is you are thus deeply interested?'

'For both—for both,' said Alice.

'That answer will not serve, Alice,' answered Everard—'here is no room for equality. I must and will know to what I have to trust. I understand not the paltering, which makes a maiden unwilling to decide betwixt two suitors; nor would I willingly impute to *you* the vanity that cannot remain contented with one lover at once.'

The vehemence of Everard's displeasure, when he supposed his own long and sincere devotion lightly forgotten, amid the addresses of a profligate courtier, awakened the spirit of Alice Lee, who, as we elsewhere said, had a portion in her temper of the lion-humour that was characteristic of her family.

'If I am thus misinterpreted,' she said—'if I am not judged worthy of the least confidence or candid construction, hear my declaration, and my assurance, that, strange as my words may seem, they are, when truly interpreted, such as do you no wrong. I tell you—I tell all present—and I tell this gentleman himself, who well knows the sense in which I speak, that his life and safety are, or ought to be, of more value to me than those of any other man in the kingdom—nay, in the world, be that other who he will.'

These words she spoke in a tone so firm and decided as admitted no further discussion. Charles bowed low and with gravity, but remained silent. Everard, his features agitated by the emotions which his pride barely enabled him to suppress, advanced to his antagonist, and said, in a tone which he vainly endeavoured to make a firm one, 'Sir, you heard the lady's declaration, with such feelings, doubtless of gratitude, as the case eminently demands.—As

her poor kinsman, and an unworthy suitor, sir, I presume to yield my interest in her to you; and as I will never be the means of giving her pain, I trust you will not think I act unworthily in retracting the letter which gave you the trouble of attending this place at this hour.—Alice,' he said, turning his head towards her, 'farewell, Alice, at once, and for ever!'

The poor young lady, whose adventitious spirit had almost deserted her, attempted to repeat the word farewell, but, failing in the attempt, only accomplished a broken and imperfect sound, and would have sunk to the ground, but for Doctor Rochecliffe, who caught her as she fell. Roger Wildrake also, who had twice or thrice put to his eyes what remained of a kerchief, interested by the lady's evident distress, though unable to comprehend the mysterious cause, hastened to assist the divine in supporting so fair a burden.

Meanwhile, the disguised prince had beheld the whole in silence, but with an agitation to which he was unwonted, and which his swarthy features, and still more his motions, began to betray. His posture was at first absolutely stationary, with his arms folded on his bosom, as one who waits to be guided by the current of events; presently after, he shifted his position, advanced and retired his foot, clenched and opened his hand, and otherwise showed symptoms that he was strongly agitated by contending feelings—was on the point, too, of forming some sudden resolution, and yet still in uncertainty what course he should pursue.

But when he saw Markham Everard, after one look of unspeakable anguish towards Alice, turning his back to depart, he broke out into his familiar ejaculation, 'Oddsfish! this must not be.' In three strides he overtook the slowly retiring Everard, tapped him smartly on the shoulder, and, as he turned round, said, with an air of command, which he well knew how to adopt at pleasure, 'One word with you, sir.'

'At your pleasure, sir,' replied Everard; and, naturally conjecturing the purpose of his antagonist to be hostile, took hold of his rapier with the left hand, and laid the right on the hilt, not displeased at the supposed call; for anger is at least as much akin to disappointment as pity is said to be to love.

'Pshaw!' answered the king, 'that cannot be *now* — Colonel Everard, I am CHARLES STUART!'

Everard recoiled in the greatest surprise, and next exclaimed, 'Impossible — it cannot be! The King of Scots has escaped from Bristol.—My Lord Wilmot, your talents for intrigue are well known; but this will not pass upon me.'

'The King of Scots, Master Everard,' replied Charles, 'since you are so pleased to limit his sovereignty—at any rate, the eldest son of the late sovereign of Britain—is now before you; therefore it is impossible he could have escaped from Bristol. Doctor Rochecliffe shall be my voucher, and will tell you, moreover, that Wilmot is of a fair complexion and light hair; mine, you may see, is swart as a raven.'

Rochecliffe, seeing what was passing, abandoned Alice to the care of Wildrake, whose extreme delicacy in the attempts he made to bring her back to life formed an amiable contrast to his usual wildness, and occupied him so much, that he remained for the moment ignorant of the disclosure in which he would have been so much interested. As for Doctor Rochecliffe, he came forward, wringing his hands in all the demonstration of extreme anxiety, and with the usual exclamations attending such a state.

'Peace, Doctor Rochecliffe!' said the king, with such complete self-possession as indeed became a prince; 'we are in the hands, I am satisfied, of a man of honour. Master Everard must be pleased in finding only a fugitive prince in the person in whom he thought he had discovered a successful rival. He cannot but be aware of the feelings which prevented me from taking advantage of the cover which this young lady's devoted loyalty afforded me, at the risk of her own happiness. He is the party who is to profit by my candour; and certainly I have a right to expect that my condition, already indifferent enough, shall not be rendered worse by his becoming privy to it under such circumstances. At any rate, the avowal is made; and it is for Colonel Everard to consider how he is to conduct himself.'

'O, your Majesty! my liege! my King! my royal prince!' exclaimed Wildrake, who, at length discovering what was passing, had crawled on his knees, and seizing the king's hand, was kissing it, more like a child mumbling gingerbread, or like a lover devouring the yielded hand of his mistress, than in the manner in which such salutations pass at court —'If my dear friend Mark Everard should prove a dog on this occasion, rely on me, I will cut his throat on the spot, were I to do the same for myself the moment afterwards!'

'Hush, hush, my good friend and loyal subject,' said the king, 'and compose yourself; for though I am obliged to put on the prince for a moment, we have not privacy or safety to receive our subjects in King Cambyses'* vein.'

Everard, who had stood for a time utterly confounded, awoke at length like a man from a dream.

'Sire,' he said, bowing low, and with profound deference, 'if I do not offer you the homage of a subject with knee and sword, it is because God, by whom kings reign, has denied you for the present the power of ascending your throne without rekindling civil war. For your safety being endangered by me, let not such an imagination for an instant cross your mind. Had I not respected your person—were I not bound to you for the candour with which your noble avowal has prevented the misery of my future life, your misfortunes would have rendered your person as sacred, so far as I can protect it, as it could be esteemed by the most devoted Royalist in the kingdom. If your plans are soundly considered, and securely laid, think that all which is now passed is but a dream. If they are in such a state that I can aid them, saving my duty to the Commonwealth, which will permit me to be privy to no schemes of actual violence, your Majesty may command my services.'

* [An ancient Persian king, son of Cyrus the Great; he was a man of very tyrannous, capricious, and violent temper.]

'It may be I may be troublesome to you, sir,' said the king; 'for my fortunes are not such as to permit me to reject even the most limited offers of assistance; but if I can, I will dispense with applying to you. I would not willingly put any man's compassion at war with his sense of duty on my account.—Doctor, I think there will be no further tilting to-day, either with sword or cane; so we may as well return to the Lodge, and leave these'—looking at Alice and Everard—'who may have more to say in explanation.'

'No—no!' exclaimed Alice, who was now perfectly come to herself, and partly by her own observation, and partly from the report of Doctor Rochecliffe, comprehended all that had taken place—'My cousin Everard and I have nothing to explain; he will forgive me for having riddled with him when I dared not speak plainly; and I forgive him for having read my riddle wrong. But my father has my promise—we must not correspond or converse for the present—I return instantly to the Lodge and he to Woodstock, unless you, sire,' bowing to the king, 'command his duty otherwise. Instant to the town, Cousin Markham; and if danger should approach, give us warning.'

Everard would have delayed her departure, would have excused himself for his unjust suspicion, would have said a thousand things; but she would not listen to him, saying, for all other answer,—'Farewell, Markham, till God send better days!'

'She is an angel of truth and beauty,' said Roger Wildrake; 'and I, like a blasphemous heretic, called her a Lindabrides! But has your Majesty, craving your pardon, no commands for poor Hodge Wildrake, who will blow out his own or any other man's brains in England, to do your Grace a pleasure?'

'We entreat our good friend Wildrake to do nothing hastily,' said Charles, smiling; 'such brains as his are rare, and should not be rashly dispersed, as the like may not be easily collected. We recommend him to be silent and prudent—to tilt no more with loyal clergymen of the Church of England, and to get himself a new jacket with all convenient speed, to which we beg to contribute our royal aid. When fit time comes, we hope to find other service for him.'

As he spoke, he slid ten pieces into the hand of poor Wildrake, who, confounded with the excess of his loyal gratitude, blubbered like a child, and would have followed the king, had not Doctor Rochecliffe, in few words, but peremptory, insisted that he should return with his patron, promising him he should certainly be employed in assisting the king's escape, could an opportunity be found of using his services.

'Be so generous, reverend sir, and you bind me to you for ever,' said the Cavalier; 'and I conjure you not to keep malice against me on account of the foolery you wot of.'

'I have no occasion, Captain Wildrake,' said the doctor, 'for I think I had the best of it.'

'Well, then, Doctor, I forgive you on my part; and I pray you, for Christian charity, let me have a finger in this good service; for, as I live in hope of it, rely that I shall die of disappointment.'

While the doctor and soldier thus spoke together, Charles took leave of Everard (who remained uncovered while he spoke to him) with his usual grace—'I need not bid you no longer be jealous of me,' said the king; 'for I presume you will scarce think of a match betwixt Alice and me, which would be too losing a one on her side. For other thoughts, the wildest libertine could not entertain them towards so high-minded a creature; and believe me, that my sense of her merit did not need this last distinguished proof of her truth and loyalty. I saw enough of her from her answers to some idle sallies of gallantry, to know with what a lofty character she is endowed. Master Everard, her happiness I see depends on you, and I trust you will be the careful guardian of it. If we can take any obstacle out of the way of your joint happiness, be assured we will use our influence.—Farewell, sir; if we cannot be better friends, do not at least let us entertain harder or worse thoughts of each other than we have now.'

There was something in the manner of Charles that was extremely affecting; something, too, in his condition as a fugitive in the kingdom which was his own by inheritance, that made a direct appeal to Everard's bosom—though in contradiction to the dictates of that policy which he judged it his duty to pursue in the distracted circumstances of the country. He remained, as we have said, uncovered; and in his manner testified the highest expression of reverence, up to the point when such might seem a symbol of allegiance. He bowed so low as almost to approach his lips to the hand of Charles—but he did not kiss it.—'I would rescue your person, sir,' he said, 'with the purchase of my own life. More'——He stopped short, and the king took up his sentence where it broke off—'More you cannot do,' said Charles, 'to maintain an honourable consistency;—but what you have said is enough. You cannot render homage to my proffered hand as that of a sovereign, but you will not prevent my taking yours as a friend—if you allow me to call myself so—I am sure, as a well-wisher at least.'

The generous soul of Everard was touched—He took the king's hand, and pressed it to his lips.

'O!' he said, 'were better times to come'——

'Bind yourself to nothing, dear Everard,' said the good-natured prince, partaking his emotion—'We reason ill while our feelings are moved. I will recruit no man to his loss, nor will I have my fallen fortunes involve those of others, because they have humanity enough to pity my present condition. If better times come, why, we will meet again, and I hope to our mutual satisfaction. If not, as your future father-in-law would say' (a benevolent smile came over his face, and accorded not unmeetly with his glistening eyes),—'if not, this parting was well made.'

Everard turned away with a deep bow, almost choking under contending feelings; the uppermost of which was a sense of the generosity with which Charles, at his own imminent risk, had cleared away the darkness that seemed about to overwhelm his prospects of happiness for life—

mixed with a deep sense of the perils by which he was environed. He returned to the little town, followed by his attendant Wildrake, who turned back so often, with weeping eyes, and hands clasped and uplifted as supplicating Heaven, that Everard was obliged to remind him that his gestures might be observed by some one, and occasion suspicion.

The generous conduct of the king during the closing part of this remarkable scene had not escaped Alice's notice; and erasing at once from her mind all resentment of Charles's former conduct, and all the suspicions they had deservedly excited, awakened in her bosom a sense of the natural goodness of his disposition, which permitted her to unite regard for his person with that reverence for his high office in which she had been educated as a portion of her creed. She felt convinced, and delighted with the conviction, that his virtues were his own, his libertinism the fault of education, or rather want of education, and the corrupting advice of sycophants and flatterers. She could not know, or perhaps did not in that moment consider, that in a soil where no care is taken to eradicate tares, they will outgrow and smother the wholesome seed, even if the last is more natural to the soil. For, as Doctor Rochecliffe informed her afterwards for her edification,—promising, as was his custom, to explain the precise words on some future occasion, if she would put him in mind—*Virtus rectorem ducemque desiderat; vitia sine magistro discuntur.**

There was no room for such reflections at present. Conscious of mutual sincerity, by a sort of intellectual communication, through which individuals are led to understand each other better, perhaps, in delicate circumstances, than by words, reserve and simulation appeared to be now banished from the intercourse between the king and Alice. With manly frankness, and at the same time with princely condescension, he requested her, exhausted as she was, to accept of his arm on the way homeward, instead of that of Doctor Rochecliffe; and Alice accepted of his support with modest humility, but without a shadow of mistrust or fear. It seemed as if the last half-hour had satisfied them perfectly with the character of each other, and that each had full conviction of the purity and sincerity of the other's intentions.

Doctor Rochecliffe, in the meantime, had fallen some four or five paces behind; for, less light and active than Alice (who had, besides, the assistance of the king's support), he was unable, without effort and difficulty, to keep up with the pace of Charles, who then was, as we have elsewhere noticed, one of the best walkers in England, and was sometimes apt to forget (as great men will) that others were inferior to him in activity.

'Dear Alice,' said the king, but as if the epithet were entirely fraternal, 'I like your Everard much—I would to God he were of our determination—But since that cannot be, I am sure he will prove a generous enemy.'

'May it please you, sire,' said Alice modestly, but with some firmness, 'my cousin will never be your Majesty's personal enemy—and he is one of the few on whose slightest word you may rely more than on the oath of those who profess more strongly and formally. He is utterly incapable of abusing your Majesty's most generous and voluntary confidence.'

'On my honour, I believe so, Alice,' replied the king. 'But, oddsfish! my girl, let Majesty sleep for the present—it concerns my safety, as I told your brother lately—Call me sir, then, which belongs alike to king, peer, knight, and gentleman—or rather, let me be wild Louis Kerneguy again.'

Alice looked down and shook her head. 'That cannot be, please your Majesty.'

'What! Louis was a saucy companion—a naughty, presuming boy—and you cannot abide him?—Well, perhaps you are right.—But we will wait for Doctor Rochecliffe,' he said, desirous, with good-natured delicacy, to make Alice aware that he had no purpose of engaging her in any discussion which could recall painful ideas. They paused accordingly, and again she felt relieved and grateful.

'I cannot persuade our fair friend Mistress Alice, Doctor,' said the king, 'that she must, in prudence, forbear using titles of respect to me, while there are such very slender means of sustaining them.'

'It is a reproach to earth and to fortune,' answered the divine, as fast as his recovered breath would permit him, 'that your most sacred Majesty's present condition should not accord with the rendering of those honours which are your own by birth, and which, with God's blessing on the efforts of your loyal subjects, I hope to see rendered to you as your hereditary right, by the universal voice of the three kingdoms.'

'True, Doctor,' replied the king; 'but in the meanwhile, can you expound to Mistress Alice Lee two lines of Horace, which I have carried in my thick head several years, till now they have come pat to my purpose? As my canny subjects of Scotland say, If you keep a thing seven years you are sure to find a use for it at last—*Telephus*—ay, so it begins—

Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba.'

'I will explain the passage to Mistress Alice,' said the doctor, 'when she reminds me of it—or rather' (he added, recollecting that his ordinary dilatory answer on such occasions ought not to be returned when the order for exposition emanated from his sovereign), 'I will repeat a poor couplet from my own translation of the poem—

Heroes and kings, in exile forced to roam,
Leave swelling phrase and seven-leagued words at home.'

'A most admirable version, Doctor,' said Charles; 'I feel all its force, and particularly the beautiful rendering of *sesquipedalia verba*

* The quotations of the learned doctor and antiquary were often left uninterpreted, though seldom uncommunicated, owing to his contempt for those who did not understand the learned languages, and his dislike to the labour of translation, for the benefit of ladies and of country gentlemen. That fair readers and country thanes may not on this occasion burst in ignorance, we add the meaning of the passage in the text—'*Virtue requires the aid of a governor and director; vices are learned without a teacher.*'

into seven-leagued boots—words, I mean—it reminds me, like half the things I meet with in this world, of the *Contes de Commère L'Oye*.'*

Thus conversing, they reached the Lodge, and, as the king went to his chamber to prepare for the breakfast summons, now impending, the idea crossed his mind, 'Wilmot, and Villiers, and Killigrew† would laugh at me, did they hear of a campaign in which neither man nor woman had been conquered—But, oddsfish! let them laugh as they will, there is something at my heart which tells me that for once in my life I have acted well.'

That day and the next were spent in tranquillity, the king waiting impatiently for the intelligence which was to announce to him that a vessel was prepared somewhere on the coast. None such was yet in readiness; but he learned that the indefatigable Albert Lee was, at great personal risk, traversing the sea-coast from town to village, and endeavouring to find means of embarkation among the friends of the Royal cause, and the correspondents of Doctor Rochecliffe.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch!
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

It is time we should give some account of the other actors in our drama, the interest due to the principal personages having for some time engrossed our attention exclusively.

We are therefore to inform the reader that the lingering longings of the Commissioners, who had been driven forth of their proposed paradise of Woodstock, not by a cherub, indeed, but, as they thought, by spirits of another sort, still detained them in the vicinity. They had, indeed, left the little borough under pretence of indifferent accommodation. The more palpable reasons were, that they entertained some resentment against Everard, as the means of their disappointment, and had no mind to reside where their proceedings could be overlooked by him, although they took leave in terms of the utmost respect. They went, however, no farther than Oxford, and remained there, as ravens, who are accustomed to witness the chase, sit upon a tree or crag at a little distance, and watch the disembowelling of the deer, expecting the relics which fall to their share. Meantime, the university and city, especially the former, supplied them with some means of employing their various faculties to advantage, until the expected moment, when, as they hoped, they should either be summoned to Windsor, or Woodstock should once more be abandoned to their discretion.

Bletson, to pass the time, vexed the souls of such learned and pious divines and scholars as he could intrude his hateful presence upon, by sophistry, atheistical discourse, and challenges to them to impugn the most scandalous theses. Desborough, one of the most brutally ignorant men of the period, got himself nominated the head of a college, and lost no time in cutting down trees and plundering plate. As for Harrison, he preached in full uniform in Saint Mary's Church, wearing his buff-coat, boots, and spurs, as if he were about to take the field for the fight at Armageddon. And it was hard to say whether that seat of Learning, Religion, and Loyalty, as it is called by Clarendon, was more vexed by the rapine of Desborough, the cold scepticism of Bletson, or the frantic enthusiasm of the Fifth-Monarchy champion.

Ever and anon soldiers, under pretence of relieving guard, or otherwise, went and came betwixt Woodstock and Oxford, and maintained, it may be supposed, a correspondence with Trusty Tomkins, who, though he chiefly resided in the town of Woodstock, visited the Lodge occasionally, and to whom, therefore, they doubtless trusted for information concerning the proceedings there.

Indeed, this man Tomkins seemed by some secret means to have gained the confidence in part, if not in whole, of almost every one connected with these intrigues. All closeted him, all conversed with him in private; those who had the means propitiated him with gifts, those who had not were liberal of promises. When he chanced to appear at Woodstock, which always seemed as it were by accident—if he passed through the hall, the knight was sure to ask him to take the foils, and was equally certain to be, after less or more resistance, victorious in the encounter; so, in consideration of so many triumphs, the good Sir Henry almost forgave him the sins of rebellion and Puritanism. Then, if his slow and formal step was heard in the passages approaching the gallery, Doctor Rochecliffe, though he never introduced him to his peculiar boudoir, was sure to meet Master Tomkins in some neutral apartment, and to engage him in long conversations, which apparently had great interest for both.

Neither was the Independent's reception below stairs less gracious than above. Joceline failed not to welcome him with the most cordial frankness; the pasty and the flagon were put in immediate requisition, and good cheer was the general word. The means for this, it may be observed, had grown more plenty at Woodstock since the arrival of Doctor Rochecliffe, who, in quality of agent for several Royalists, had various sums of money at his disposal. By these funds it is likely that Trusty Tomkins also derived his own full advantage.

In his occasional indulgence in what he called a fleshly frailty (and for which he said he had a privilege), which was in truth an attachment to strong liquors, and that in no moderate degree, his language, at other times remarkably decorous and reserved, became wild and animated. He sometimes talked, with all the unction of an old debauchee, of former exploits, such as deer-stealing, orchard-robbing, drunken gambols, and desperate affrays in which he had been engaged in the earlier part of his life, sung bacchanalian and amorous ditties, dwelt sometimes upon adventures which drove Phœbe Mayflower from

* Tales of Mother Goose.

† [Thomas Killigrew, page and afterwards groom of the bedchamber to Charles II., was a witty and licentious person, and was sometimes called 'King Charles II.'s jester.']

the company, and penetrated even the deaf ears of Dame Jellycot, so as to make the buttery, in which he held his carousals, no proper place for the poor old woman.

In the middle of these wild rants, Tomkins twice or thrice suddenly ran into religious topics, and spoke mysteriously, but with great animation, and a rich eloquence, on the happy and pre-eminent saints, who were saints, as he termed them, indeed—men who had stormed the inner treasure-house of heaven, and possessed themselves of its choicest jewels. All other sects he treated with the utmost contempt, as merely quarrelling, as he expressed it, like hogs over a trough about husks and acorns; under which derogatory terms he included alike the usual rites and ceremonies of public devotion, the ordinances of the established Churches of Christianity, and the observances, nay, the forbearances, enjoined by every class of Christians. Scarcely hearing, and not at all understanding him, Joceline, who seemed his most frequent confidant on such occasions, generally led him back into some strain of rude mirth, or old recollection of follies before the Civil Wars, without caring about or endeavouring to analyze the opinion of this saint of an evil fashion, but fully sensible of the protection which his presence afforded at Woodstock, and confident in the honest meaning of so free-spoken a fellow, to whom ale and brandy, when better liquor was not to be come by, seemed to be principal objects of life, and who drank a health to the king or any one else, whenever required, provided the cup in which he was to perform the libation were but a brimmer.

These peculiar doctrines, which were entertained by a sect sometimes termed the Family of Love, but more commonly Ranters,* had made some progress in times when such variety of religious opinions were prevalent, that men pushed the jarring heresies to the verge of absolute and most impious insanity. Secrecy had been enjoined on these frantic believers in a most blasphemous doctrine, by the fear of consequences, should they come to be generally announced; and it was the care of Master Tomkins to conceal the spiritual freedom which he pretended to have acquired, from all whose resentment would have been stirred by his public avowal of it. This was not difficult; for their profession of faith permitted, nay, required, their occasional conformity with the sectaries or professors of any creed which chanced to be uppermost.

Tomkins had accordingly the art to pass himself on Doctor Rochecliffe as still a zealous member of the Church of England, though serving under the enemy's colours, as a spy in their camp; and as he had on several times given him true and valuable intelligence, this active intriguer was the more easily induced to believe his professions.

Nevertheless, lest this person's occasional presence at the Lodge, which there were perhaps no means to prevent without exciting suspicion, should infer danger to the king's person, Rochecliffe, whatever confidence he otherwise reposed in him, recommended that, if possible, the king should keep always out of his sight, and when accidentally discovered, that he should only appear in the character of Louis Kerneguy. Joseph Tomkins, he said, was, he really believed, Honest Joe; but honesty was a horse which might be overburdened, and there was no use in leading our neighbour into temptation.

It seemed as if Tomkins himself had acquiesced in this limitation of confidence exercised towards him, or that he wished to seem blinder than he really was to the presence of this stranger in the family. It occurred to Joceline, who was a very shrewd fellow, that once or twice, when by inevitable accident Tomkins had met Kerneguy, he seemed less interested in the circumstance than he would have expected from the man's disposition, which was naturally prying and inquisitive. 'He asked no questions about the young stranger,' said Joceline—'God avert that he knows or suspects too much!' But his suspicions were removed, when, in the course of their subsequent conversation, Joseph Tomkins mentioned the king's escape from Bristol as a thing positively certain, and named both the vessel in which, he said, he had gone off, and the master who commanded her, seeming so convinced of the truth of the report, that Joceline judged it impossible he could have the slightest suspicion of the reality.

Yet, notwithstanding this persuasion, and the comradeship which had been established between them, the faithful under-keeper resolved to maintain a strict watch over his gossip Tomkins, and be in readiness to give the alarm should occasion arise. True, he thought, he had reason to believe that his said friend, notwithstanding his drunken and enthusiastic rants, was as trustworthy as he was esteemed by Doctor Rochecliffe; yet still he was an adventurer, the outside and lining of whose cloak were of different colours, and a high reward, and pardon for past acts of malignancy, might tempt him once more to turn his tippet. For these reasons Joceline kept a strict though unostentatious watch over Trusty Tomkins.

We have said that the discreet seneschal was universally well received at Woodstock, whether in the borough or at the Lodge, and that even Joceline Joliffe was anxious to conceal any suspicions which he could not altogether repress, under a great show of cordial hospitality. There were, however, two individuals, who, for very different reasons, nourished personal dislike against the individual so generally acceptable.

One was Nehemiah Holdenough, who remembered, with great bitterness of spirit, the Independent's violent intrusion into his pulpit, and who ever spoke of him in private as a lying missionary, into whom Satan had put a spirit of delusion; and preached, besides, a solemn sermon on the subject of the false prophet, out of whose mouth came frogs. The discourse was highly prized by the mayor and most of the better class, who conceived that their minister had struck a heavy blow at the very root of Independency. On the other hand, those of the private spirit contended, that Joseph Tomkins had made a successful and triumphant rally, in an exhortation on the evening of the same day, in which he proved, to the conviction of many

* Note E. The Familists.

handicraftsmen, that the passage in Jeremiah, 'The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means,' was directly applicable to the Presbyterian system of church government. The clergyman despatched an account of his adversary's conduct to the Reverend Master Edwards, to be inserted in the next edition of Gangræna, as a pestilent heretic; and Tomkins recommended the parson to his master, Desborough, as a good subject on whom to impose a round fine, for vexing the private spirit; assuring him at the same time, that though the minister might seem poor, yet if a few troopers were quartered on him till the fine was paid, every rich shopkeeper's wife in the borough would rob the till, rather than go without the mammon of unrighteousness with which to redeem their priest from sufferance; holding, according to his expression, with Laban, 'You have taken from me my gods, and what have I more?' There was, of course, little cordiality between the polemical disputants, when religious debate took so worldly a turn.

But Joe Tomkins was much more concerned at the evil opinion which seemed to be entertained against him, by one whose good graces he was greatly more desirous to obtain than those of Nehemiah Holdenough. This was no other than pretty Mistress Phœbe Mayflower, for whose conversion he had felt a strong vocation, ever since his lecture upon Shakespeare on their first meeting at the Lodge. He seemed desirous, however, to carry on this more serious work in private, and especially to conceal his labours from his friend Joceline Joliffe, lest perchance he had been addicted to jealousy. But it was in vain that he plied the faithful damsel, sometimes with verses from the Canticles, sometimes with quotations from Green's Arcadia,* or pithy passages from Venus and Adonis,† and doctrines of a nature yet more abstruse, from the popular work entitled Aristotle's Masterpiece. Unto no wooing of his, sacred or profane, metaphysical or physical, would Phœbe Mayflower seriously incline.

The maiden loved Joceline Joliffe, on the one hand; and, on the other, if she disliked Joseph Tomkins when she first saw him, as a rebellious Puritan, she had not been at all reconciled by finding reason to regard him as a hypocritical libertine. She hated him in both capacities—never endured his conversation when she could escape from it—and when obliged to remain, listened to him only because she knew he had been so deeply trusted, that to offend him might endanger the security of the family, in the service of which she had been born and bred up, and to whose interest she was devoted. For reasons somewhat similar, she did not suffer her dislike of the steward to become manifest before Joceline Joliffe, whose spirit as a forester and a soldier might have been likely to bring matters to an arbitrament, in which the *couteau de chasse* and quarterstaff of her favourite would have been too unequally matched with the long rapier and pistols which his dangerous rival always carried about his person. But it is difficult to blind jealousy when there is any cause of doubt; and perhaps the sharp watch maintained by Joceline on his comrade was prompted not only by his zeal for the king's safety, but by some vague suspicion that Tomkins was not ill-disposed to poach upon his own fair manor.

Phœbe, in the meanwhile, like a prudent girl, sheltered herself as much as possible by the presence of Goody Jellycot. Then, indeed, it is true the Independent, or whatever he was, used to follow her with his addresses to very little purpose; for Phœbe seemed as deaf, through wilfulness, as the old matron by natural infirmity. This indifference highly incensed her new lover, and induced him anxiously to watch for a time and place in which he might plead his suit with an energy that should command attention. Fortune, that malicious goddess, who so often ruins us by granting the very object of our vows, did at length procure him such an opportunity as he had long coveted.

It was about sunset, or shortly after, when Phœbe, upon whose activity much of the domestic arrangements depended, went as far as Fair Rosamond's Spring to obtain water for the evening meal, or rather to gratify the prejudice of the old knight, who believed that celebrated fountain afforded the choicest supplies of the necessary element. Such was the respect in which he was held by his whole family, that to neglect any of his wishes that could be gratified, though with inconvenience to themselves, would, in their estimation, have been almost equal to a breach of religious duty.

To fill the pitcher had, we know, been of late a troublesome task; but Joceline's ingenuity had so far rendered it easy, by repairing rudely a part of the ruined front of the ancient fountain, that the water was collected, and, trickling along a wooden spout, dropped from a height of about two feet. A damsel was thereby enabled to place her pitcher under the slowly dropping supply, and, without toil to herself, might wait till her vessel was filled.

Phœbe Mayflower, on the evening we allude to, saw, for the first time, this little improvement; and, justly considering it as a piece of gallantry of her sylvan admirer, designed to save her the trouble of performing her task in a more inconvenient manner, she gratefully employed the minutes of ease which the contrivance procured her, in reflecting on the good-nature and ingenuity of the obliging engineer, and perhaps in thinking he might have done as wisely to have waited till she came to the fountain, that he might have secured personal thanks for the trouble he had taken. But then she knew he was detained in the buttery with that odious Tomkins, and rather than have seen the Independent along with him, she would have renounced the thought of meeting Joceline.

As she was thus reflecting, Fortune was malicious enough to send Tomkins to the fountain, and without Joceline. When she saw his figure darken the path up which he came, an anxious reflection came over the poor maiden's breast, that she was alone, and within the verge of the forest, where in general persons were prohibited to come during the twilight, for disturbing the

* [By Robert Greene, the dramatist; it is also called *Menaphon.*]

† [Shakespeare's poem.]

deer settling to their repose. She encouraged herself, however, and resolved to show no sense of fear, although, as the steward approached, there was something in the man's look and eye no way calculated to allay her apprehensions.

'The blessings of the evening upon you, my pretty maiden,' he said. 'I meet you even as the chief servant of Abraham, who was a steward like myself, met Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, at the well of the city of Nahor, in Mesopotamia. Shall I not, therefore, say to you, Set down thy pitcher that I may drink?'

'The pitcher is at your service, Master Tomkins,' she replied, 'and you may drink as much as you will; but you have, I warrant, drunk better liquor, and that not long since.'

It was, indeed, obvious that the steward had arisen from a revel, for his features were somewhat flushed, though he had stopped far short of intoxication. But Phœbe's alarm at his first appearance was rather increased when she observed how he had been lately employed.

'I do but use my privilege, my pretty Rebecca; the earth is given to the saints, and the fulness thereof. They shall occupy and enjoy it, both the riches of the mine, and the treasures of the vine; and they shall rejoice, and their hearts be merry within them. Thou hast yet to learn the privileges of the saints, my Rebecca.'

'My name is Phœbe,' said the maiden, in order to sober the enthusiastic rapture which he either felt or affected.

'Phœbe after the flesh,' he said, 'but Rebecca being spiritualized; for art thou not a wandering and stray sheep?—and am I not sent to fetch thee within the fold?—Wherefore else was it said, Thou shalt find her seated by the well, in the wood which is called after the ancient harlot, Rosamond?'

'You have found me sitting here sure enough,' said Phœbe; 'but if you wish to keep me company, you must walk to the Lodge with me; and you shall carry my pitcher for me, if you will be so kind. I will hear all the good things you have to say to me as we go along. But Sir Henry calls for his glass of water regularly before prayers.'

'What!' exclaimed Tomkins, 'hath the old man of bloody hand and perverse heart sent thee hither to do the work of a bondswoman? Verily thou shalt return enfranchised; and for the water thou hast drawn for him, it shall be poured forth, even as David caused to be poured forth the water of the well of Bethlehem.'

So saying, he emptied the water pitcher, in spite of Phœbe's exclamations and entreaties. He then replaced the vessel beneath the little conduit, and continued:—'Know that this shall be a token to thee. The filling of that pitcher shall be like the running of a sand-glass; and if within the time which shall pass ere it rises to the brim, thou shalt listen to the words which I shall say to thee, then it shall be well with thee, and thy place shall be high among those who, forsaking the instruction which is as milk for babes and sucklings, eat the strong food which nourishes manhood. But if the pitcher shall overbrim with water ere thy ear shall hear and understand, thou shalt then be given as a prey, and as a bondsmaiden, unto those who shall possess the fat and the fair of the earth.'

'You frighten me, Master Tomkins,' said Phœbe, 'though I am sure you do not mean to do so. I wonder how you dare speak words so like the good words in the Bible, when you know how you laughed at your own master, and all the rest of them—when you helped to play the hobgoblins at the Lodge.'

'Think'st thou then, thou simple fool, that in putting that deceit upon Harrison and the rest, I exceeded my privileges?—Nay, verily. Listen to me, foolish girl. When in former days I lived the most wild, malignant rakehell in Oxfordshire, frequenting wakes and fairs, dancing around Maypoles, and showing my lustihood at football and cudgel-playing—Yea, when I was called, in the language of the uncircumcised, Philip Hazeldine, and was one of the singers in the choir, and one of the ringers in the steeple, and served the priest yonder, by name Rochecliffe, I was not farther from the straight road than when, after long reading, I at length found one blind guide after another, all burners of bricks in Egypt. I left them one by one, the poor tool Harrison being the last; and by my own unassisted strength I have struggled forward to the broad and blessed light, whereof thou too, Phœbe, shalt be partaker.'

'I thank you, Master Tomkins,' said Phœbe, suppressing some fear under an appearance of indifference; 'but I shall have light enough to carry home my pitcher, would you but let me take it; and that is all the want of light I shall have this evening.'

So saying, she stooped to take the pitcher from the fountain; but he snatched hold of her by the arm, and prevented her from accomplishing her purpose. Phœbe, however, was the daughter of a bold forester, prompt at thoughts of self-defence; and though she missed getting hold of the pitcher, she caught up instead a large pebble, which she kept concealed in her right hand.

'Stand up, foolish maiden, and listen,' said the Independent sternly; 'and know, in one word, that sin, for which the spirit of man is punished with the vengeance of Heaven, lieth not in the corporal act, but in the thought of the sinner. Believe, lovely Phœbe, that to the pure all acts are pure, and that sin is in our thought, not in our actions—even as the radiance of the day is dark to a blind man, but seen and enjoyed by him whose eyes receive it. To him who is but a novice in the things of the spirit, much is enjoined, much is prohibited; and he is fed with milk fit for babes,—for him are ordinances, prohibitions, and commands. But the saint is above these ordinances and restraints.—To him, as to the chosen child of the house, is given the pass-key to open all locks which withhold him from the enjoyment of his heart's desire. Into such pleasant paths will I guide thee, lovely Phœbe, as shall unite in joy, in innocent freedom, pleasures, which to the unprivileged are sinful and prohibited.'

'I really wish, Master Tomkins, you would let me go home,' said Phœbe, not comprehending the nature of his doctrine, but disliking at

once his words and his manner. He went on, however, with the accursed and blasphemous doctrines, which, in common with others of the pretended saints, he had adopted, after having long shifted from one sect to another, until he settled in the vile belief that sin, being of a character exclusively spiritual, only existed in the thoughts, and that the worst actions were permitted to those who had attained to the pitch of believing themselves above ordinance. 'Thus, my Phœbe,' he continued, endeavouring to draw her towards him, 'I can offer thee more than ever was held out to woman since Adam first took his bride by the hand. It shall be for others to stand dry-lipped, doing penance, like Papists, by abstinence, when the vessel of pleasure pours forth its delights. Dost thou love money?—I have it, and can procure more—am at liberty to procure it on every hand, and by every means—the earth is mine and its fulness. Do you desire power?—which of these poor cheated Commissioner-fellows' estates dost thou covet, I will work it out for thee; for I deal with a mightier spirit than any of them. And it is not without warrant that I have aided the malignant Rochecliffe, and the clown Joliffe, to frighten and baffle them in the guise they did. Ask what thou wilt, Phœbe, I can give, or I can procure it for thee—Then enter with me into a life of delight in this world, which shall prove but an anticipation of the joys of paradise hereafter!'

Again the fanatical voluptuary endeavoured to pull the poor girl towards him, while she, alarmed, but not scared out of her presence of mind, endeavoured, by fair entreaty, to prevail on him to release her. But his features, in themselves not marked, had acquired a frightful expression, and he exclaimed, 'No, Phœbe—do not think to escape—thou art given to me as a captive—thou hast neglected the hour of grace, and it has glided past—See, the water trickles over thy pitcher, which was to be a sign between us—Therefore I will urge thee no more with words, of which thou art not worthy, but treat thee as a recusant of offered grace.'

'Master Tomkins,' said Phœbe, in an imploring tone, 'consider, for God's sake, I am a fatherless child—do me no injury, it would be a shame to your strength and your manhood—I cannot understand your fine words—I will think on them till to-morrow.' Then, in rising resentment, she added more vehemently—'I will not be used rudely—stand off, or I will do you a mischief.' But, as he pressed upon her with a violence of which the object could not be mistaken, and endeavoured to secure her right hand, she exclaimed, 'Take it then, with a wanion to you!'—and struck him an almost stunning blow on the face, with the pebble which she held ready for such an extremity.

The fanatic let her go, and staggered backward, half stupefied; while Phœbe instantly betook herself to flight, screaming for help as she ran, but still grasping the victorious pebble. Irritated to frenzy by the severe blow which he had received, Tomkins pursued, with every black passion in his soul, and in his face, mingled with fear lest his villany should be discovered. He called on Phœbe loudly to stop, and had the brutality to menace her with one of his pistols if she continued to fly. Yet she slacked not her pace for his threats, and he must either have executed them, or seen her escape to carry the tale to the Lodge, had she not unhappily stumbled over the projecting root of a fir tree. But as he rushed upon his prey, rescue interposed in the person of Joceline Joliffe, with his quarterstaff on his shoulder. 'How now? what means this?' he said, stepping between Phœbe and her pursuer. Tomkins, already roused to fury, made no other answer than by discharging at Joceline the pistol which he held in his hand. The ball grazed the under-keeper's face, who, in requital of the assault, and saying, 'Aha! let ash answer iron,' applied his quarterstaff with so much force to the Independent's head, that, lighting on the left temple, the blow proved almost instantly mortal.

A few convulsive struggles were accompanied with these broken words,—'Joceline—I am gone—but I forgive thee—Doctor Rochecliffe—I wish I had minded more—O!—the clergyman—the funeral service'—— As he uttered these words, indicative, it may be, of his return to a creed, which, perhaps, he had never abjured so thoroughly as he had persuaded himself, his voice was lost in a groan, which, rattling in the throat, seemed unable to find its way to the air. These were the last symptoms of life; the clenched hands presently relaxed—the closed eyes opened, and stared on the heavens a lifeless jelly—the limbs extended themselves and stiffened. The body, which was lately animated with life, was now a lump of senseless clay—the soul, dismissed from its earthly tenement in a moment so unhallowed, was gone before the judgment-seat.

'O, what have you done?—what have you done, Joceline?' exclaimed Phœbe; 'you have killed the man!'

'Better than he should have killed me,' answered Joceline; 'for he was none of the blinkers that miss their mark twice running.—And yet I am sorry for him.—Many a merry bout have we had together when he was wild Philip Hazeldine, and then he was bad enough; but since he daubed over his vices with hypocrisy, he seems to have proved worse devil than ever.'

'O, Joceline, come away,' said poor Phœbe, 'and do not stand gazing on him thus;' for the woodsman, resting on his fatal weapon, stood looking down on the corpse with the appearance of a man half stunned at the event.

'This comes of the ale-pitcher,' she continued, in the true style of female consolation, 'as I have often told you—For Heaven's sake, come to the Lodge, and let us consult what is to be done.'

'Stay, first, girl, and let me drag him out of the path; we must not have him lie here in all men's sight—Will you not help me, wench?'

'I cannot, Joceline—I would not touch a lock on him for all Woodstock.'

'I must to this gear myself, then,' said Joceline, who, a soldier as well as a woodsman, still had great reluctance to the necessary task. Something in the face and broken words of the dying man had made a deep and terrific impression on nerves not easily shaken. He ac-

complished it, however, so far as to drag the late steward out of the open path, and bestow his body amongst the undergrowth of brambles and briers, so as not to be visible unless particularly looked after. He then returned to Phœbe, who had sat speechless all the while beneath the tree over whose roots she had stumbled.

'Come away, wench,' he said, 'come away to the Lodge, and let us study how this is to be answered for—the mishap of his being killed will strangely increase our danger. What had he sought of thee, wench, when you ran from him like a madwoman?—But I can guess—Phil was always a devil among the girls, and, I think, as Doctor Rochecliffe says, that since he turned saint, he took to himself seven devils worse than himself.—Here is the very place where I saw him, with his sword in his hand raised against the old knight, and he a child of the parish—it was high treason at least—but, by my faith, he hath paid for it at last.'

'But O, Joceline,' said Phœbe, 'how could you take so wicked a man into your counsels, and join him in all his plots about scaring the Roundhead gentlemen?'

'Why, look thee, wench, I thought I knew him at the first meeting, especially when Bevis, who was bred here when he was a dog-leader, would not fly at him; and when we made up our old acquaintance at the Lodge, I found he kept up a close correspondence with Doctor Rochecliffe, who was persuaded that he was a good King's man, and held consequently good intelligence with him.—The Doctor boasts to have learned much through his means; I wish to Heaven he may not have been as communicative in turn.'

'O, Joceline,' said the waiting-woman, 'you should never have let him within the gate of the Lodge!'

'No more I would, if I had known how to keep him out; but when he went so frankly into our scheme, and told me how I was to dress myself like Robinson the player, whose ghost haunted Harrison—I wish no ghost may haunt me!—when he taught me how to bear myself to terrify his lawful master, what could I think, wench? I only trust the Doctor has kept the great secret of all from his knowledge.—But here we are at the Lodge. Go to thy chamber, wench, and compose thyself. I must seek out Doctor Rochecliffe; he is ever talking of his quick and ready invention. Here come times, I think, that will demand it all.'

Phœbe went to her chamber accordingly; but, the strength arising from the pressure of danger giving way when the danger was removed, she quickly fell into a succession of hysterical fits, which required the constant attention of Dame Jellycot, and the less alarmed, but more judicious care of Mistress Alice, before they even abated in their rapid recurrence.

The under-keeper carried his news to the politic doctor, who was extremely disconcerted, alarmed, nay, angry with Joceline, for having slain a person on whose communications he had accustomed himself to rely. Yet his looks declared his suspicion, whether his confidence had not been too rashly conferred—a suspicion which pressed him the more anxiously, that he was unwilling to avow it, as a derogation from his character for shrewdness, on which he valued himself.

Doctor Rochecliffe's reliance, however, on the fidelity of Tomkins, had apparently good grounds. Before the Civil Wars, as may be partly collected from what has been already hinted at, Tomkins, under his true name of Hazeldine, had been under the protection of the Rector of Woodstock, occasionally acted as his clerk, was a distinguished member of his choir, and, being a handy and ingenious fellow, was employed in assisting the antiquarian researches of Doctor Rochecliffe through the interior of Woodstock. When he engaged in the opposite side in the Civil Wars, he still kept up his intelligence with the divine, to whom he had afforded what seemed valuable information from time to time. His assistance had latterly been eminently useful in aiding the doctor, with the assistance of Joceline and Phœbe, in contriving and executing the various devices by which the Parliamentary Commissioners had been expelled from Woodstock. Indeed, his services in this respect had been thought worthy of no less a reward than a present of what plate remained at the Lodge, which had been promised to the Independent accordingly. The doctor, therefore, while admitting he might be a bad man, regretted him as a useful one, whose death, if inquired after, was likely to bring additional danger on a house which danger already surrounded, and which contained a pledge so precious.

CHAPTER XXX.

Cassio. That thrust had been my enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou know'st.
OTHELLO.

ON the dark October night succeeding the evening on which Tomkins was slain, Colonel Everard, besides his constant attendant, Roger Wildrake, had Master Nehemiah Holdenough with him as a guest at supper. The devotions of the evening having been performed according to the Presbyterian fashion, a light entertainment and a double quart of burnt claret were placed before his friends at nine o'clock, an hour unusually late. Master Holdenough soon engaged himself in a polemical discourse against sectaries and Independents, without being aware that his eloquence was not very interesting to his principal hearer, whose ideas in the meanwhile wandered to Woodstock and all which it contained—the Prince, who lay concealed there—his uncle—above all—Alice Lee. As for Wildrake, after bestowing a mental curse both on sectaries and Presbyterians, as being, in his opinion, never a barrel the better herring, he stretched out his limbs, and would probably have composed himself to rest, but that he as well as his patron had thoughts which murdered sleep.

The party were waited upon by a little gipsy-looking boy, in an orange-tawny doublet, much decayed, and garnished with blue worsted lace. The rogue looked somewhat stinted in size, but

active both in intelligence and in limb, as his black eyes seemed to promise by their vivacity. He was an attendant of Wildrake's choice, who had conferred on him the *nom de guerre* of Spitfire, and had promised him promotion so soon as his young *protégé*, Breakfast, was fit to succeed him in his present office. It need scarce be said that the *menage* was maintained entirely at the expense of Colonel Everard, who allowed Wildrake to arrange the household very much according to his pleasure. The page did not omit, in offering the company wine from time to time, to accommodate Wildrake with about twice the number of opportunities of refreshing himself which he considered it necessary to afford to the colonel or his reverend guest.

While they were thus engaged, the good divine lost in his own argument, and the hearers in their private thoughts, their attention was about half-past ten arrested by a knocking at the door of the house. To those who have anxious hearts, trifles give cause of alarm.

Even a thing so simple as a knock at the door may have a character which excites apprehension. This was no quiet gentle tap, intimating a modest intruder; no redoubled rattle, as the pompous annunciation of some vain person; neither did it resemble the formal summons to formal business, nor the cheerful visit of some welcome friend. It was a single blow, solemn and stern, if not actually menacing in the sound. The door was opened by some of the persons of the house; a heavy foot ascended the stair, a stout man entered the room, and, drawing the cloak from his face, said, 'Markham Everard, I greet thee in God's name.'

It was General Cromwell.

Everard, surprised and taken at unawares, endeavoured in vain to find words to express his astonishment. A bustle occurred in receiving the General, assisting him to uncloak himself, and offering in dumb show the civilities of reception. The General cast his keen eye around the apartment, and, fixing it first on the divine, addressed Everard as follows:

'A reverend man I see is with thee. Thou art not one of those, good Markham, who let the time unnoted and unimproved pass away. Casting aside the things of this world—pressing forward to those of the next—it is by thus using our time in this poor seat of terrestrial sin and care, that we may, as it were —— But how is this?' he continued, suddenly changing his tone, and speaking briefly, sharply, and anxiously; 'one hath left the room since I entered?'

Wildrake had, indeed, been absent for a minute or two, but had now returned, and stepped forward from a bay-window, as if he had been out of sight only, not out of the apartment. 'Not so, sir; I stood but in the background out of respect. Noble General, I hope all is well with the Estate, that your Excellency makes us so late a visit? Would not your Excellency choose some'——

'Ah!' said Oliver, looking sternly and fixedly at him—'Our trusty go-between—our faithful confidant.—No, sir; at present I desire nothing more than a kind reception, which, methinks, my friend Markham Everard is in no hurry to give me.'

'You bring your own welcome, my lord,' said Everard, compelling himself to speak. 'I can only trust it was no bad news that made your Excellency a late traveller, and ask, like my follower, what refreshment I shall command for your accommodation.'

'The State is sound and healthy, Colonel Everard,' said the General; 'and yet the less so, that many of its members, who have been hitherto workers together, and propounders of good counsel, and advancers of the public weal, have now waxed cold in their love and in their affection for the Good Cause, for which we should be ready, in our various degrees, to act and do so soon as we are called to act that whereunto we are appointed, neither rashly nor over-slothfully, neither lukewarmly nor over-violently, but with such a frame and disposition in which zeal and charity may, as it were, meet and kiss each other in our streets. Howbeit, because we look back after we have put our hand to the plough, therefore is our force waxed dim.'

'Pardon me, sir,' said Nehemiah Holdenough, who, listening with some impatience, began to guess in whose company he stood—'Pardon me, for unto this I have a warrant to speak.'

'Ah! ah!' said Cromwell. 'Surely, most worthy sir, we grieve the Spirit when we restrain those pourings forth, which, like water from a rock'——

'Nay, therein I differ from you, sir,' said Holdenough; 'for as there is the mouth to transmit the food, and the profit to digest what Heaven hath sent; so is the preacher ordained to teach and the people to hear; the shepherd to gather the flock into the sheepfold, the sheep to profit by the care of the shepherd.'

'Ah, my worthy sir,' said Cromwell, with much unction, 'methinks you verge upon the great mistake, which supposes that churches are tall large houses built by masons, and hearers are men—wealthy men, who pay tithes, the larger as well as the less; and that the priests, men in black gowns or grey cloaks, who receive the same, are in guerdon the only distributors of Christian blessings; whereas, in my apprehension, there is more of Christian liberty in leaving it to the discretion of the hungry soul to seek his edification where it can be found, whether from the mouth of a lay teacher, who claimeth his warrant from Heaven alone, or at the dispensation of those who take ordination and degrees from synods and universities, at best but associations of poor sinful creatures like themselves.'

'You speak you know not what, sir,' replied Holdenough impatiently. 'Can light come out of darkness, sense out of ignorance, or knowledge of the mysteries of religion from such ignorant mediciners as give poisons instead of wholesome medicaments, and cram with filth the stomachs of such as seek to them for food?' This, which the Presbyterian divine uttered rather warmly, the General answered with the utmost mildness.

'Lack-a-day, lack-a-day! a learned man, but intemperate; over-zeal hath eaten him up.—A well-a-day, sir, you may talk of your regular gospel-meals, but a word spoken in season by one whose heart is with your heart, just, per-

haps, when you are riding on to encounter an enemy, or are about to mount a breach, is to the poor spirit like a rasher on the coals, which the hungry shall find preferable to a great banquet, at such times when the full soul loatheth the honeycomb. Nevertheless, although I speak thus in my poor judgment, I would not put force on the conscience of any man, leaving to the learned to follow the learned, and the wise to be instructed by the wise, while poor simple wretched souls are not to be denied a drink from the stream which runneth by the way.—Ay, verily, it will be a comely sight in England when men shall go on as in a better world, bearing with each other's infirmities, joining in each other's comforts—Ay, truly, the rich drink out of silver flagons, and goblets of silver, the poor out of paltry bowls of wood—and even so let it be, since they both drink the same element.'

Here an officer opened the door and looked in, to whom Cromwell, exchanging the canting drawl, in which it seemed he might have gone on interminably, for the short, brief tone of action, called out, 'Pearson, is he come?'

'No, sir,' replied Pearson; 'we have inquired for him at the place you noted, and also at other haunts of his about the town.'

'The knave!' said Cromwell, with bitter emphasis; 'can he have proved false?—No, no, his interest is too deeply engaged. We shall find him by and by.—Hark thee hither!'

While this conversation was going forward, the reader must imagine the alarm of Everard. He was certain that the personal attendance of Cromwell must be on some most important account, and he could not but strongly suspect that the General had some information respecting Charles's lurking-place. If taken, a renewal of the tragedy of the 30th of January was instantly to be apprehended, and the ruin of the whole family of Lee, with himself probably included, must be the necessary consequence.

He looked eagerly for consolation at Wildrake, whose countenance expressed much alarm, which he endeavoured to bear out with his usual look of confidence. But the weight within was too great; he shuffled with his feet, rolled his eyes, and twisted his hands, like an unassured witness before an acute and not to be deceived judge.

Oliver, meanwhile, left his company not a minute's leisure to take counsel together. Even while his perplexed eloquence flowed on in a stream so mazy that no one could discover which way its course was tending, his sharp, watchful eye rendered all attempts of Everard to hold communication with Wildrake, even by signs, altogether vain. Everard, indeed, looked for an instant at the window, then glanced at Wildrake, as if to hint there might be a possibility to escape that way. But the Cavalier had replied with a disconsolate shake of the head, so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Everard, therefore, lost all hope, and the melancholy feeling of approaching and inevitable evil was only varied by anxiety concerning the shape and manner in which it was about to make its approach.

But Wildrake had a spark of hope left. The very instant Cromwell entered he had got out of the room, and down to the door of the house. 'Back—back!' repeated by two armed sentinels, convinced him that, as his fears had anticipated, the General had come neither unattended nor unprepared. He turned on his heel, ran upstairs, and meeting on the landing-place the boy whom he called Spitfire, hurried him into the small apartment which he occupied as his own. Wildrake had been shooting that morning, and game lay on the table. He pulled a feather from a woodcock's wing, and saying hastily, 'For thy life, Spitfire, mind my orders—I will put thee safe out at the window into the court—the yard wall is not high—and there will be no sentry there—Fly to the Lodge, as thou wouldst win heaven, and give this feather to Mistress Alice Lee, if possible—if not, to Joceline Joliffe—say I have won the wager of the young lady. Dost mark me, boy?'

The sharp-witted youth clapped his hand in his master's, and only replied, 'Done, and done.'

Wildrake opened the window, and, though the height was considerable, he contrived to let the boy down safely by holding his cloak. A heap of straw on which Spitfire lighted rendered the descent perfectly safe, and Wildrake saw him scramble over the wall of the court-yard, at the angle which bore on a back lane; and so rapidly was this accomplished, that the Cavalier had just re-entered the room, when, the bustle attending Cromwell's arrival subsiding, his own absence began to be noticed.

He remained during Cromwell's lecture on the vanity of creeds, anxious in mind whether he might not have done better to send an explicit verbal message, since there was no time to write. But the chance of the boy being stopped, or becoming confused with feeling himself the messenger of a hurried and important communication, made him, on the whole, glad that he had preferred a more enigmatical way of conveying the intelligence. He had, therefore, the advantage of his patron, for he was conscious still of a spark of hope.

Pearson had scarce shut the door, when Holdenough, as ready in arms against the future dictator as he had been prompt to encounter the supposed phantoms and fiends of Woodstock, resumed his attack upon the schismatics, whom he undertook to prove to be at once soul-slayers, false brethren, and false messengers; and was proceeding to allege texts in behalf of his proposition, when Cromwell, apparently tired of the discussion, and desirous to introduce a discourse more accordant with his real feelings, interrupted him, though very civilly, and took the discourse into his own hands.

'Lack-a-day,' he said, 'the good man speaks truth, according to his knowledge and to his lights,—ay, bitter truths, and hard to be digested, while we see as men see, and not with the eyes of angels.—False messengers, said the reverend man?—ay, truly, the world is full of such. You shall see them who will carry your secret message to the house of your mortal foe, and will say to him, "Lo! my master is going forth with a small train, by such and such desolate places; be you speedy, therefore, that you may arise and slay him." And another, who knoweth where the foe of your house, and enemy of your person, lies hidden, shall, instead of

telling his master thereof, carry tidings to the enemy even where he lurketh, saying, "Lo! my master knoweth of your secret abode—up now, and fly, lest he come on thee like a lion on his prey."—But shall this go without punishment?' looking at Wildrake with a withering glance. 'Now, as my soul liveth, and as He liveth who hath made me a ruler in Israel, such false messengers shall be knitted to gibbets on the wayside, and their right hands shall be nailed above their heads, in an extended position, as if pointing out to others the road from which they themselves have strayed!'

'Surely,' said Master Holdenough, 'it is right to cut off such offenders.'

'Thank ye, Mass-John,' muttered Wildrake; 'when did the Presbyterian fail to lend the devil a shove?'

'But, I say,' continued Holdenough, 'that the matter is estranged from our present purpose, for the false brethren of whom I spoke are'——

'Right, excellent sir, they be those of our own house,' answered Cromwell; 'the good man is right once more. Ay, of whom can we now say that he is a true brother, although he has lain in the same womb with us? Although we have struggled in the same cause, ate at the same table, fought in the same battle, worshipped at the same throne, there shall be no truth in him.—Ah, Markham Everard, Markham Everard!'

He paused at this ejaculation; and Everard, desirous at once of knowing how far he stood committed, replied, 'Your Excellency seems to have something in your mind in which I am concerned. May I request you will speak it out, that I may know what I am accused of?'

'Ah, Mark, Mark,' replied the General, 'there needeth no accuser speak when the still small voice speaks within us. Is there not moisture on thy brow, Mark Everard? Is there not trouble in thine eye? Is there not a failure in thy frame? And who ever saw such things in noble and stout Markham Everard, whose brow was only moist after having worn the helmet for a summer's day; whose hand only shook when it had wielded for hours the weighty falchion?—But go to, man! thou doubtest over much. Hast thou not been to me as a brother, and shall I not forgive thee even the seventy-seventh time? The knave hath tarried somewhere, who should have done by this time an office of much import. Take advantage of his absence, Mark; it is a grace that God gives thee beyond expectance. I do not say, fall at my feet; but speak to me as a friend to his friend.'

'I have never said anything to your Excellency that was in the least undeserving the title you have assigned to me,' said Colonel Everard proudly.

'Nay, nay, Markham,' answered Cromwell; 'I say not you have. But—but you ought to have remembered the message I sent you by that person' (pointing to Wildrake); 'and you must reconcile it with your conscience, how, having such a message, guarded with such reasons, you could think yourself at liberty to expel my friends from Woodstock, being determined to disappoint my object, whilst you availed yourself of the boon, on condition of which my warrant was issued.'

Everard was about to reply, when, to his astonishment, Wildrake stepped forward; and with a voice and look very different from his ordinary manner, and approaching a good deal to real dignity of mind, said, boldly and calmly, 'You are mistaken, Master Cromwell; and address yourself to the wrong party here.'

The speech was so sudden and intrepid that Cromwell stepped a pace back, and motioned with his right hand towards his weapon, as if he had expected that an address of a nature so unusually bold was to be followed by some act of violence. He instantly resumed his indifferent posture; and, irritated at a smile which he observed on Wildrake's countenance, he said, with the dignity of one long accustomed to see all tremble before him, 'This to me, fellow! Know you to whom you speak?'

'Fellow!' echoed Wildrake, whose reckless humour was now completely set afloat—'No fellow of yours, Master Oliver. I have known the day when Roger Wildrake of Squattleseamere, Lincoln, a handsome young gallant, with a good estate, would have been thought no fellow of the bankrupt brewer of Huntingdon.'

'Be silent!' said Everard; 'be silent, Wildrake, if you love your life!'

'I care not a maravedi for my life,' said Wildrake. 'Zounds, if he dislikes what I say, let him take to his tools! I know, after all, he hath good blood in his veins; and I will indulge him with a turn in the court yonder, had he been ten times a brewer.'

'Such ribaldry, friend,' said Oliver, 'I treat with the contempt it deserves. But if thou hast anything to say touching the matter in question, speak out like a man, though thou look'st more like a beast.'

'All I have to say is,' replied Wildrake, 'that whereas you blame Everard for acting on your warrant, as you call it, I can tell you he knew not a word of the rascally conditions you talk of. I took care of that; and you may take the vengeance on me, if you list.'

'Slave! dare you tell this to *me?*' said Cromwell, still heedfully restraining his passion, which he felt was about to discharge itself upon an unworthy object.

'Ay, you will make every Englishman a slave, if you have your own way,' said Wildrake, not a whit abashed;—for the awe which had formerly overcome him when alone with this remarkable man had vanished, now that they were engaged in an altercation before witnesses.—'But do your worst, Master Oliver; I tell you beforehand, the bird has escaped you.'

'You dare not say so!—Escaped?—So ho! Pearson! tell the soldiers to mount instantly.—Thou art a lying fool!—Escaped?—Where, or from whence?'

'Ay, that is the question,' said Wildrake; 'for look you, sir—that men do go from hence is certain—but how they go, or to what quarter'——

Cromwell stood attentive, expecting some useful hint from the careless impetuosity of the Cavalier, upon the route which the king might have taken.

—'Or to what quarter, as I said before, why,

your Excellency, Master Oliver, may e'en find that out yourself.'

As he uttered the last words he unsheathed his rapier, and made a full pass at the General's body. Had his sword met no other impediment than the buff jerkin, Cromwell's course had ended on the spot. But, fearful of such attempts, the General wore under his military dress a shirt of the finest mail, made of rings of the best steel, and so light and flexible that it was little or no encumbrance to the motions of the wearer. It proved his safety on this occasion, for the rapier sprung in shivers; while the owner, now held back by Everard and Holdenough, flung the hilt with passion on the ground, exclaiming, 'Be damned the hand that forged thee!—To serve me so long, and fail me when thy true service would have honoured us both for ever! But no good could come of thee, since thou wert pointed, even in jest, at a learned divine of the Church of England.'

In the first instant of alarm, and perhaps suspecting Wildrake might be supported by others, Cromwell half drew from his bosom a concealed pistol, which he hastily returned, observing that both Everard and the clergyman were withholding the Cavalier from another attempt.

Pearson and a soldier or two rushed in—'Secure that fellow,' said the General, in the indifferent tone of one to whom imminent danger was too familiar to cause irritation—'Bind him—but not so hard, Pearson;'—for the men, to show their zeal, were drawing their belts, which they used for want of cords, brutally tight round Wildrake's limbs. 'He would have assassinated me, but I would reserve him for his fit doom.'

'Assassinated!—I scorn your words, Master Oliver,' said Wildrake; 'I proffered you a fair duello.'

'Shall we shoot him in the street, for an example?' said Pearson to Cromwell; while Everard endeavoured to stop Wildrake from giving further offence.

'On your life harm him not; but let him be kept in safe ward, and well looked after,' said Cromwell; while the prisoner exclaimed to Everard, 'I prithee let me alone—I am now neither thy follower, nor any man's, and I am as willing to die as ever I was to take a cup of liquor.—And hark ye, speaking of that, Master Oliver, you were once a jolly fellow, prithee let one of thy lobsters here advance yonder tankard to my lips, and your Excellency shall hear a toast, a song, and a—secret.'

'Unloose his head, and hand the debauched beast the tankard,' said Oliver; 'while yet he exists, it were shame to refuse him the element he lives in.'

'Blessings on your head for once,' said Wildrake, whose object in continuing this wild discourse was, if possible, to gain a little delay, when every moment was precious. 'Thou hast brewed good ale, and that's warrant for a blessing. For my toast, and my song, here they go together—

Son of a witch,
Mayst thou die in a ditch,
With the butchers who back thy quarrels;
And rot above ground,
While the world shall resound
A welcome to Royal King Charles.

And now for my secret, that you may not say I had your liquor for nothing—I fancy my song will scarce pass current for much—My secret is, Master Cromwell, that the bird is flown—and your red nose will be as white as your winding-sheet before you can smell out which way.'

'Pshaw, rascal,' answered Cromwell contemptuously, 'keep your scurrile jests for the gibbet foot.'

'I shall look on the gibbet more boldly,' replied Wildrake, 'than I have seen you look on the Royal Martyr's picture.'

This reproach touched Cromwell to the very quick.—'Villain!' he exclaimed; 'drag him hence, draw out a party, and——But hold, not now—to prison with him—let him be close watched and gagged, if he attempts to speak to the sentinels—Nay, hold—I mean, put a bottle of brandy into his cell, and he will gag himself in his own way, I warrant you—When day comes, that men can see the example, he shall be gagged after my fashion.'

During the various breaks in his orders, the General was evidently getting command of his temper; and though he began in fury, he ended with the contemptuous sneer of one who overlooks the abusive language of an inferior. Something remained on his mind, notwithstanding, for he continued standing, as if fixed to the same spot in the apartment, his eyes bent on the ground, and with closed hand pressed against his lips, like a man who is musing deeply. Pearson, who was about to speak to him, drew back, and made a sign to those in the room to be silent.

Master Holdenough did not mark, or at least did not obey it. Approaching the General, he said, in a respectful but firm tone, 'Did I understand it to be your Excellency's purpose that this poor man shall die next morning?'

'Hah!' exclaimed Cromwell, starting from his reverie, 'what say'st thou?'

'I took leave to ask if it was your will that this unhappy man should die to-morrow?'

'Whom saidst thou?' demanded Cromwell: 'Markham Everard—shall he die, saidst thou?'

'God forbid!' replied Holdenough, stepping back—'I asked whether this blinded creature, Wildrake, was to be so suddenly cut off?'

'Ay, marry is he,' said Cromwell, 'were the whole General Assembly of Divines at Westminster—the whole Sanhedrim of Presbytery—to offer bail for him.'

'If you will not think better of it, sir,' said Holdenough; 'at least give not the poor man the means of destroying his senses—Let me go to him as a divine, to watch with him, in case he may yet be admitted into the vineyard at the latest hour—yet brought into the sheepfold, though he has neglected the call of the pastor till time is well-nigh closed upon him.'

'For God's sake,' said Everard, who had hitherto kept silence, because he knew Cromwell's temper on such occasions, 'think better of what you do!'

'Is it for thee to teach me?' replied Cromwell; 'think thou of thine own matters, and believe me it will require all thy wit.—And for you, reverend sir, I will have no father-confessors attend my prisoners—no tales out of school. If

the fellow thirsts after ghostly comfort, as he is much more like to thirst after a quartern of brandy, there is Corporal Humgudgeon, who commands the *corps-de-garde*, will preach and pray as well as the best of ye.—But this delay is intolerable—Comes not this fellow yet?'

'No, sir,' replied Pearson. 'Had we not better go down to the Lodge? The news of our coming hither may else get there before us.'

'True,' said Cromwell, speaking aside to his officer, 'but you know Tomkins warned us against doing so, alleging there were so many postern-doors, and sallyports, and concealed entrances in the old house, that it was like a rabbit-warren, and that an escape might be easily made under our very noses, unless he were with us to point out all the ports which should be guarded. He hinted, too, that he might be delayed a few minutes after his time of appointment—but we have now waited half-an-hour.'

'Does your Excellency think Tomkins is certainly to be depended upon?' said Pearson.

'As far as his interest goes, unquestionably,' replied the General. 'He has ever been the pump by which I have sucked the marrow out of many a plot, in special those of the conceited fool Rochecliffe, who is goose enough to believe that such a fellow as Tomkins would value anything beyond the offer of the best bidder. And yet it groweth late—I fear we must to the Lodge without him—Yet, all things well considered, I will tarry here till midnight.—Ah, Everard, thou mightest put this gear to rights if thou wilt! Shall some foolish principle of fantastic punctilio have more weight with thee, man, than have the pacification and welfare of England; the keeping of faith to thy friend and benefactor, and who will be yet more so, and the fortune and security of thy relations? Are these, I say, lighter in the balance than the cause of a worthless boy, who, with his father and his father's house, have troubled Israel for fifty years?'

'I do not understand your Excellency, nor at what service you point, which I can honestly render,' replied Everard. 'That which is dishonest I should be loath that you proposed.'

'Then this at least might suit your honesty, or scrupulous humour, call it which thou wilt,' said Cromwell. 'Thou knowest, surely, all the passages about Jezebel's palace down yonder?—Let me know how they may be guarded against the escape of any from within.'

'I cannot pretend to aid you in this matter,' said Everard; 'I know not all the entrances and posterns about Woodstock, and if I did, I am not free in conscience to communicate with you on this occasion.'

'We shall do without you, sir,' replied Cromwell haughtily; 'and if aught is found which may criminate you, remember you have lost right to my protection.'

'I shall be sorry,' said Everard, 'to have lost your friendship, General; but I trust my quality as an Englishman may dispense with the necessity of protection from any man. I know no law which obliges me to be spy or informer, even if I were in the way of having opportunity to do service in either honourable capacity.'

'Well, sir,' said Cromwell, 'for all your privileges and qualities, I will make bold to take you down to the Lodge at Woodstock to-night, to inquire into affairs in which the State is concerned.—Come hither, Pearson.' He took a paper from his pocket, containing a rough sketch or ground-plan of Woodstock Lodge, with the avenues leading to it.—'Look here,' he said; 'we must move in two bodies on foot, and with all possible silence—thou must march to the rear of the old house of iniquity with twenty file of men, and dispose them around it the wisest thou canst. Take the reverend man there along with you. He must be secured at any rate, and may serve as a guide. I myself will occupy the front of the Lodge, and thus, having stopped all the earths, thou wilt come to me for further orders—silence and despatch is all.—But for the dog Tomkins, who broke appointment with me, he had need render a good excuse, or woe to his father's son!—Reverend sir, be pleased to accompany that officer.—Colonel Everard, you are to follow me; but first give your sword to Captain Pearson, and consider yourself as under arrest.'

Everard gave his sword to Pearson without any comment, and with the most anxious presage of evil followed the republican General, in obedience to commands which it would have been useless to dispute.

CHAPTER XXXI.

'Were my son William here but now,
He wadna fail the pledge.'
Wi' that in at the door there ran
A ghastly-looking page—
'I saw them, master, O! I saw,
Beneath the thornie brae,
Of black-mail'd warriors many a rank.
"Revenge!" he cried, "and gae."'
HENRY MACKENZIE.

THE little party at the Lodge were assembled at supper, at the early hour of eight o'clock. Sir Henry Lee, neglecting the food that was placed on the table, stood by a lamp on the chimney-piece, and read a letter with mournful attention.

'Does my son write to you more particularly than to me, Doctor Rochecliffe?' said the knight. 'He only says here, that he will return probably this night; and that Master Kerneguy must be ready to set off with him instantly. What can this haste mean? Have you heard of any new search after our suffering party? I wish they would permit me to enjoy my son's company in quiet but for a day.'

'The quiet which depends on the wicked ceasing from troubling,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'is connected, not by days and hours, but by minutes. Their glut of blood at Worcester had satiated them for a moment, but their appetite, I fancy, has revived.'

'You have news, then, to that purpose?' said Sir Henry.

'Your son,' replied the doctor, 'wrote to me by the same messenger: he seldom fails to do so, being aware of what importance it is that I should know everything that passes. Means of escape are provided on the coast, and Master Kerneguy

must be ready to start with your son the instant he appears.'

'It is strange,' said the knight; 'for forty years I have dwelt in this house, man and boy, and the point only was how to make the day pass over our heads; for if I did not scheme out some hunting match or hawking, or the like, I might have sat here on my arm-chair, as undisturbed as a sleeping dormouse, from one end of the year to the other; and now I am more like a hare on her form, that dare not sleep unless with her eyes open, and scuds off when the wind rustles among the fern.'

'It is strange,' said Alice, looking at Doctor Rochecliffe, 'that the Roundhead steward has told you nothing of this. He is usually communicative enough of the motions of his party; and I saw you close together this morning.'

'I must be closer with him this evening,' said the doctor gloomily; 'but he will not blab.'

'I wish you may not trust him too much,' said Alice in reply. 'To me, that man's face, with all its shrewdness, evinces such a dark expression, that methinks I read treason in his very eye.'

'Be assured, that matter is looked to,' answered the doctor, in the same ominous tone as before. No one replied, and there was a chilling and anxious feeling of apprehension which seemed to sink down on the company at once, like those sensations which make such constitutions as are particularly subject to the electrical influence, conscious of an approaching thunderstorm.

The disguised monarch, apprised that day to be prepared on short notice to quit his temporary asylum, felt his own share of the gloom which involved the little society. But he was the first also to shake it off, as what neither suited his character nor his situation. Gaiety was the leading distinction of the former, and presence of mind, not depression of spirits, was required by the latter.

'We make the hour heavier,' he said, 'by being melancholy about it. Had you not better join me, Mistress Alice, in Patrick Carey's jovial farewell?—Ah, you do not know Pat Carey—a younger brother of Lord Falkland's?' *

'A brother of the immortal Lord Falkland's, and write songs!' said the doctor.

'O, Doctor, the muses take tithe as well as the Church,' said Charles, 'and have their share in every family of distinction. You do not know the words, Mistress Alice, but you can aid me, notwithstanding, in the burden at least—

> Come, now that we're parting, and 'tis one to ten
> If the towers of sweet Woodstock I e'er see agen,
> Let us e'en have a frolic, and drink like tall men,
> While the goblet goes merrily round.' †

The song arose, but not with spirit. It was one of those efforts at forced mirth, by which, above all other modes of expressing it, the absence of real cheerfulness is most distinctly intimated. Charles stopped the song, and upbraided the choristers.

'You sing, my dear Mistress Alice, as if you were chanting one of the seven penitential psalms; and you, good Doctor, as if you recited the funeral service.'

The doctor rose hastily from the table, and turned to the window; for the expression connected singularly with the task which he was that evening to discharge. Charles looked at him with some surprise; for the peril in which he lived made him watchful of the slightest motions of those around him—then turned to Sir Henry, and said, 'My honoured host, can you tell any reason for this moody fit, which has so strangely crept upon us all?'

'Not I, my dear Louis,' replied the knight; 'I have no skill in these nice quillets of philosophy. I could as soon undertake to tell you the reason why Bevis turns round three times before he lies down. I can only say for myself, that if age and sorrow and uncertainty be enough to break a jovial spirit, or at least to bend it now and then, I have my share of them all; so that I, for one, cannot say that I am sad merely because I am not merry. I have but too good cause for sadness. I would I saw my son, were it but for a minute.'

Fortune seemed for once disposed to gratify the old man; for Albert Lee entered at that moment. He was dressed in a riding-suit, and appeared to have travelled hard. He cast his eye hastily around as he entered. It rested for a second on that of the disguised prince, and, satisfied with the glance which he received in lieu, he hastened, after the fashion of the olden day, to kneel down to his father, and request his blessing.

'It is thine, my boy,' said the old man; a tear springing to his eyes as he laid his hand on the long locks, which distinguished the young Cavalier's rank and principles, and which, usually combed and curled with some care, now hung wild and dishevelled about his shoulders. They remained an instant in this posture, when the old man suddenly started from it, as if ashamed of the emotion which he had expressed before so many witnesses, and, passing the back of his hand hastily across his eyes, bade Albert get up and mind his supper, 'since I daresay you have ridden fast and far since you last baited—and we'll send round a cup to his health, if Doctor Rochecliffe and the good company pleases—Joceline, thou knave, skink about—thou look'st as if thou hadst seen a ghost.'

'Joceline,' said Alice, 'is sick for sympathy—one of the stags ran at Phœbe Mayflower to-day, and she was fain to have Joceline's assistance to drive the creature off—the girl has been in fits since she came home.'

'Silly slut,' said the old knight—'She a woodman's daughter!—But, Joceline, if the deer gets dangerous, you must send a broad arrow through him.'

'It will not need, Sir Henry,' said Joceline, speaking with great difficulty of utterance—'he is quiet enough now—he will not offend in that sort again.'

'See it be so,' replied the knight; 'remember Mistress Alice often walks in the Chase. And now, fill round, and fill, too, a cup to thyself to over-red thy fear, as mad Will has it. Tush, man, Phœbe will do well enough—she only screamed and ran, that thou might'st have

* Note F. Patrick Carey.

† The original song of Carey bears Wykeham, instead of Woodstock, for the locality. The verses are full of the bacchanalian spirit of the time.

the pleasure to help her. Mind what thou dost, and do not go spilling the wine after that fashion.—Come, here is a health to our wanderer, who has come to us again.'

'None will pledge it more willingly than I,' said the disguised prince, unconsciously assuming an importance which the character he personated scarce warranted; but Sir Henry, who had become fond of the supposed page, with all his peculiarities, imposed only a moderate rebuke upon his petulance. 'Thou art a merry, good-humoured youth, Louis,' he said, 'but it is a world to see how the forwardness of the present generation hath gone beyond the gravity and reverence which in my youth was so regularly observed towards those of higher rank and station —I dared no more have given my own tongue the rein, when there was a doctor of divinity in company, than I would have dared to have spoken in church in service time.'

'True, sir,' said Albert, hastily interfering; 'but Master Kerneguy had the better right to speak at present, that I have been absent on his business as well as my own, have seen several of his friends, and bring him important intelligence.'

Charles was about to rise and beckon Albert aside, naturally impatient to know what news he had procured, or what scheme of safe escape was now decreed for him. But Doctor Rochecliffe twitched his cloak, as a hint to him to sit still, and not show any extraordinary motive for anxiety, since, in case of a sudden discovery of his real quality, the violence of Sir Henry Lee's feelings might have been likely to attract too much attention.

Charles, therefore, only replied, as to the knight's stricture, that he had a particular title to be sudden and unceremonious in expressing his thanks to Colonel Lee—that gratitude was apt to be unmannerly—finally, that he was much obliged to Sir Henry for his admonition; and that, quit Woodstock when he would, 'he was sure to leave it a better man than he came there.'

His speech was of course ostensibly directed towards the father; but a glance at Alice assured her that she had her full share in the compliment.

'I fear,' he concluded, addressing Albert, 'that you come to tell us our stay here must be very short.'

'A few hours only,' said Albert—'just enough for needful rest for ourselves and our horses. I have procured two which are good and tried. But Doctor Rochecliffe broke faith with me. I expected to have met some one down at Joceline's hut, where I left the horses; and finding no person, I was delayed an hour in littering them down myself, that they might be ready for to-morrow's work—for we must be off before day.'

'I—I—intended to have sent Tomkins—but—but'——hesitated the doctor, 'I'——

'The Roundheaded rascal was drunk, or out of the way, I presume,' said Albert. 'I am glad of it—you may easily trust him too far.'

'Hitherto he has been faithful,' said the doctor, 'and I scarce think he will fail me now. But Joceline will go down and have the horses in readiness in the morning.'

Joceline's countenance was usually that of alacrity itself on a case extraordinary. Now, however, he seemed to hesitate.

'You will go with me a little way, Doctor?' he said, as he edged himself closely to Rochecliffe.

'How? puppy, fool, and blockhead,' said the knight, 'wouldst thou ask Doctor Rochecliffe to bear thee company at this hour?—Out, hound!—get down to the kennel yonder instantly, or I will break the knave's pate of thee.'

Joceline looked with an eye of agony at the divine, as if entreating him to interfere in his behalf; but just as he was about to speak, a most melancholy howling arose at the hall-door, and a dog was heard scratching for admittance.

'What ails Bevis next?' said the old knight. 'I think this must be All-Fools' Day, and that everything around me is going mad!'

The same sound startled Albert and Charles from a private conference in which they had engaged, and Albert ran to the hall-door to examine personally into the cause of the noise.

'It is no alarm,' said the old knight to Kerneguy, 'for in such cases the dog's bark is short, sharp, and furious. These long howls are said to be ominous. It was even so that Bevis's grandsire bayed the whole livelong night on which my poor father died. If it comes now as a presage, God send it regard the old and useless, not the young, and those who may yet serve King and country!'

The dog had pushed past Colonel Lee, who stood a little while at the hall-door to listen if there were anything stirring without, while Bevis advanced into the room where the company were assembled, bearing something in his mouth, and exhibiting, in an unusual degree, that sense of duty and interest which a dog seems to show when he thinks he has the charge of something important. He entered, therefore, drooping his long tail, slouching his head and ears, and walking with the stately yet melancholy dignity of a war-horse at his master's funeral. In this manner he paced through the room, went straight up to Joceline, who had been regarding him with astonishment, and, uttering a short and melancholy howl, laid at his feet the object which he bore in his mouth. Joceline stooped, and took from the floor a man's glove, of the fashion worn by the troopers, having something like the old-fashioned gauntlet projections of thick leather arising from the wrist, which go half-way up to the elbow, and secure the arm against a cut with a sword. But Joceline had no sooner looked at what in itself was so common an object, than he dropped it from his hand, staggered backward, uttered a groan, and nearly fell to the ground.

'Now, the coward's curse be upon thee for an idiot!' said the knight, who had picked up the glove, and was looking at it—'thou shouldst be sent back to school, and flogged till the craven's blood was switched out of thee—What dost thou look at but a glove, thou base poltroon, and a very dirty glove, too? Stay, here is writing—Joseph Tomkins? Why, that is the Roundheaded fellow—I wish he hath not come to some mischief, for this is not dirt on the cheveron, but blood. Bevis may have bit the fellow, and yet the dog seemed to love him well too, or the stag

may have hurt him. Out, Joceline, instantly, and see where he is—wind your bugle.'

'I cannot go,' said Joliffe, 'unless'—and again he looked piteously at Doctor Rochecliffe, who saw no time was to be lost in appeasing the ranger's terrors, as his ministry was most needful in the present circumstances.—'Get spade and mattock,' he whispered to him, 'and a dark lantern, and meet me in the Wilderness.'

Joceline left the room; and the doctor, before following him, had a few words of explanation with Colonel Lee. His own spirit, far from being dismayed on the occasion, rather rose higher, like one whose natural element was intrigue and danger. 'Here hath been wild work,' he said, 'since you parted. Tomkins was rude to the wench Phœbe—Joceline and he had a brawl together, and Tomkins is lying dead in the thicket, not far from Rosamond's Well. It will be necessary that Joceline and I go directly to bury the body; for, besides that some one might stumble upon it and raise an alarm, this fellow Joceline will never be fit for any active purpose till it is under ground. Though as stout as a lion, the under-keeper has his own weak side, and is more afraid of a dead body than a living one. When do you propose to start to-morrow?'

'By daybreak, or earlier,' said Colonel Lee; 'but we will meet again. A vessel is provided, and I have relays in more places than one—we go off from the coast of Sussex; and I am to get a letter at ——, acquainting me precisely with the spot.'

'Wherefore not go off instantly?' said the doctor.

'The horses would fail us,' replied Albert; 'they have been hard ridden to-day.'

'Adieu,' said Rochecliffe, 'I must to my task —Do you take rest and repose for yours. To conceal a slaughtered body, and convey on the same night a king from danger and captivity, are two feats which have fallen to few folks save myself; but let me not, while putting on my harness, boast myself as if I were taking it off after a victory.' So saying, he left the apartment, and, muffling himself in his cloak, went out into what was called the Wilderness.

The weather was a raw frost. The mist lay in partial wreaths upon the lower grounds; but the night, considering that the heavenly bodies were in a great measure hidden by the haze, was not extremely dark. Doctor Rochecliffe could not, however, distinguish the under-keeper until he had hemmed once or twice, when Joceline answered the signal by showing a glimpse of light from the dark lantern which he carried. Guided by this intimation of his presence, the divine found him leaning against a buttress which had once supported a terrace, now ruinous. He had a pickaxe and shovel, together with a deer's hide hanging over his shoulder.

'What do you want with the hide, Joceline,' said Doctor Rochecliffe, 'that you lumber it about with you on such an errand?'

'Why, look you, Doctor,' he answered, 'it is as well to tell you all about it. The man and I —he there—you know whom I mean—had many years since a quarrel about this deer. For though we were great friends, and Philip was sometimes allowed by my master's permission to help me in mine office, yet I knew, for all that, Philip Hazeldine was sometimes a trespasser. The deer-stealers were very bold at that time, it being just before the breaking out of the war, when men were becoming unsettled. And so it chanced, that one day, in the Chase, I found two fellows, with their faces blacked and shirts over their clothes, carrying as prime a buck between them as any was in the Park. I was upon them in the instant—one escaped, but I got hold of the other fellow, and who should it prove to be but trusty Phil Hazeldine! Well, I don't know whether it was right or wrong, but he was my old friend and pot-companion, and I took his word for amendment in future; and he helped me to hang up the deer on a tree, and I came back with a horse to carry him to the Lodge, and tell the knight the story, all but Phil's name. But the rogues had been too clever for me; for they had flayed and dressed the deer, and quartered him, and carried him off, and left the hide and horns, with a chime, saying—

> The haunch to thee,
> The breast to me,
> The hide and the horns for the keeper's fee.

And this I knew for one of Phil's mad pranks, that he would play in those days with any lad in the country. But I was so nettled, that I made the deer's hide be curried and dressed by a tanner, and swore that it should be his winding-sheet or mine; and though I had long repented my rash oath, yet now, Doctor, you see what it has come to—though I forgot it, the devil did not.'

'It was a very wrong thing to make a vow so sinful,' said Rochecliffe; 'but it would have been greatly worse had you endeavoured to keep it. Therefore, I bid you cheer up,' said the good divine; 'for in this unhappy case, I could not have wished, after what I have heard from Phœbe and yourself, that you should have kept your hand still, though I may regret that the blow has proved fatal. Nevertheless, thou hast done even that which was done by the great and inspired legislator, when he beheld an Egyptian tyrannizing over a Hebrew, saving that, in the case present, it was a female, when, says the Septuagint, *Percussum Egyptium abscondit sabulo;* the meaning whereof I will explain to you another time. Wherefore, I exhort you not to grieve beyond measure; for although this circumstance is unhappy in time and place, yet, from what Phœbe hath informed me of yonder wretch's opinions, it is much to be regretted that his brains had not been beaten out in his cradle, rather than that he had grown up to be one of those Grindlestonians, or Muggletonians, in whom is the perfection of every foul and blasphemous heresy, united with such a universal practice of hypocritical assentation as would deceive their master, even Satan himself.'

'Nevertheless, sir,' said the forester, 'I hope you will bestow some of the service of the Church on this poor man, as it was his last wish, naming you, sir, at the same time; and unless this were done, I should scarce dare to walk out in the dark again for my whole life.'

'Thou art a silly fellow; but if,' continued the doctor, 'he named me as he departed, and

desired the last rites of the Church, there was, it may be, a turning from evil and a seeking to good even in his last moments; and if Heaven granted him grace to form a prayer so fitting, wherefore should man refuse it? All I fear is the briefness of time.'

'Nay, your reverence may cut the service somewhat short,' said Joceline; 'assuredly he does not deserve the whole of it; only if something were not to be done, I believe I should flee the country. They were his last words; and methinks he sent Bevis with his glove to put me in mind of them.'

'Out, fool! Do you think,' said the doctor, 'dead men send gauntlets to the living, like knights in a romance? or if so, would they choose dogs to carry their challenges? I tell thee, fool, the cause was natural enough. Bevis, questing about, found the body, and brought the glove to you to intimate where it was lying, and to require assistance; for such is the high instinct of these animals towards one in peril.

'Nay, if you think so, Doctor,' said Joceline—'and doubtless, I must say, Bevis took an interest in the man—if indeed it was not something worse in the shape of Bevis, for methought his eyes looked wild and fiery, as if he would have spoken.'

As he talked thus, Joceline rather hung back, and in doing so displeased the doctor, who exclaimed, 'Come along, thou lazy laggard. Art thou a soldier, and a brave one, and so much afraid of a dead man? Thou hast killed men in battle and in chase, I warrant thee.'

'Ay, but their backs were to me,' said Joceline. 'I never saw one of them cast back his head, and glare at me as yonder fellow did, his eye retaining a glance of hatred, mixed with terror and reproach, till it became fixed like a jelly. And were you not with me, and my master's concerns, and something else, very deeply at stake, I promise you I would not again look at him for all Woodstock.'

'You must, though,' said the doctor, suddenly pausing, 'for here is the place where he lies. Come hither deep into the copse; take care of stumbling—Here is a place just fitting, and we will draw the briers over the grave afterwards.'

As the doctor thus issued his directions, he assisted also in the execution of them; and while his attendant laboured to dig a shallow and misshapen grave, a task which the state of the soil, perplexed with roots, and hardened by the influence of the frost, rendered very difficult, the divine read a few passages out of the funeral service, partly in order to appease the superstitious terrors of Joceline, and partly because he held it matter of conscience not to deny the Church's rites to one who had requested their aid in extremity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Case ye, case ye,—on with your vizards.
HENRY IV.

THE company whom we had left in Victor Lee's parlour were about to separate for the night, and had risen to take a formal leave of each other, when a tap was heard at the hall-door. Albert, the vidette of the party, hastened to open it, enjoining, as he left the room, the rest to remain quiet, until he had ascertained the cause of the knocking. When he gained the portal, he called to know who was there, and what they wanted at so late an hour.

'It is only me,' answered a treble voice.

'And what is your name, my little fellow?' said Albert.

'Spitfire, sir,' replied the voice without.

'Spitfire?' said Albert.

'Yes, sir,' replied the voice; 'all the world calls me so, and Colonel Everard himself. But my name is Spittal for all that.'

'Colonel Everard! arrive you from him?' demanded young Lee.

'No, sir; I come, sir, from Roger Wildrake, Esquire, of Squattlesea-mere, if it like you,' said the boy; 'and I have brought a token to Mistress Lee, which I am to give into her own hands, if you would but open the door, sir, and let me in—but I can do nothing with a three-inch board between us.'

'It is some freak of that drunken rakehell,' said Albert, in a low voice, to his sister, who had crept out after him on tiptoe.

'Yet let us not be hasty in concluding so,' said the young lady; 'at this moment the least trifle may be of consequence.—What token has Master Wildrake sent me, my little boy?'

'Nay, nothing very valuable neither,' replied the boy; 'but he was so anxious you should get it, that he put me out of window as one would chuck out a kitten, that I might not be stopped by the soldiers.'

'Hear you?' said Alice to her brother; 'undo the gate, for God's sake.'

Her brother, to whom her feelings of suspicion were now sufficiently communicated, opened the gate in haste, and admitted the boy, whose appearance, not much dissimilar to that of a skinned rabbit in a livery, or a monkey at a fair, would at another time have furnished them with amusement. The urchin messenger entered the hall, making several odd bows and congés, and delivered the woodcock's feather* with much ceremony to the young lady, assuring her it was the prize she had won upon a wager about hawking.

'I prithee, my little man,' said Albert, 'was your master drunk or sober, when he sent thee all this way with a feather at this time of night?'

'With reverence, sir,' said the boy, 'he was what *he* calls sober, and what I would call concerned in liquor for any other person.'

'Curse on the drunken coxcomb!' said Albert.—'There is a tester for thee, boy, and tell thy master to break his jests on suitable persons, and at fitting times.'

'Stay, yet a minute,' exclaimed Alice; 'we must not go too fast—this craves wary walking.'

'A feather,' said Albert; 'all this work about a feather! Why, Doctor Rochecliffe, who can suck intelligence out of every trifle as a magpie would suck an egg, could make nothing of this.'

'Let us try what we can do without him then,'

* Note G. Signal of Danger.

said Alice. Then, addressing herself to the boy, —'So there are strangers at your master's?'

'At Colonel Everard's, madam, which is the same thing,' said Spitfire.

'And what manner of strangers,' said Alice; 'guests, I suppose?'

'Ay, mistress,' said the boy, 'a sort of guests that make themselves welcome wherever they come, if they meet not a welcome from their landlord—soldiers, madam.'

'The men that have long been lying at Woodstock,' said Albert.

'No, sir,' said Spitfire, 'new comers, with gallant buff-coats and steel breastplates; and their commander—your honour and your ladyship never saw such a man—at least I am sure Bill Spitfire never did.'

'Was he tall or short?' said Albert, now much alarmed.

'Neither one nor other,' said the boy; 'stout made, with slouching shoulders; a nose large, and a face one would not like to say No to. He had several officers with him. I saw him but for a moment, but I shall never forget him while I live.'

'You are right,' said Albert Lee to his sister, pulling her to one side—'quite right—the Archfiend himself is upon us!'

And the feather,' said Alice, whom fear had rendered apprehensive of slight tokens, 'means flight—and a woodcock is a bird of passage.'

'You have hit it,' said her brother; 'but the time has taken us cruelly short. Give the boy a trifle more—nothing that can excite suspicion, and dismiss him. I must summon Rochecliffe and Joceline.'

He went accordingly, but, unable to find those he sought, he returned with hasty steps to the parlour, where, in his character of Louis, the page was exerting himself to detain the old knight, who, while laughing at the tales he told him, was anxious to go to see what was passing in the hall.

'What is the matter, Albert?' said the old man; 'who calls at the Lodge at so undue an hour, and wherefore is the hall-door opened to them? I will not have my rules, and the regulations laid down for keeping this house, broken through, because I am old and poor. Why answer you not? why keep a chattering with Louis Kerneguy, and neither of you all the while minding what I say?—Daughter Alice, have you sense and civility enough to tell me, what or who it is that is admitted here contrary to my general orders?'

'No one, sir,' replied Alice; 'a boy brought a message, which I fear is an alarming one.'

'There is only fear, sir,' said Albert, stepping forward, 'that whereas we thought to have stayed with you till to-morrow, we must now take farewell of you to-night.'

'Not so, brother,' said Alice; 'you must stay and aid the defence here—if you and Master Kerneguy are both missed, the pursuit will be instant, and probably successful; but if you stay, the hiding-places about this house will take some time to search. You can change coats with Kerneguy too.'

'Right, noble wench,' said Albert; 'most excellent—yes—Louis, I remain as Kerneguy, you fly as young Master Lee.'

'I cannot see the justice of that,' said Charles.

'Nor I neither,' said the knight, interfering. 'Men come and go, lay schemes, and alter them, in my house, without deigning to consult me. And who is Master Kerneguy, or what is he to me, that my son must stay and take the chance of mischief, and this your Scotch page is to escape in his dress? I will have no such contrivance carried into effect, though it were the finest cobweb that was ever woven in Doctor Rochecliffe's brains.—I wish you no ill, Louis; thou art a lively boy; but I have been somewhat too lightly treated in this, man.'

'I am fully of your opinion, Sir Henry,' replied the person whom he addressed. 'You have been, indeed, repaid for your hospitality by want of that confidence, which could never have been so justly reposed. But the moment is come when I must say, in a word, I am that unfortunate Charles Stuart, whose lot it has been to become the cause of ruin to his best friends, and whose present residence in your family threatens to bring destruction to you, and all around you.'

'Master Louis Kerneguy,' said the knight, very angrily, 'I will teach you to choose the subjects of your mirth better when you address them to me; and, moreover, very little provocation would make me desire to have an ounce or two of that malapert blood from you.'

'Be still, sir, for God's sake!' said Albert to his father. 'This is indeed THE KING; and such is the danger of his person, that every moment we waste may bring round a fatal catastrophe.'

'Good God!' said the father, clasping his hands together, and about to drop on his knees, 'has my earnest wish been accomplished! and is it in such a manner as to make me pray it had never taken place!'

He then attempted to bend his knee to the king—kissed his hand, while large tears trickled from his eyes—then said, 'Pardon, my lord—your Majesty, I mean—permit me to sit in your presence but one instant till my blood beats more freely, and then'——

Charles raised his ancient and faithful subject from the ground; and, even in that moment of fear, and anxiety, and danger, insisted on leading him to his seat, upon which he sunk in apparent exhaustion, his head drooping upon his long white beard, and big unconscious tears mingling with its silver hairs. Alice and Albert remained with the king, arguing and urging his instant departure.

'The horses are at the under-keeper's hut,' said Albert, 'and the relays only eighteen or twenty miles off. If the horses can but carry you so far'——

'Will you not rather,' interrupted Alice, 'trust to the concealments of this place, so numerous and so well tried—Rochecliffe's apartments, and the yet farther places of secrecy?'

'Alas!' said Albert, 'I know them only by name. My father was sworn to confide them to but one man, and he had chosen Rochecliffe.'

'I prefer taking the field to any hiding-hole in England,' said the king. 'Could I but find

my way to this hut where the horses are, I would try what arguments whip and spur could use to get them to the rendezvous, where I am to meet Sir Thomas Acland and fresh cattle. Come with me, Colonel Lee, and let us run for it. The Roundheads have beat us in battle; but if it come to a walk or a race, I think I can show which has the best mettle.'

'But then,' said Albert, 'we lose all the time which may otherwise be gained by the defence of this house—leaving none here but my poor father, incapable from his state of doing anything; and you will be instantly pursued by fresh horses, while ours are unfit for the road. O, where is the villain Joceline?'

'What can have become of Doctor Rochecliffe?' said Alice; 'he that is so ready with advice;—where can they be gone? O, if my father could but rouse himself!'

'Your father *is* roused,' said Sir Henry, rising and stepping up to them with all the energy of full manhood in his countenance and motions. 'I did but gather my thoughts—for when did they fail a Lee when his King needed counsel or aid?' He then began to speak, with the ready and distinct utterance of a general at the head of an army, ordering every motion for attack and defence—unmoved himself, and his own energy compelling obedience, and that cheerful obedience, from all who heard him. 'Daughter,' he said, 'beat up Dame Jellycot—Let Phœbe rise if she were dying, and secure doors and windows.'

'That hath been done regularly since—we have been thus far honoured,' said his daughter, looking at the king—'yet, let them go through the chambers once more.' And Alice retired to give the orders, and presently returned.

The old knight proceeded, in the same decided tone of promptitude and despatch—'Which is your first stage?'

'Gray's—Rothebury, by Henley, where Sir Thomas Acland and young Knolles are to have horses in readiness,' said Albert; 'but how to get there with our weary cattle?'

'Trust me for that,' said the knight; and proceeded with the same tone of authority—'Your Majesty must instantly to Joceline's lodge,' he said; 'there are your horses and your means of flight. The secret places of this house, well managed, will keep the rebel dogs in play two or three hours good—Rochecliffe is, I fear, kidnapped, and his Independent hath betrayed him—Would I had judged the villain better! I would have struck him through at one of our trials of fence, with an unbated weapon, as Will says.—But for your guide when on horseback, half a bowshot from Joceline's hut is that of old Martin the verdurer; he is a score of years older than I, but as fresh as an old oak—beat up his quarters, and let him ride with you for death and life. He will guide you to your relay, for no fox that ever earthed in the Chase knows the country so well for seven leagues around.'

'Excellent, my dearest father, excellent!' said Albert; 'I had forgot Martin the verdurer.'

'Young men forget all,' answered the knight.—'Alas, that the limbs should fail, when the head which can best direct them—is come perhaps to its wisest!'

'But the tired horses,' said the king—'could we not get fresh cattle?'

'Impossible at this time of night,' answered Sir Henry; 'but tired horses may do much with care and looking to.' He went hastily to the cabinet which stood in one of the oriel windows, and searched for something in the drawers, pulling out one after another.

'We lose time, father,' said Albert, afraid that the intelligence and energy which the old man displayed had been but a temporary flash of the lamp, which was about to relapse into evening twilight.

'Go to, Sir Boy,' said his father sharply; 'is it for thee to tax me in this presence!—Know that, were the whole Roundheads that are out of hell in present assemblage round Woodstock, I could send away the Royal Hope of England by a way that the wisest of them could never guess.—Alice, my love, ask no questions, but speed to the kitchen, and fetch a slice or two of beef, or better of venison; cut them long, and thin, d'ye mark me'——

'This is wandering of the mind,' said Albert, apart to the king. 'We do him wrong, and your Majesty harm, to listen to him.'

'I think otherwise,' said Alice, 'and I know my father better than you.' So saying, she left the room, to fulfil her father's orders.

'I think so too,' said Charles—'in Scotland, the Presbyterian ministers, when thundering in their pulpits on my own sins and those of my house, took the freedom to call me to my face Jeroboam, or Rehoboam, or some such name, for following the advice of young counsellors—Oddsfish, I will take that of the grey beard for once, for never saw I more sharpness and decision than in the countenance of that noble old man.'

By this time Sir Henry had found what he was seeking. 'In this tin box,' he said, 'are six balls prepared of the most cordial spices, mixed with medicaments of the choicest and most invigorating quality. Given from hour to hour, wrapped in a covering of good beef or venison, a horse of spirit will not flag for five hours, at the speed of fifteen miles an hour; and, please God, the fourth of the time places your Majesty in safety—what remains may be useful on some future occasion. Martin knows how to administer them; and Albert's weary cattle shall be ready, if walked gently for ten minutes, in running to devour the way, as old Will says—Nay, waste not time in speech, your Majesty does me but too much honour in using what is your own.—Now, see if the coast is clear, Albert, and let his Majesty set off instantly—We will play our parts but ill, if any take the chase after him for these two hours that are between night and day—Change dresses, as you proposed, in yonder sleeping apartment—something may be made of that too.'

'But, good Sir Henry,' said the king, 'your zeal overlooks a principal point. I have, indeed, come from the under-keeper's hut you mention to this place, but it was by daylight, and under guidance—I shall never find my way thither in utter darkness, and without a guide—I fear you must let the Colonel go with me; and I entreat and command you will put yourself to

no trouble or risk to defend the house—only make what delay you can in showing its secret recesses.'

'Rely on me, my royal and liege sovereign,' said Sir Henry; 'but Albert *must* remain here, and Alice shall guide your Majesty to Joceline's hut in his stead.'

'Alice!' said Charles, stepping back in surprise—'why, it is dark night—and—and—and'——He glanced his eye towards Alice, who had by this time returned to the apartment, and saw doubt and apprehension in her look; an intimation that the reserve under which he had placed his disposition for gallantry, since the morning of the proposed duel, had not altogether effaced the recollection of his previous conduct. He hastened to put a strong negative upon a proposal which appeared so much to embarrass her. 'It is impossible for me, indeed, Sir Henry, to use Alice's services—I must walk as if bloodhounds were at my heels.'

'Alice shall trip it,' said the knight, 'with any wench in Oxfordshire; and what would your Majesty's best speed avail, if you knew not the way to go?'

'Nay, nay, Sir Henry,' continued the king, 'the night is too dark—we stay too long—I will find it myself.'

'Lose no time in exchanging your dress with Albert,' said Sir Henry—'leave me to take care of the rest.'

Charles, still inclined to expostulate, withdrew, however, into the apartment where young Lee and he were to exchange clothes; while Sir Henry said to his daughter, 'Get thee a cloak, wench, and put on thy thickest shoes. Thou might'st have ridden Pixie, but he is something spirited, and thou art a timid horsewoman, and ever wert so—the only weakness I have known of thee.'

'But, my father,' said Alice, fixing her eyes very earnestly on Sir Henry's face, 'must I really go along with the king? might not Phœbe or Dame Jellycot go with us?'

'No—no—no,' answered Sir Henry; 'Phœbe, the silly slut, has, as you well know, been in fits to-night, and, I take it, such a walk as you must take is no charm for hysterics—Dame Jellycot hobbles as slow as a broken-winded mare—besides, her deafness, were there occasion to speak to her—No—no—you shall go alone, and entitle yourself to have it written on your tomb, "Here lies she who saved the King!"—And, hark you, do not think of returning to-night, but stay at the verdurer's with his niece—the Park and Chase will shortly be filled with our enemies, and whatever chances here you will learn early enough in the morning.'

'And what is it I may then learn?' said Alice—'Alas, who can tell?—O, dearest father, let me stay and share your fate! I will pull off the timorous woman, and fight for the King, if it be necessary.—But—I cannot think of becoming his only attendant in the dark night, and through a road so lonely.'

'How!' said the knight, raising his voice; 'do you bring ceremonious and silly scruples forward, when the King's safety, nay, his life, is at stake? By this mark of loyalty,' stroking his grey beard as he spoke, 'could I think thou wert other than becomes a daughter of the House of Lee, I would'——

At this moment the king and Albert interrupted him by entering the apartment, having exchanged dresses, and, from their stature, bearing some resemblance to each other, though Charles was evidently a plain, and Lee a handsome young man. Their complexions were different; but the difference could not be immediately noticed, Albert having adopted a black peruque, and darkened his eyebrows.

Albert Lee walked out to the front of the mansion, to give one turn around the Lodge, in order to discover in what direction any enemies might be approaching, that they might judge of the road which it was safest for the royal fugitive to adopt. Meanwhile the king, who was first in entering the apartment, had heard a part of the angry answer which the old knight made to his daughter, and was at no loss to guess the subject of his resentment. He walked up to him with the dignity which he perfectly knew to assume when he chose it.

'Sir Henry,' he said, 'it is our pleasure, nay, our command, that you forbear all exertion of paternal authority in this matter. Mistress Alice, I am sure, must have good and strong reasons for what she wishes; and I should never pardon myself were she placed in an unpleasant situation on my account. I am too well acquainted with woods and wildernesses to fear losing my way among my native oaks of Woodstock.'

'Your Majesty shall not incur the danger,' said Alice, her temporary hesitation entirely removed by the calm, clear, and candid manner in which Charles uttered these last words. 'You shall run no risk that I can prevent; and the unhappy chances of the times in which I have lived have from experience made the forest as well known to me by night as by day. So, if you scorn not my company, let us away instantly.'

'If your company is given with good will, I accept it with gratitude,' replied the monarch.

'Willingly,' she said, 'most willingly. Let me be one of the first to show that zeal and that confidence, which I trust all England will one day emulously display in behalf of your Majesty.'

She uttered these words with an alacrity of spirit, and made the trifling change of habit with a speed and dexterity which showed that all her fears were gone, and that her heart was entirely in the mission on which her father had despatched her.

'All is safe around,' said Albert Lee, showing himself; 'you may take which passage you will—the most private is the best.'

Charles went gracefully up to Sir Henry Lee ere his departure, and took him by the hand.—'I am too proud to make professions,' he said, 'which I may be too poor ever to realize. But while Charles Stuart lives, he lives the obliged and indebted debtor of Sir Henry Lee.'

'Say not so, please your Majesty, say not so,' exclaimed the old man, struggling with the hysterical sobs which rose to his throat. 'He who might claim all, cannot become indebted by accepting some small part.'

'Farewell, good friend, farewell!' said the king; 'think of me as a son, a brother to Albert

and to Alice, who are, I see, already impatient. Give me a father's blessing, and let me be gone.'

'The God, through whom kings reign, bless your Majesty,' said Sir Henry, kneeling and turning his reverend face and clasped hands up to heaven—'The Lord of Hosts bless you, and save your Majesty from your present dangers, and bring you in his own good time to the safe possession of the crown that is your due!'

Charles received his blessing like that of a father, and Alice and he departed on their journey.

As they left the apartment, the old knight let his hands sink gently as he concluded this fervent ejaculation, his head sinking at the same time. His son dared not disturb his meditation, yet feared the strength of his feelings might overcome that of his constitution, and that he might fall into a swoon. At length he ventured to approach and gradually touch him. The old knight started to his feet, and was at once the same alert, active-minded, forecasting director, which he had shown himself a little before.

'You are right, boy,' he said, 'we must be up and doing. They lie, the Roundheaded traitors, that call him dissolute and worthless! He hath feelings worthy the son of the blessed Martyr. You saw, even in the extremity of danger, he would have perilled his safety rather than take Alice's guidance when the silly wench seemed in doubt about going. Profligacy is intensely selfish, and thinks not of the feelings of others. But hast thou drawn bolt and bar after them? I vow I scarce saw when they left the hall.'

'I let them out at the little postern,' said the colonel; 'and when I returned I was afraid I had found you ill.'

'Joy—joy, only joy, Albert—I cannot allow a thought of doubt to cross my breast. God will not desert the descendant of an hundred kings—the rightful heir will not be given up to the ruffians. There was a tear in his eye as he took leave of me—I am sure of it. Wouldst not die for him, boy?'

'If I lay my life down for him to-night,' said Albert, 'I would only regret it, because I should not hear of his escape to-morrow.'

'Well, let us to this gear,' said the knight; 'think'st thou know'st enough of his manner, clad as thou art in his dress, to induce the women to believe thee to be the page Kerneguy?'

'Umph!' replied Albert, 'it is not easy to bear out a personification of the King, when women are in the case. But there is only a very little light below, and I can try.'

'Do so instantly,' said his father; 'the knaves will be here presently.'

Albert accordingly left the apartment, while the knight continued—'If the women be actually persuaded that Kerneguy be still here, it will add strength to my plot—the beagles will open on a false scent, and the royal stag be safe in cover ere they regain the slot of him. Then to draw them on from hiding-place to hiding-place! Why, the east will be grey before they have sought the half of them!—Yes, I will play at bob-cherry with them, hold the bait to their nose, which they are never to gorge upon! I will drag a trail for them which will take them some time to puzzle out.—But at what cost do I do this?' continued the old knight, interrupting his own joyous soliloquy — 'O, Absalom, Absalom, my son! my son!—But let him go; he can but die as his fathers have died; and in the cause for which they lived. But he comes—Hush!—Albert, hast thou succeeded? hast thou taken royalty upon thee so as to pass current?'

'I have, sir,' replied Albert; 'the women will swear that Louis Kerneguy was in the house this very last minute.'

'Right, for they are good and faithful creatures,' said the knight, 'and would swear what was for his Majesty's safety at any rate; yet they will do it with more nature and effect if they believe they are swearing truth.—How didst thou impress the deceit upon them?'

'By a trifling adoption of the royal manner, sir, not worth mentioning.'

'Out, rogue!' replied the knight. 'I fear the King's character will suffer under your mummery.'

'Umph!' said Albert, muttering what he dared not utter aloud—'were I to follow the example close up, I know whose character would be in the greatest danger.'

'Well, now we must adjust the defence of the outworks, the signals, etc., betwixt us both, and the best way to baffle the enemy for the longest time possible.' He then again had recourse to the secret drawers of his cabinet, and pulled out a piece of parchment on which was a plan. 'This,' said he, 'is a scheme of the citadel, as I call it, which may hold out long enough after you have been forced to evacuate the places of retreat you are already acquainted with. The Ranger was always sworn to keep this plan secret, save from one person only, in case of sudden death.—Let us sit down and study it together.'

They accordingly adjusted their measures in a manner which will better show itself from what afterwards took place, than were we to state the various schemes which they proposed, and provisions made against events that did not arrive.

At length young Lee, armed and provided with some food and liquor, took leave of his father, and went and shut himself up in Victor Lee's apartment, from which was an opening to the labyrinth of private apartments, or hiding-places, that had served the associates so well in the fantastic tricks which they had played off at the expense of the Commissioners of the Commonwealth.

'I trust,' said Sir Henry, sitting down by his desk, after having taken a tender farewell of his son, 'that Rochecliffe has not blabbed out the secret of the plot to yonder fellow Tomkins, who was not unlikely to prate of it out of school. But here am I seated—perhaps for the last time, with my Bible on the one hand, and old Will on the other, prepared, thank God, to die as I have lived.—I marvel they come not yet,' he said, after waiting for some time.—'I always thought the devil had a smarter spur to give his agents, when they were upon his own special service.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

But see, his face is black, and full of blood;
His eyeballs farther out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man;
His hair uprear'd—his nostrils stretch'd with struggling;
His hands abroad display'd, as one who grasp'd
And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.
HENRY VI. *Part I.*

HAD those whose unpleasant visit Sir Henry expected come straight to the Lodge, instead of staying three hours at Woodstock, they would have secured their prey. But the Familist, partly to prevent the king's escape, partly to render himself of more importance in the affair, had represented the party at the Lodge as being constantly on the alert, and had therefore inculcated upon Cromwell the necessity of his remaining quiet until he (Tomkins) should appear to give him notice that the household were retired to rest. On this condition he undertook, not only to discover the apartment in which the unfortunate Charles slept, but, if possible, to find some mode of fastening the door on the outside, so as to render flight impossible. He had also promised to secure the key of a postern, by which the soldiers might be admitted into the house without exciting alarm. Nay, the matter might, by means of his local knowledge, be managed, as he represented it, with such security, that he would undertake to place his Excellency, or whomsoever he might appoint for the service, by the side of Charles Stuart's bed, ere he had slept off the last night's claret. Above all, he had stated that, from the style of the old house, there were many passages and posterns which must be carefully guarded before the least alarm was caught by those within, otherwise the success of the whole enterprise might be endangered. He had therefore besought Cromwell to wait for him at the village if he found him not there on his arrival; and assured him that the marching and countermarching of soldiers was at present so common, that even if any news were carried to the Lodge that fresh troops had arrived in the borough, so ordinary a circumstance would not give them the least alarm. He recommended that the soldiers chosen for this service should be such as could be depended upon—no fainters in spirit—none who turn back from Mount Gilead for fear of the Amalekites, but men of war, accustomed to strike with the sword, and to need no second blow. Finally, he represented that it would be wisely done if the General should put Pearson, or any other officer whom he could completely trust, into the command of the detachment, and keep his own person, if he should think it proper to attend, secret even from the soldiers.

All this man's counsels Cromwell had punctually followed. He had travelled in the van of this detachment of one hundred picked soldiers, whom he had selected for the service, men of dauntless resolution, bred in a thousand dangers, and who were steeled against all feelings of hesitation and compassion, by the deep and gloomy fanaticism which was their chief principle of action—men to whom, as their General, and no less as the chief among the elect, the commands of Oliver were like a commission from the Deity.

Great and deep was the General's mortification at the unexpected absence of the personage on whose agency he so confidently reckoned, and many conjectures he formed as to the cause of such mysterious conduct. Sometimes he thought Tomkins had been overcome by liquor, a frailty to which Cromwell knew him to be addicted; and when he held this opinion, he discharged his wrath in maledictions, which, of a different kind from the wild oaths and curses of the Cavaliers, had yet in them as much blasphemy, and more determined malevolence. At other times he thought some unexpected alarm, or perhaps some drunken Cavalier revel, had caused the family of Woodstock Lodge to make later hours than usual. To this conjecture, which appeared the most probable of any, his mind often recurred; and it was the hope that Tomkins would still appear at the rendezvous which induced him to remain at the borough, anxious to receive communication from his emissary, and afraid of endangering the success of the enterprise by any premature exertion on his own part.

In the meantime, Cromwell, finding it no longer possible to conceal his personal presence, disposed of everything so as to be ready at a minute's notice. Half the soldiers he caused to dismount, and had the horses put into quarters; the other half were directed to keep their horses saddled, and themselves ready to mount at a moment's notice. The men were brought into the house by turns, and had some refreshment, leaving a sufficient guard on the horses, which was changed from time to time.

Thus Cromwell waited with no little uncertainty, often casting an anxious eye upon Colonel Everard, who, he suspected, could, if he chose it, well supply the place of his absent confidant. Everard endured this calmly, with unaltered countenance, and brow neither ruffled nor dejected.

Midnight at length tolled, and it became necessary to take some decisive step. Tomkins might have been treacherous; or, a suspicion which approached more near to the reality, his intrigue might have been discovered, and he himself murdered or kidnapped by the vengeful Royalists. In a word, if any use was to be made of the chance which fortune afforded of securing the most formidable claimant of the supreme power, which he already aimed at, no further time was to be lost. He at length gave orders to Pearson to get the men under arms; he directed him concerning the mode of forming them, and that they should march with the utmost possible silence; or, as it was given out in the orders, 'Even as Gideon marched in silence when he went down against the camp of the Midianites, with only Phurah his servant. Peradventure,' continued this strange document, 'we too may learn of what yonder Midianites have dreamed.'

A single patrol, followed by a corporal and five steady, experienced soldiers, formed the advanced guard of the party; then followed the main body. A rear-guard of ten men guarded

Everard and the minister. Cromwell required the attendance of the former, as it might be necessary to examine him, or confront him with others; and he carried Master Holdenough with him, because he might escape if left behind, and perhaps raise some tumult in the village. The Presbyterians, though they not only concurred with, but led the way in the Civil War, were at its conclusion highly dissatisfied with the ascendency of the military sectaries, and not to be trusted as cordial agents in anything where their interest was concerned. The infantry, being disposed of as we have noticed, marched off from the left of their line, Cromwell and Pearson, both on foot, keeping at the head of the centre, or main body of the detachment. They were all armed with petronels, short guns similar to the modern carbine, and, like them, used by horsemen. They marched in the most profound silence and with the utmost regularity, the whole body moving like one man.

About one hundred yards behind the rearmost of the dismounted party, came the troopers who remained on horseback; and it seemed as if even the irrational animals were sensible to Cromwell's orders, for the horses did not neigh, and even appeared to place their feet on the earth cautiously, and with less noise than usual.

Their leader, full of anxious thoughts, never spoke, save to enforce by whispers his caution respecting silence; while the men, surprised and delighted to find themselves under the command of their renowned General, and destined, doubtless, for some secret service of high import, used the utmost precaution in attending to his reiterated orders.

They marched down the street of the little borough in the order we have mentioned. Few of the townsmen were abroad; and one or two, who had protracted the orgies of the evening to that unusual hour, were too happy to escape the notice of a strong party of soldiers, who often acted in the character of police, to inquire about their purpose for being under arms so late, or the route which they were pursuing.

The external gate of the Chase had, ever since the party had arrived at Woodstock, been strictly guarded by three file of troopers, to cut off all communication between the Lodge and the town. Spitfire, Wildrake's emissary, who had often been a-bird-nesting, or on similar mischievous excursions in the forest, had evaded these men's vigilance by climbing over a breach with which he was well acquainted, in a different part of the wall.

Between this party and the advanced guard of Cromwell's detachment a whispered challenge was exchanged, according to the rules of discipline. The infantry entered the Park, and were followed by the cavalry, who were directed to avoid the hard road, and ride as much as possible upon the turf which bordered on the avenue. Here, too, an additional precaution was used, a file or two of foot soldiers being detached to search the woods on either hand, and make prisoner, or, in the event of resistance, put to death, any whom they might find lurking there, under what pretence soever.

Meanwhile, the weather began to show itself as propitious to Cromwell as he had found most incidents in the course of his successful career. The grey mist, which had hitherto obscured everything, and rendered marching in the wood embarrassing and difficult, had now given way to the moon, which, after many efforts, at length forced her way through the vapour, and hung her dim dull cresset in the heavens, which she enlightened, as the dying lamp of an anchorite does the cell in which he reposes. The party were in sight of the front of the palace, when Holdenough whispered to Everard, as they walked near each other—'See ye not, yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rosamond? This night will try whether the devil of the sectaries or the devil of the malignants shall prove the stronger. O, sing jubilee, for the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself!'

Here the divine was interrupted by a non-commissioned officer, who came hastily, yet with noiseless steps, to say, in a low, stern whisper—'Silence, prisoner in the rear—silence on pain of death.'

A moment afterwards the whole party stopped their march, the word *halt* being passed from one to another, and instantly obeyed.

The cause of this interruption was the hasty return of one of the flanking party to the main body, bringing news to Cromwell that they had seen a light in the wood at some distance on the left.

'What can it be?' said Cromwell, his low, stern voice, even in a whisper, making itself distinctly heard. 'Does it move, or is it stationary?'

'So far as we can judge, it moveth not,' answered the trooper.

'Strange—there is no cottage near the spot where it is seen.'

'So please your Excellency, it may be a device of Sathan,' said Corporal Humgudgeon, snuffling through his nose; 'he is mighty powerful in these parts of late.'

'So please your idiocy, thou art an ass,' said Cromwell; but, instantly recollecting that the corporal had been one of the adjutators or tribunes of the common soldiers, and was therefore to be treated with suitable respect, he said, 'Nevertheless, if it be the device of Satan, please it the Lord we will resist him, and the foul slave shall fly from us.—Pearson,' he said, resuming his soldier-like brevity, 'take four file, and see what is yonder—No—the knaves may shrink from thee. Go thou straight to the Lodge—invest it in the way we agreed, so that a bird shall not escape out of it—form an outward and an inward ring of sentinels, but give no alarm until I come. Should any attempt to escape, KILL them.'—He spoke that command with terrible emphasis.—'Kill them on the spot,' he repeated, 'be they who or what they will. Better so than trouble the Commonwealth with prisoners.'

Pearson heard, and proceeded to obey his commander's orders.

Meanwhile, the future Protector disposed the small force which remained with him in such a manner that they should approach from different points at once the light which excited his suspicions, and gave them orders to creep as near

to it as they could, taking care not to lose each other's support, and to be ready to rush in at the same moment, when he should give the sign, which was to be a loud whistle. Anxious to ascertain the truth with his own eyes, Cromwell, who had by instinct all the habits of military foresight, which, in others, are the result of professional education and long experience, advanced upon the object of his curiosity. He skulked from tree to tree with the light step and prowling sagacity of an Indian bush-fighter; and before any of his men had approached so near as to descry them, he saw, by the lantern which was placed on the ground, two men, who had been engaged in digging what seemed to be an ill-made grave. Near them lay extended something wrapped in a deer's hide, which greatly resembled the dead body of a man. They spoke together in a low voice, yet so that their dangerous auditor could perfectly overhear what they said.

'It is done at last,' said one; 'the worst and hardest labour I ever did in my life. I believe there is no luck about me left. My very arms feel as if they did not belong to me; and, strange to tell, toil as hard as I would, I could not gather warmth in my limbs.'

'I have warmed me enough,' said Rochecliffe, breathing short with fatigue.

'But the cold lies at my heart,' said Joceline; 'I scarce hope ever to be warm again. It is strange, and a charm seems to be on us. Here have we been nigh two hours in doing what Diggen the sexton would have done to better purpose in half a one.'

'We are wretched spadesmen enough,' answered Doctor Rochecliffe. 'Every man to his tools—thou to thy bugle-horn, and I to my papers in cipher. But do not be discouraged; it is the frost on the ground, and the number of roots, which rendered our task difficult. And now, all due rites done to this unhappy man, and having read over him the service of the Church, *valeat quantum*, let us lay him decently in this place of last repose; there will be small lack of him above ground. So cheer up thy heart, man, like a soldier as thou art; we have read the service over his body; and, should times permit it, we will have him removed to consecrated ground, though he is all unworthy of such favour. Here, help me to lay him in the earth; we will drag briers and thorns over the spot, when we have shovelled dust upon dust; and do thou think of this chance more manfully; and remember, thy secret is in thine own keeping.'

'I cannot answer for that,' said Joceline. 'Methinks the very night-winds among the leaves will tell of what we have been doing—methinks the trees themselves will say, "There is a dead corpse lies among our roots." Witnesses are soon found when blood hath been spilled.'

'They are so, and that right early,' exclaimed Cromwell, starting from the thicket, laying hold on Joceline, and putting a pistol to his head. At any other period of his life, the forester would, even against the odds of numbers, have made a desperate resistance; but the horror he had felt at the slaughter of an old companion, although in defence of his own life, together with fatigue and surprise, had altogether unmanned him, and he was seized as easily as a sheep is secured by the butcher. Doctor Rochecliffe offered some resistance, but was presently secured by the soldiers who pressed around him.

'Look, some of you,' said Cromwell, 'what corpse this is upon whom these lewd sons of Belial have done a murder—Corporal Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, see if thou knowest the face.'

'I profess I do, even as I should do mine own in a mirror,' snuffled the corporal, after looking on the countenance of the dead man by the help of the lantern. 'Of a verity it is our trusty brother in the faith, Joseph Tomkins.'

'Tomkins!' exclaimed Cromwell, springing forward, and satisfying himself with a glance at the features of the corpse—'Tomkins!—and murdered, as the fracture of the temple intimates!—dogs that ye are, confess the truth—You have murdered him because you have discovered his treachery—I should say his true spirit towards the Commonwealth of England, and his hatred of those complots in which you would have engaged his honest simplicity.'

'Ay,' said Grace-be-here Humgudgeon, 'and then to misuse his dead body with your papistical doctrines, as if you had crammed cold porridge into its cold mouth. I pray thee, General, let these men's bonds be made strong.'

'Forbear, Corporal,' said Cromwell; 'our time presses.—Friend, to you, whom I believe to be Doctor Anthony Rochecliffe by name and surname, I have to give the choice of being hanged at daybreak to-morrow, or making atonement for the murder of one of the Lord's people, by telling what thou knowest of the secrets which are in yonder house.'

'Truly, sir,' replied Rochecliffe, 'you found me but in my duty as a clergyman, interring the dead; and respecting answering your questions, I am determined myself, and do advise my fellow-sufferer on this occasion'——

'Remove him,' said Cromwell; 'I know his stiffneckedness of old, though I have made him plough in my furrow, when he thought he was turning up his own swathe—Remove him to the rear, and bring hither the other fellow.—Come thou here—this way—closer—closer.—Corporal Grace-be-here, do thou keep thy hand upon the belt with which he is bound. We must take care of our life for the sake of this distracted country, though, lack-a-day, for its own proper worth we could peril it for a pin's point.—Now, mark me, fellow, choose betwixt buying thy life by a full confession, or being tucked presently up to one of these old oaks—How likest thou that?'

'Truly, master,' answered the under-keeper, affecting more rusticity than was natural to him (for his frequent intercourse with Sir Henry Lee had partly softened and polished his manners), 'I think the oak is like to bear a lusty acorn—that is all.'

'Dally not with me, friend,' continued Oliver; 'I profess to thee in sincerity I am no trifler. What guests have you seen at yonder house called the Lodge?'

'Many a brave guest in my day, I'se warrant ye, master,' said Joceline. 'Ah, to see how the chimneys used to smoke some twelve years back!

Ah, sir, a sniff of it would have dined a poor man.'

'Out, rascal!' said the General, 'dost thou jeer me? Tell me at once what guests have been of late in the Lodge—and look thee, friend, be assured that, in rendering me this satisfaction, thou shalt not only rescue thy neck from the halter, but render also an acceptable service to the State, and one which I will see fittingly rewarded. For, truly, I am not of those who would have the rain fall only on the proud and stately plants, but rather would, so far as my poor wishes and prayers are concerned, that it should also fall upon the lowly and humble grass and corn, that the heart of the husbandman may be rejoiced, and that as the cedar of Lebanon waxes in its height, in its boughs, and in its roots, so may the humble and lowly hyssop that groweth upon the walls flourish,—and—and, truly—Understand'st thou me, knave?'

'Not entirely, if it please your honour,' said Joceline; 'but it sounds as if you were preaching a sermon, and has a marvellous twang of doctrine with it.'

'Then, in one word—thou knowest there is one Louis Kerneguy, or Carnego, or some such name, in hiding at the Lodge yonder?'

'Nay, sir,' replied the under-keeper, 'there have been many coming and going since Worcester Field; and how should I know who they are?—my service is out of doors, I trow.'

'A thousand pounds,' said Cromwell, 'do I tell down to thee, if thou canst place that boy in my power.'

'A thousand pounds is a marvellous matter, sir,' said Joceline; but I have more blood on my hand than I like already. I know not how the price of life may thrive—and, 'scape or hang, I have no mind to try.'

'Away with him to the rear,' said the General; 'and let him not speak with his yoke-fellow yonder.—Fool that I am to waste time in expecting to get milk from mules.—Move on towards the Lodge.'

They moved with the same silence as formerly, notwithstanding the difficulties which they encountered from being unacquainted with the road and its various intricacies. At length they were challenged, in a low voice, by one of their own sentinels, two concentric circles of whom had been placed around the Lodge, so close to each other as to preclude the possibility of an individual escaping from within. The outer guard was maintained partly by horse upon the roads and open lawn, and, where the ground was broken and bushy, by infantry. The inner circle was guarded by foot soldiers only. The whole were in the highest degree alert, expecting some interesting and important consequences from the unusual expedition on which they were engaged.

'Any news, Pearson?' said the General to his aide-de-camp, who came instantly to report to his superior.

He received for answer, 'None.'

Cromwell led his officer forward just opposite to the door of the Lodge, and there paused betwixt the circles of guards, so that their conversation could not be overheard.

He then pursued his inquiry, demanding—'Were there any lights, any appearances of stirring—any attempt at sally—any preparation for defence?'

'All as silent as the valley of the shadow of death—even as the vale of Jehoshaphat.'

'Pshaw! tell me not of Jehoshaphat, Pearson,' said Cromwell. 'These words are good for others, but not for thee. Speak plainly, and like a blunt soldier as thou art. Each man hath his own mode of speech; and bluntness, not sanctity, is thine.'

'Well, then, nothing has been stirring,' said Pearson.—'Yet peradventure'——

'Peradventure not me,' said Cromwell, 'or thou wilt tempt me to knock thy teeth out. I ever distrust a man when he speaks after another fashion from his own.'

'Zounds! let me speak to an end,' answered Pearson, 'and I will speak in what language your Excellency will.'

'Thy zounds, friend,' said Oliver, 'showeth little of grace, but much of sincerity. Go to, then—thou knowest I love and trust thee. Hast thou kept close watch? It behoves us to know that, before giving the alarm.'

'On my soul,' said Pearson, 'I have watched as closely as a cat at a mouse-hole. It is beyond possibility that anything could have eluded our vigilance, or even stirred within the house, without our being aware of it.'

''Tis well,' said Cromwell; 'thy services shall not be forgotten, Pearson. Thou canst not preach and pray, but thou canst obey thine orders, Gilbert Pearson, and that may make amends.'

'I thank your Excellency,' replied Pearson; 'but I beg leave to chime in with the humours of the times. A poor fellow hath no right to hold himself singular.'

He paused, expecting Cromwell's orders what next was to be done, and, indeed, not a little surprised that the General's active and prompt spirit had suffered him during a moment so critical to cast away a thought upon a circumstance so trivial as his officer's peculiar mode of expressing himself. He wondered still more, when, by a brighter gleam of moonshine than he had yet enjoyed, he observed that Cromwell was standing motionless, his hands supported upon his sword, which he had taken out of the belt, and his stern brows bent on the ground. He waited for some time impatiently, yet afraid to interfere, lest he should awaken this unwonted fit of ill-timed melancholy into anger and impatience. He listened to the muttering sounds which escaped from the half-opening lips of his principal, in which the words 'hard necessity,' which occurred more than once, were all of which the sense could be distinguished. 'My Lord-General.' at length he said, 'time flies.'

'Peace, busy fiend, and urge me not!' said Cromwell. 'Think'st thou, like other fools, that I have made a paction with the devil for success, and am bound to do my work within an appointed hour, lest the spell should lose its force?'

'I only think, my Lord-General,' said Pearson, 'that fortune has put into your offer what you have long desired to make prize of, and that you hesitate.'

Cromwell sighed deeply as he answered, 'Ah, Pearson, in this troubled world, a man, who is

called like me to work great things in Israel, had need to be, as the poets feign, a thing made of hardened metal, immoveable to feelings of human charities, impassible, resistless. Pearson, the world will hereafter, perchance, think of me as being such a one as I have described, "an iron man, and made of iron mould."—Yet they will wrong my memory—my heart is flesh, and my blood is mild as that of others. When I was a sportsman, I have wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by my hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of my greyhound; and canst thou think it a light thing to me, that, the blood of this lad's father lying in some measure upon my head, I should now put in peril that of the son? They are of the kindly race of English sovereigns, and, doubtless, are adored like to demigods by those of their own party. I am called Parricide, Bloodthirsty Usurper, already, for shedding the blood of one man, that the plague might be stayed—or as Achan was slain that Israel might thereafter stand against the face of their enemies. Nevertheless, who has spoken unto me graciously since that high deed? Those who acted in the matter with me are willing that I should be the scapegoat of atonement—those who looked on and helped not, bear themselves now as if they had been borne down by violence; and while I looked that they should shout applause on me, because of the victory of Worcester, whereof the Lord had made me the poor instrument, they look aside to say, "Ha! ha! the King-killer, the Parricide—soon shall his place be made desolate."—Truly it is a great thing, Gilbert Pearson, to be lifted above the multitude; but when one feeleth that his exaltation is rather hailed with hate and scorn than with love and reverence—in sooth, it is still a hard matter for a mild, tender-conscienced, infirm spirit to bear—and God be my witness, that, rather than do this new deed, I would shed my own best heart's-blood in a pitched field, twenty against one.' Here he fell into a flood of tears, which he sometimes was wont to do. This extremity of emotion was of a singular character. It was not actually the result of penitence, and far less that of absolute hypocrisy, but arose merely from the temperature of that remarkable man, whose deep policy and ardent enthusiasm were intermingled with a strain of hypochondriacal passion, which often led him to exhibit scenes of this sort, though seldom, as now, when he was called to the execution of great undertakings.

Pearson, well acquainted as he was with the peculiarities of his General, was baffled and confounded by this fit of hesitation and contrition, by which his enterprising spirit appeared to be so suddenly paralyzed. After a moment's silence, he said, with some dryness of manner, 'If this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honour betwixt us.'

'Ha!' said Cromwell, as if touched to the quick, 'wouldst thou take the prey from the lion?'

'If the lion behaves like a village cur,' said Pearson boldly, 'who now barks and seems as if he would tear all to pieces, and now flies from a raised stick or stone, I know not why I should fear him. If Lambert had been here, there had been less speaking and more action.'

'Lambert! What of Lambert?' said Cromwell very sharply.

'Only,' said Pearson, 'that I long since hesitated whether I should follow your Excellency or him—and I begin to be uncertain whether I have made the best choice, that's all.'

'Lambert!' exclaimed Cromwell impatiently, yet softening his voice lest he should be overheard descanting on the character of his rival,—'What is Lambert?—a tulip-fancying fellow, whom nature intended for a Dutch gardener at Delft or Rotterdam. Ungrateful as thou art, what could Lambert have done for thee?'

'He would not,' answered Pearson, 'have stood here hesitating before a locked door, when fortune presented the means of securing, by one blow, his own fortune, and that of all who followed him.'

'Thou art right, Gilbert Pearson,' said Cromwell, grasping his officer's hand, and strongly pressing it. 'Be the half of this bold accompt thine, whether the reckoning be on earth or heaven.'

'Be the whole of it mine hereafter,' said Pearson hardily, 'so your Excellency have the advantage of it upon earth. Step back to the rear till I force the door—there may be danger, if despair induce them to make a desperate sally.'

'And if they do sally, is there one of my Ironsides who fears fire or steel less than myself?' said the General. 'Let ten of the most determined men follow us, two with halberds, two with petronels, the others with pistols—Let all their arms be loaded, and fire without hesitation, if there is any attempt to resist or to sally forth—Let Corporal Humgudgeon be with them, and do thou remain here, and watch against escape, as thou wouldst watch for thy salvation.'

The General then struck at the door with the hilt of his sword—at first with a single blow or two, then with a reverberation of strokes that made the ancient building ring again. This noisy summons was repeated once or twice without producing the least effect.

'What can this mean?' said Cromwell; 'they cannot surely have fled, and left the house empty!'

'No,' replied Pearson, 'I will insure you against that; but your Excellency strikes so fiercely, you allow no time for an answer. Hark! I hear the baying of a hound, and the voice of a man who is quieting him—Shall we break in at once, or hold parley?'

'I will speak to them first,' said Cromwell.—'Hollo! who is within there?'

'Who is it inquires?' answered Sir Henry Lee from the interior; 'or what want you here at this dead hour?'

'We come by warrant of the Commonwealth of England,' said the General.

'I must see your warrant ere I undo either bolt or latch,' replied the knight; 'we are enough of us to make good the castle: neither I nor my fellows will deliver it up but upon good

quarter and conditions; and we will not treat for these save in fair daylight.'

'Since you will not yield to our right, you must try our might,' replied Cromwell. 'Look to yourselves within, the door will be in the midst of you in five minutes.'

'Look to yourselves without,' replied the stout-hearted Sir Henry; 'we will pour our shot upon you, if you attempt the least violence.'

But, alas! while he assumed this bold language, his whole garrison consisted of two poor terrified women; for his son, in conformity with the plan which they had fixed upon, had withdrawn from the hall into the secret recesses of the palace.

'What can they be doing now, sir?' said Phœbe, hearing a noise as it were of a carpenter turning screw-nails, mixed with a low buzz of men talking.

'They are fixing a petard,' said the knight, with great composure. 'I have noted thee for a clever wench, Phœbe, and I will explain it to thee: 'Tis a metal pot, shaped much like one of the roguish knaves' own sugar-loaf hats, supposing it had narrower brims—it is charged with some few pounds of fine gunpowder. Then'——

'Gracious! we shall be all blown up!' exclaimed Phœbe,—the word gunpowder being the only one which she understood in the knight's description.

'Not a bit, foolish girl. Pack old Dame Jellycot into the embrasure of yonder window,' said the knight, 'on that side of the door, and we will ensconce ourselves on this, and we shall have time to finish my explanation, for they have bungling engineers. We had a clever French fellow at Newark would have done the job in the firing of a pistol.'

They had scarce got into the place of security when the knight proceeded with his description, —'The petard being formed, as I tell you, is secured with a thick and strong piece of plank termed the madrier, and the whole being suspended, or rather secured against the gate to be forced—But thou mindest me not?'

'How can I, Sir Henry,' she said, 'within reach of such a thing as you speak of?—O Lord! I shall go mad with very terror—we shall be crushed—blown up—in a few minutes!'

'We are secure from the explosion,' replied the knight gravely, 'which will operate chiefly in a forward direction into the middle of the chamber; and from any fragments that may fly laterally, we are sufficiently guarded by this deep embrasure.'

'But they will slay us when they enter,' said Phœbe.

'They will give thee fair quarter, wench,' said Sir Henry; 'and if I do not bestow a brace of balls on that rogue engineer, it is because I would not incur the penalty inflicted by martial law, which condemns to the edge of the sword all persons who attempt to defend an untenable post. Not that I think the rigour of the law could reach Dame Jellycot or thyself, Phœbe, considering that you carry no arms. If Alice had been here she might indeed have done somewhat, for she can use a birding-piece.'

Phœbe might have appealed to her own deeds of that day, as more allied to feats of *mêlée* and battle, than any which her young lady ever acted; but she was in an agony of inexpressible terror, expecting, from the knight's account of the petard, some dreadful catastrophe, of what nature she did not justly understand, notwithstanding his liberal communication on the subject.

'They are strangely awkward at it,' said Sir Henry; 'little Boutirlin would have blown the house up before now.—Ah! he is a fellow would take the earth like a rabbit—if he had been here, never may I stir but he would have countermined them ere now, and

> —'Tis sport to have the engineer
> Hoist with his own petard,

as our immortal Shakespeare has it.'

'O Lord, the poor mad old gentleman,' thought Phœbe.—'O sir, had you not better leave alone play-books, and think of your end?' uttered she aloud, in sheer terror and vexation of spirit.

'If I had not made up my mind to that many days since,' answered the knight, 'I had not now met this hour with a free bosom—

> As gentle and as jocund as to rest,
> Go I to death—truth hath a quiet breast.'

As he spoke, a broad glare of light flashed from without, through the windows of the hall and betwixt the strong iron stanchions with which they were secured—a broad discoloured light it was, which shed a red and dusky illumination on the old armour and weapons, as if it had been the reflection of a conflagration. Phœbe screamed aloud, and, forgetful of reverence in the moment of passion, clung close to the knight's cloak and arm; while Dame Jellycot, from her solitary niche, having the use of her eyes, though bereft of her hearing, yelled like an owl when the moon breaks out suddenly.

'Take care, good Phœbe,' said the knight; 'you will prevent my using my weapon if you hang upon me thus.—The bungling fools cannot fix their petard without the use of torches! Now let me take the advantage of this interval. —Remember what I told thee, and how to put off time.'

'O Lord—ay, sir,' said Phœbe, 'I will say anything. O Lord, that it were but over!—Ah! ah!'—(two prolonged screams)—'I hear something hissing like a serpent.'

'It is the fusee, as we martialists call it,' replied the knight; 'that is, Phœbe, the match which fires the petard, and which is longer or shorter, according to the distance.'

Here the knight's discourse was cut short by a dreadful explosion, which, as he had foretold, shattered the door, strong as it was, to pieces, and brought down the glass clattering from the windows with all the painted heroes and heroines, who had been recorded on that fragile place of memory for centuries. The women shrieked incessantly, and were answered by the bellowing of Bevis, though shut up at a distance from the scene of action. The knight, shaking Phœbe from him with difficulty, advanced into the hall to meet those who rushed in, with torches lighted and weapons prepared.

'Death to all who resist—life to those who

surrender!' exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot. 'Who commands this garrison?'

'Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley,' answered the old knight, stepping forward; 'who, having no other garrison than two weak women, is compelled to submit to what he would willingly have resisted.'

'Disarm the inveterate and malignant rebel,' cried Oliver. 'Art thou not ashamed, sir, to detain me before the door of a house which you had no force to defend? Wearest thou so white a beard, and knowest thou not, that to refuse surrendering an indefensible post, by the martial law deserves hanging?'

'My beard and I,' said Sir Henry, 'have settled that matter between us, and agree right cordially. It is better to run the risk of being hanged like honest men, than to give up our trust like cowards and traitors.'

'Ha! say'st thou?' said Cromwell; 'thou hast powerful motives, I doubt not, for running thy head into a noose. But I will speak with thee by and by. Ho! Pearson, Gilbert Pearson, take this scroll—Take the elder woman with thee—Let her guide you to the various places therein mentioned—Search every room therein set down, and arrest, or slay upon the slightest resistance, whomsoever you find there. Then note those places marked as commanding points for cutting off intercourse through the mansion—the landing-places of the great staircase, the great gallery, and so forth. Use the woman civilly. The plan annexed to the scroll will point out the posts, even if she prove stupid or refractory. Meanwhile, the corporal, with a party, will bring the old man and the girl there to some apartment—the parlour, I think, called Victor Lee's, will do as well as another. —We will then be out of this stifling smell of gunpowder.'

So saying, and without requiring any further assistance or guidance, he walked towards the apartment he had named. Sir Henry had his own feelings, when he saw the unhesitating decision with which the General led the way, and which seemed to intimate a more complete acquaintance with the various localities of Woodstock than was consistent with his own present design, to engage the Commonwealth party in a fruitless search through the intricacies of the Lodge.

'I will now ask thee a few questions, old man,' said the General, when they had arrived in the room; 'and I warn thee, that hope of pardon for thy many and persevering efforts against the Commonwealth can be no otherwise merited, than by the most direct answers to the questions I am about to ask.'

Sir Henry bowed. He would have spoken, but he felt his temper rising high, and became afraid it might be exhausted before the part he had settled to play, in order to afford the king time for his escape, should be brought to an end.

'What household have you had here, Sir Henry Lee, within these few days—what guests —what visitors? We know that your means of housekeeping are not so profuse as usual, so the catalogue cannot be burdensome to your memory.'

'Far from it,' replied the knight, with unusual command of temper; 'my daughter, and latterly my son, have been my guests; and I have had these females, and one Joceline Joliffe, to attend upon us.'

'I do not ask after the regular members of your household, but after those who have been within your gates, either as guests, or as malignant fugitives taking shelter?'

'There may have been more of both kinds, sir, than I, if it please your valour, am able to answer for,' replied the knight. 'I remember my kinsman Everard was here one morning—Also, I bethink me, a follower of his, called Wildrake.'

'Did you not also receive a young Cavalier, called Louis Garnegey?' said Cromwell.

'I remember no such name, were I to hang for it,' said the knight.

'Kerneguy, or some such word,' said the General; 'we will not quarrel for a sound.'

'A Scotch lad, called Louis Kerneguy, was a guest of mine,' said Sir Henry, 'and left me this morning for Dorsetshire.'

'So late!' exclaimed Cromwell, stamping with his foot—'How fate contrives to baffle us, even when she seems most favourable!—What direction did he take, old man?' continued Cromwell —'what horse did he ride—who went with him?'

'My son went with him,' replied the knight; 'he brought him here as the son of a Scottish lord.—I pray you, sir, to be finished with these questions; for although I owe thee, as Will Shakespeare says,

> Respect for thy great place, and let the devil
> Be sometimes honoured for his burning throne,—

yet I feel my patience wearing thin.'

Cromwell here whispered to the corporal, who in turn uttered orders to two soldiers, who left the room. 'Place the knight aside; we will now examine the servant damsel,' said the General.—'Dost thou know,' said he to Phœbe, 'of the presence of one Louis Kerneguy, calling himself a Scotch page, who came here a few days since?'

'Surely, sir,' she replied, 'I cannot easily forget him; and I warrant no well-looking wench that comes into his way will be like to forget him either.'

'Aha,' said Cromwell, 'say'st thou so? truly I believe the woman will prove the truer witness. —When did he leave this house?'

'Nay, I know nothing of his movements, not I,' said Phœbe; 'I am only glad to keep out of his way. But if he have actually gone hence, I am sure he was here some two hours since, for he crossed me in the lower passage, between the hall and the kitchen.'

'How did you know it was he?' demanded Cromwell.

'By a rude enough token,' said Phœbe—'La, sir, you do ask such questions!' she added, hanging down her head.

Humgudgeon here interfered, taking upon himself the freedom of a coadjutor. 'Verily,' he said, 'if what the damsel is called to speak upon hath aught unseemly, I crave your Excellency's permission to withdraw, not desiring that my nightly meditations may be disturbed with tales of such a nature.'

'Nay, your honour,' said Phœbe, 'I scorn the old man's words, in the way of seemliness or unseemliness either. Master Louis did but snatch a kiss, that is the truth of it, if it must be told.'

Here Humgudgeon groaned deeply, while his Excellency avoided laughing with some difficulty. 'Thou hast given excellent tokens, Phœbe,' he said; 'and if they be true, as I think they seem to be, thou shalt not lack thy reward. — And here comes our spy from the stables.'

'There are not the least signs,' said the trooper, 'that horses have been in the stables for a month—there is no litter in the stalls, no hay in the racks, the corn-binns are empty, and the mangers are full of cobwebs.'

'Ay, ay,' said the old knight, 'I have seen when I kept twenty good horses in these stalls, with many a groom and stable-boy to attend them.'

'In the meanwhile,' said Cromwell, 'their present state tells little for the truth of your own story, that there were horses to-day, on which this Kerneguy and your son fled from justice.'

'I did not say that the horses were kept there,' said the knight. 'I have horses and stables elsewhere.'

'Fie, fie, for shame, for shame!' said the General; 'can a white-bearded man, I ask it once more, be a false witness?'

'Faith, sir,' said Sir Henry Lee, 'it is a thriving trade, and I wonder not that you who live on it are so severe in prosecuting interlopers. But it is the times, and those who rule the times, that make grey-beards deceivers.'

'Thou art facetious, friend, as well as daring, in thy malignancy,' said Cromwell; 'but, credit me, I will cry quittance with you ere I am done. Whereunto lead these doors?'

'To bedrooms,' answered the knight.

'Bedrooms! only to bedrooms?' said the republican General, in a voice which indicated such was the internal occupation of his thoughts, that he had not fully understood the answer.

'Lord, sir,' said the knight, 'why should you make it so strange? I say these doors lead to bedrooms—to places where honest men sleep, and rogues lie awake.'

'You are running up a further account, Sir Henry,' said the General; 'but we will balance it once and for all.'

During the whole of the scene, Cromwell, whatever might be the internal uncertainty of his mind, maintained the most strict temperance in language and manner, just as if he had no further interest in what was passing, than as a military man employed in discharging the duty enjoined him by his superiors. But the restraint upon his passion was but

> The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below. *

The course of his resolution was hurried on even more forcibly, because no violence of expression attended or announced its current. He threw himself into a chair, with a countenance that indicated no indecision of mind, but a determination which awaited only the signal for action. Meanwhile the knight, as if resolved in nothing to forego the privileges of his rank and place, sat himself down in turn, and putting on his hat, which lay on a table, regarded the General with a calm look of fearless indifference. The soldiers stood around, some holding the torches, which illuminated the apartment with a lurid and sombre glare of light, the others resting upon their weapons. Phœbe, with her hands folded, her eyes turned upwards till the pupils were scarce visible, and every shade of colour banished from her ruddy cheek, stood like one in immediate apprehension of the sentence of death being pronounced, and instant execution commanded.

Heavy steps were at last heard, and Pearson and some of the soldiers returned. This seemed to be what Cromwell waited for. He started up, and asked hastily, 'Any news, Pearson? any prisoners — any malignants slain in thy defence?'

'None, so please your Excellency,' said the officer.

'And are thy sentinels all carefully placed, as Tomkins's scroll gave direction, and with fitting orders?'

'With the most deliberate care,' said Pearson.

'Art thou very sure,' said Cromwell, pulling him a little to one side, 'that this is all well and duly cared for? Bethink thee, that when we engage ourselves in the private communications, all will be lost should the party we look for have the means of dodging us by an escape into the more open rooms, and from thence perhaps into the forest.'

'My Lord-General,' answered Pearson, 'if placing the guards on the places pointed out in this scroll be sufficient, with the strictest orders to stop, and, if necessary, to stab or shoot whoever crosses their post, such orders are given to men who will not fail to execute them. If more is necessary, your Excellency has only to speak.'

'No — no — no, Pearson,' said the General, 'thou hast done well.—This night over, and let it end but as we hope, thy reward shall not be wanting.—And now to business.—Sir Henry Lee, undo me the secret spring of yonder picture of your ancestor. Nay, spare yourself the trouble and guilt of falsehood or equivocation, and, I say, undo me that spring presently.'

'When I acknowledge you for my master, and wear your livery, I may obey your commands,' answered the knight; 'even then I would need first to understand them.'

'Wench,' said Cromwell, addressing Phœbe, 'go thou undo the spring—you could do it fast enough when you aided at the gambols of the demons of Woodstock, and terrified even Mark Everard, who, I judged, had more sense.'

'O Lord, sir, what shall I do?' said Phœbe, looking to the knight; 'they know all about it. What shall I do?'

'For thy life, hold out to the last, wench! Every minute is worth a million.'

'Ha! heard you that, Pearson?' said Cromwell to the officer; then, stamping with his

* But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.
CAMPBELL'S *Gertrude of Wyoming*.

foot, he added, 'Undo the spring, or I will else use levers and wrenching irons—Or, ha! another petard were well bestowed—Call the engineer.'

'O Lord, sir,' cried Phœbe, 'I shall never live another peter—I will open the spring.'

'Do as thou wilt,' said Sir Henry; 'it shall profit them but little.'

Whether from real agitation, or from a desire to gain time, Phœbe was some minutes ere she could get the spring to open; it was indeed secured with art, and the machinery on which it acted was concealed in the frame of the portrait. The whole, when fastened, appeared quite motionless, and betrayed, as when examined by Colonel Everard, no external mark of its being possible to remove it. It was now withdrawn, however, and showed a narrow recess, with steps which ascended on one side into the thickness of the wall. Cromwell was now like a greyhound slipped from the leash with the prey in full view.—'Up,' he cried, 'Pearson, thou art swifter than I—Up thou next, corporal.' With more agility than could have been expected from his person or years, which were past the meridian of life, and exclaiming, 'Before, those with the torches!' he followed the party, like an eager huntsman in the rear of his hounds, to encourage at once and direct them, as they penetrated into the labyrinth described by Doctor Rochecliffe in the 'Wonders of Woodstock.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

The King, therefore, for his defence
Against the furious Queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
As never yet was seen.
Most curiously that bower was built,
Of stone and timber strong;
An hundred and fifty doors
Did to this bower belong;
And they so cunningly contrived,
With turnings round about,
That none but with a clew of thread
Could enter in or out.

BALLAD OF FAIR ROSAMOND.

THE tradition of the country, as well as some historical evidence, confirmed the opinion that there existed, within the old Royal Lodge at Woodstock, a labyrinth, or connected series of subterranean passages, built chiefly by Henry II., for the security of his mistress, Rosamond Clifford, from the jealousy of his queen, the celebrated Eleanor. Doctor Rochecliffe, indeed, in one of those fits of contradiction with which antiquaries are sometimes seized, was bold enough to dispute the alleged purpose of the perplexed maze of rooms and passages, with which the walls of the ancient palace were perforated; but the fact was undeniable, that in raising the fabric some Norman architect had exerted the utmost of the complicated art, which they have often shown elsewhere, in creating secret passages, and chambers of retreat and concealment. There were stairs, which were ascended merely, as it seemed, for the purpose of descending again—passages which, after turning and winding for a considerable way, returned to the place where they set out—there were trapdoors and hatchways, panels and portcullises. Although Oliver was assisted by a sort of ground-plan made out and transmitted by Joseph Tomkins, whose former employment in Doctor Rochecliffe's service had made him fully acquainted with the place, it was found imperfect; and, moreover, the most serious obstacles to their progress occurred in the shape of strong doors, party-walls, and iron grates—so that the party blundered on in the dark, uncertain whether they were not going farther from, rather than approaching, the extremity of the labyrinth. They were obliged to send for mechanics with sledge-hammers and other instruments, to force one or two of those doors, which resisted all other means of undoing them. Labouring along in these dusky passages, where, from time to time, they were like to be choked by the dust which their acts of violence excited, the soldiers were obliged to be relieved oftener than once, and the bulky Corporal Grace-be-here himself puffed and blew like a grampus that has got into shoal water. Cromwell alone continued, with unabated zeal, to push on his researches—to encourage the soldiers, by the exhortations which they best understood, against fainting for lack of faith—and to secure, by sentinels at proper places, possession of the ground which they had already explored. His acute and observing eye detected, with a sneering smile, the cordage and machinery by which the bed of poor Desborough had been inverted, and several remains of the various disguises, as well as private modes of access, by which Desborough, Bletson, and Harrison had been previously imposed upon. He pointed them out to Pearson, with no further comment than was implied in the exclamation, 'The simple fools!'

But his assistants began to lose heart and be discouraged, and required all his spirit to raise theirs. He then called their attention to voices which they seemed to hear before them, and urged these as evidence that they were moving on the track of some enemy of the Commonwealth, who, for the execution of his malignant plots, had retreated into these extraordinary fastnesses.

The spirits of the men became at last downcast, notwithstanding all this encouragement. They spoke to each other in whispers, of the devils of Woodstock, who might be all the while decoying them forward to a room said to exist in the palace, where the floor, revolving on an axis, precipitated those who entered into a bottomless abyss. Humgudgeon hinted that he had consulted the Scripture that morning by way of lot, and his fortune had been to alight on the passage, 'Eutychus fell down from the third loft.' The energy and authority of Cromwell, however, and the refreshment of some food and strong waters, reconciled them to pursuing their task. Nevertheless, with all their unwearied exertions, morning dawned on the search before they had reached Doctor Rochecliffe's sitting apartment, into which, after all, they obtained entrance by a mode much more difficult than that which the doctor himself employed. But here their ingenuity was long at fault. From the miscellaneous articles that were strewed around, and the

preparations made for food and lodging, it seemed they had gained the very citadel of the labyrinth; but though various passages opened from it, they all terminated in places with which they were already acquainted, or communicated with the other parts of the house, where their own sentinels assured them none had passed. Cromwell remained long in deep uncertainty. Meantime he directed Pearson to take charge of the ciphers and more important papers which lay on the table. 'Though there is little there,' he said, 'that I have not already known, by means of Trusty Tomkins—Honest Joseph—for an artful and thorough-paced agent, the like of thee is not left in England.'

After a considerable pause, during which he sounded with the pommel of his sword almost every stone in the building, and every plank on the floor, the General gave orders to bring the old knight and Doctor Rochecliffe to the spot, trusting that he might work out of them some explanation of the secrets of this apartment.

'So please your Excellency to let me to deal with them,' said Pearson, who was a true soldier of fortune, and had been a buccanier in the West Indies, 'I think that, by a whipcord twitched tight round their forehead, and twisted about with a pistol-butt, I could make either the truth start from their lips or the eyes from their head.'

'Out upon thee, Pearson!' said Cromwell with abhorrence; 'we have no warrant for such cruelty, neither as Englishmen nor Christians. We may slay malignants as we crush noxious animals, but to torture them is a deadly sin; for it is written, "He made them to be pitied of those who carried them captive." Nay, I recall the order even for their examination, trusting that wisdom will be granted us without it, to discover their most secret devices.'

There was a pause accordingly, during which an idea seized upon Cromwell's imagination—'Bring me hither,' he said, 'yonder stool;' and placing it beneath one of the windows, of which there were two so high in the wall as not to be accessible from the floor, he clambered up into the entrance of the window, which was six or seven feet deep, corresponding with the thickness of the wall. 'Come up hither, Pearson,' said the General; 'but ere thou comest double the guard at the foot of the turret called Love's Ladder, and bid them bring up the other petard —So now, come thou hither.'

The inferior officer, however brave in the field, was one of those whom a great height strikes with giddiness and sickness. He shrunk back from the view of the precipice, on the verge of which Cromwell was standing with complete indifference, till the General, catching the hand of his follower, pulled him forward as far as he would advance. 'I think,' said the General, 'I have found the clue, but by this light it is no easy one! See you, we stand in the portal near the top of Rosamond's Tower; and yon turret, which rises opposite to our feet, is that which is called Love's Ladder, from which the drawbridge reached that admitted the profligate Norman tyrant to the bower of his mistress.'

'True, my lord, but the drawbridge is gone,' said Pearson.

'Ay, Pearson,' replied the General; 'but an active man might spring from the spot we stand upon to the battlements of yonder turret.'

'I do not think so, my lord,' said Pearson.

'What?' said Cromwell; 'not if the avenger of blood were behind you, with his slaughter-weapon in his hand?'

'The fear of instant death might do much,' answered Pearson; 'but when I look at that sheer depth on either side, and at the empty chasm between us and yonder turret, which is, I warrant you, twelve feet distant, I confess the truth, nothing short of the most imminent danger should induce me to try. Pah—the thought makes my head grow giddy!—I tremble to see your Highness stand there, balancing yourself as if you meditated a spring into the empty air. I repeat, I would scarce stand so near the verge as does your Highness for the rescue of my life.'

'Ah, base and degenerate spirit!' said the General; 'soul of mud and clay, wouldst thou not do it, and much more, for the possession of empire!—that is, peradventure,' continued he, changing his tone as one who has said too much, 'shouldst thou be called on to do this, that thereby becoming a great man in the tribes of Israel, thou mightest redeem the captivity of Jerusalem—ay, and it may be, work some great work for the afflicted people of this land.'

'Your Highness may feel such calls,' said the officer; 'but they are not for poor Gilbert Pearson, your faithful follower. You made a jest of me yesterday, when I tried to speak your language; and I am no more able to fulfil your designs than to use your mode of speech.'

'But, Pearson,' said Cromwell, 'thou hast thrice, yea, four times called me your Highness.'

'Did I, my lord? I was not sensible of it. I crave your pardon,' said the officer.

'Nay,' said Oliver, 'there was no offence. I do indeed stand high, and I may perchance stand higher—though, alas! it were fitter for a simple soul like me to return to my plough and my husbandry. Nevertheless, I will not wrestle against the Supreme will, should I be called on to do yet more in that worthy cause. For surely he who hath been to our British Israel as a shield of help, and a sword of excellency, making her enemies be found liars unto her, will not give over the flock to those foolish shepherds of Westminster, who shear the sheep and feed them not, and who are in very deed hirelings, not shepherds.'

'I trust to see your lordship quoit them all down-stairs,' answered Pearson. 'But may I ask why we pursue this discourse even now, until we have secured the common enemy?'

'I will tarry no jot of time,' said the General; 'fence the communication of Love's Ladder, as it is called, below, as I take it for almost certain that the party whom we have driven from fastness to fastness during the night, has at length sprung to the top of yonder battlements from the place where we now stand. Finding the turret is guarded below, the place he has chosen for his security will prove a rat-trap, from whence there is no returning.'

'There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet,' said Pearson; 'were it not better, my lord, to

mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret, with its contents, one hundred feet in the air?'

'Ah, silly man,' said Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder; 'if thou hadst done this without telling me, it had been good service, but we will first summon the turret, and then think whether the petard will serve our turn—it is but mining at last.—Blow a summons there, down below.'

The trumpets rang at his bidding, till the old walls echoed from every recess and vaulted archway. Cromwell, as if he cared not to look upon the person whom he expected to appear, drew back, like a necromancer afraid of the spectre which he has evoked.

'He has come to the battlement,' said Pearson to his General.

'In what dress or appearance?' answered Cromwell from within the chamber.

'A grey riding-suit, passmented with silver, russet walking boots, a cut band, a grey hat and plume, black hair.'

'It is he, it is he!' said Cromwell; 'and another crowning mercy is vouchsafed!'

Meantime, Pearson and young Lee exchanged defiance from their respective posts.

'Surrender,' said the former, 'or we blow you up in your fastness.'

'I am come of too high a race to surrender to rebels,' said Albert, assuming the air with which, in such a condition, a king might have spoken.

'I bear you to witness,' cried Cromwell exultingly, 'he hath refused quarter. Of a surety, his blood be on his head.—One of you bring down the barrel of powder. As he loves to soar high, we will add what can be taken from the soldiers' bandoliers.—Come with me, Pearson; thou understandest this gear.—Corporal Grace-be-here, stand thou fast on the platform of the window where Captain Pearson and I stood but even now, and bend the point of thy partisan against any who shall attempt to pass. Thou art as strong as a bull; and I will back thee against despair itself.'

'But,' said the corporal, mounting reluctantly, 'the place is as the pinnacle of the temple; and it is written, that Eutychus fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.'

'Because he slept upon his post,' answered Cromwell readily. 'Beware thou of carelessness, and thus thy feet shall be kept from stumbling.—You four soldiers, remain here to support the corporal, if it be necessary; and you, as well as the corporal, will draw into the vaulted passage the minute the trumpets sound a retreat. It is as strong as a casemate, and you may lie there safe from the effects of the mine. Thou, Zerubbabel Robins, I know wilt be their lance-prisade.'*

Robins bowed, and the General departed to join those who were without.

As he reached the door of the hall, the petard was heard to explode, and he saw that it had succeeded; for the soldiers rushed, brandishing their swords and pistols, in at the postern of the turret, whose gate had been successfully forced. A thrill of exultation, but not unmingled with horror, shot across the veins of the ambitious soldier.

'Now—now!' he cried; 'they are dealing with him!'

His expectations were deceived. Pearson and the others returned disappointed, and reported they had been stopped by a strong trap-door of grated iron, extended over the narrow stair; and they could see there was an obstacle of the same kind some ten feet higher. To remove it by force, while a desperate and well-armed man had the advantage of the steps above them, might cost many lives. 'Which, lack-a-day,' said the General, 'it is our duty to be tender of. What dost thou advise, Gilbert Pearson?'

'We must use powder, my lord,' answered Pearson, who saw his master was too modest to reserve to himself the whole merit of the proceeding—'There may be a chamber easily and conveniently formed under the foot of the stair. We have a sausage, by good luck, to form the train—and so'——

'Ah!' said Cromwell, 'I know thou canst manage such gear well.—But, Gilbert, I go to visit the posts, and give them orders to retire to a safe distance when the retreat is sounded. You will allow them five minutes for this purpose.'

'Three is enough for any knave of them all,' said Pearson. 'They will be lame indeed, that require more on such a service.—I ask but one, though I fire the train myself.'

'Take heed,' said Cromwell, 'that the poor soul be listened to, if he asks quarter. It may be, he may repent him of his hard-heartedness, and call for mercy.'

'And mercy he shall have,' answered Pearson, 'provided he calls loud enough to make me hear him; for the explosion of that damned petard has made me as deaf as the devil's dam.'

'Hush, Gilbert, hush!' said Cromwell; 'you offend in your language.'

'Zooks, sir, I must speak either in your way or in my own,' said Pearson, 'unless I am to be dumb as well as deaf!—Away with you, my lord, to visit the posts; and you will presently hear me make some noise in the world.'

Cromwell smiled gently at his aide-de-camp's petulance, patted him on the shoulder, and called him a mad fellow, walked a little way, then turned back to whisper, 'What thou dost, do quickly;' then returned again towards the outer circle of guards, turning his head from time to time, as if to assure himself that the corporal, to whom he had entrusted the duty, still kept guard with his advanced weapon upon the terrific chasm between Rosamond's Tower and the corresponding turret. Seeing him standing on his post, the General muttered between his moustaches, 'The fellow hath the strength and courage of a bear; and yonder is a post where one shall do more to keep back than an hundred in making way.' He cast a last look on the gigantic figure, who stood in that airy position, like some Gothic statue, the weapon half levelled against the opposite turret, with the butt rested against his right foot, his steel-cap and burnished corselet glittering in the rising sun.

* 'Lance-prisade,' or 'lance-brisade,' a private appointed to a small command—a sort of temporary corporal.

Cromwell then passed on to give the necessary orders, that such sentinels as might be endangered at their present posts by the effect of the mine, should withdraw at the sound of the trumpet to the places which he pointed out to them. Never, on any occasion of his life, did he display more calmness and presence of mind. He was kind, nay, facetious with the soldiers, who adored him; and yet he resembled a volcano before the eruption commences — all peaceful and quiet without, while a hundred contradictory passions were raging in his bosom.

Corporal Humgudgeon, meanwhile, remained steady upon his post; yet, though as determined a soldier as ever fought among the redoubted regiment of Ironsides, and possessed of no small share of that exalted fanaticism which lent so keen an edge to the natural courage of those stern religionists, the veteran felt his present situation to be highly uncomfortable. Within a pike's length of him arose a turret, which was about to be dispersed in massive fragments through the air; and he felt small confidence in the length of time which might be allowed for his escape from such a dangerous vicinity. The duty of constant vigilance upon his post was partly divided by this natural feeling, which induced him from time to time to bend his eyes on the miners below, instead of keeping them riveted on the opposite turret.

At length the interest of the scene arose to the uttermost. After entering and returning from the turret, and coming out again more than once, in the course of about twenty minutes Pearson issued, as it might be supposed, for the last time, carrying in his hand, and uncoiling as he went along, the sausage, or linen bag (so called from its appearance), which, strongly sewed together, and crammed with gunpowder, was to serve as a train betwixt the mine to be sprung, and the point occupied by the engineer who was to give fire. He was in the act of finally adjusting it, when the attention of the corporal on the tower became irresistibly and exclusively riveted upon the preparations for the explosion. But while he watched the aide-de-camp drawing his pistol to give fire, and the trumpeter handling his instrument, as waiting the order to sound the retreat, fate rushed on the unhappy sentinel in a way he least expected.

Young, active, bold, and completely possessed of his presence of mind, Albert Lee, who had been from the loopholes a watchful observer of every measure which had been taken by his besiegers, had resolved to make one desperate effort for self-preservation. While the head of the sentinel on the opposite platform was turned from him, and bent rather downwards, he suddenly sprung across the chasm, though the space on which he lighted was scarce wide enough for two persons, threw the surprised soldier from his precarious stand, and jumped himself down into the chamber. The gigantic trooper went sheer down twenty feet, struck against a projecting battlement, which launched the wretched man outwards, and then fell on the earth with such tremendous force, that the head, which first touched the ground, dinted a hole in the soil of six inches in depth, and was crushed like an eggshell. Scarce knowing what had happened, yet startled and confounded at the descent of this heavy body, which fell at no great distance from him, Pearson snapped his pistol at the train, no previous warning given; the powder caught, and the mine exploded. Had it been strongly charged with powder, many of those without might have suffered; but the explosion was only powerful enough to blow out in a lateral direction a part of the wall just above the foundation, sufficient, however, to destroy the equipoise of the building. Then, amid a cloud of smoke, which began gradually to encircle the turret like a shroud, arising slowly from its base to its summit, it was seen to stagger and shake by all who had courage to look steadily at a sight so dreadful. Slowly, at first, the building inclined outwards, then rushed precipitately to its base, and fell to the ground in huge fragments, the strength of its resistance showing the excellence of the mason-work. The engineer, so soon as he had fired the train, fled in such alarm, that he well-nigh ran against his General, who was advancing towards him, while a huge stone from the summit of the building, flying farther than the rest, lighted within a yard of them.

'Thou hast been over hasty, Pearson,' said Cromwell, with the greatest composure possible —'hath no one fallen in that same tower of Siloe?'

'Some one fell,' said Pearson, still in great agitation, 'and yonder lies his body half-buried in the rubbish.'

With a quick and resolute step Cromwell approached the spot, and exclaimed, 'Pearson, thou hast ruined me — the young Man hath escaped.—This is our own sentinel—plague on the idiot! Let him rot beneath the ruins which crushed him!'

A cry now resounded from the platform of Rosamond's Tower, which appeared yet taller than formerly, deprived of the neighbouring turret, which emulated though it did not attain to its height,—'A prisoner, noble General—a prisoner—the fox whom we have chased all night is now in the snare — the Lord hath delivered him into the hand of his servants.'

'Look you keep him in safe custody,' exclaimed Cromwell, 'and bring him presently down to the apartment from which the secret passages have their principal entrance.'

'Your Excellency shall be obeyed.'

The proceedings of Albert Lee, to which these exclamations related, had been unfortunate. He had dashed from the platform, as we have related, the gigantic strength of the soldier opposed to him, and had instantly jumped down into Rochecliffe's chamber. But the soldiers stationed there threw themselves upon him, and, after a struggle, which was hopelessly maintained against such advantage of numbers, had thrown the young Cavalier to the ground, two of them, drawn down by his strenuous exertions, falling across him. At the same moment a sharp and severe report was heard, which, like a clap of thunder in the immediate vicinity, shook all around them, till the strong and solid tower tottered like the masts of a stately vessel when

about to part by the board. In a few seconds, this was followed by another sullen sound, at first low and deep, but augmenting like the roar of a cataract, as it descends, reeling, bellowing, and rushing, as if to astound both heaven and earth. So awful, indeed, was the sound of the neighbour tower as it fell, that both the captive, and those who struggled with him, continued for a minute or two passive in each other's grasp.

Albert was the first who recovered consciousness and activity. He shook off those who lay above him, and made a desperate effort to gain his feet, in which he partly succeeded. But as he had to deal with men accustomed to every species of danger, and whose energies were recovered nearly as soon as his own, he was completely secured, and his arms held down. Loyal and faithful to his trust, and resolved to sustain to the last the character which he had assumed, he exclaimed, as his struggles were finally overpowered, 'Rebel villains! would you slay your King?'

'Ha, heard you that?' cried one of the soldiers to the lance-prisade who commanded the party. 'Shall I not strike this son of a wicked father under the fifth rib, even as the tyrant of Moab was smitten by Ehud with a dagger of a cubit's length?'

But Robins answered, 'Be it far from us, Merciful Strickalthrow, to slay in cold blood the captive of our bow and of our spear. Methinks, since the storm of Tredagh* we have shed enough of blood—therefore, on your lives do him no evil; but take from him his arms, and let us bring him before the chosen Instrument, even our General, that he may do with him what is meet in his eyes.'

By this time the soldier, whose exultation had made him the first to communicate the intelligence from the battlements to Cromwell, returned, and brought commands corresponding to the orders of their temporary officer, and Albert Lee, disarmed and bound, was conducted as a captive into the apartment which derived its name from the victories of his ancestor, and placed in the presence of General Cromwell.

Running over in his mind the time which had elapsed since the departure of Charles till the siege, if it may be termed so, had terminated in his own capture, Albert had every reason to hope that his royal master must have had time to accomplish his escape. Yet he determined to maintain to the last a deceit which might for a time insure the king's safety. The difference betwixt them could not, he thought, be instantly discovered, begrimed as he was with dust and smoke, and with blood issuing from some scratches received in the scuffle.

In this evil plight, but bearing himself with such dignity as was adapted to the princely character, Albert was ushered into the apartment of Victor Lee, where, in his father's own chair, reclined the triumphant enemy of the cause to which the House of Lee had been hereditarily faithful.

* Tredagh, or Drogheda, was taken by Cromwell in 1649, by storm, and the governor and the whole garrison put to the sword.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A barren title hast thou bought too dear,
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king?
HENRY IV. *Part I.*

OLIVER CROMWELL arose from his seat as the two veteran soldiers, Zerubbabel Robins and Merciful Strickalthrow, introduced into the apartment the prisoner, whom they held by the arms, and fixed his stern hazel eye on Albert long before he could give vent to the ideas which were swelling in his bosom. Exultation was the most predominant.

'Art not thou,' he at length said, 'that Egyptian which, before these days, madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness many thousand men, who were murderers!—Ha, youth, I have hunted thee from Stirling to Worcester, from Worcester to Woodstock, and we have met at last!'

'I would,' replied Albert, speaking in the character which he had assumed, 'that we had met where I could have shown thee the difference betwixt a rightful King and an ambitious usurper!'

'Go to, young man,' said Cromwell; 'say rather the difference between a judge raised up for the redemption of England, and the son of those kings whom the Lord in his anger permitted to reign over her. But we will not waste useless words. God knows that it is not of our will that we are called to such high matters, being as humble in our thoughts as we are of ourselves; and in our unassisted nature frail and foolish; and unable to render a reason but for the better spirit within us, which is not of us. — Thou art weary, young man, and thy nature requires rest and refection, being doubtless dealt with delicately, as one who hath fed on the fat and drunk of the sweet, and who hath been clothed in purple and fine linen.'

Here the General suddenly stopped, and then abruptly exclaimed—'But is this—Ay! whom have we here? These are not the locks of the swarthy lad Charles Stuart?—A cheat! a cheat!'

Albert hastily cast his eyes on a mirror which stood in the room, and perceived that a dark peruke, found among Doctor Rochecliffe's miscellaneous wardrobe, had been disordered in the scuffle with the soldiery, and that his own light brown hair was escaping from beneath it.

'Who is this?' said Cromwell, stamping with fury—'Pluck the disguise from him.'

The soldiers did so; and bringing him at the same time towards the light, the deception could not be maintained for a moment longer with any possibility of success. Cromwell came up to him with his teeth set, and grinding against each other as he spoke, his hands clenched, and trembling with emotion, and speaking with a voice low-pitched, bitterly and deeply emphatic, such as might have preceded a stab with his dagger.

'Thy name, young man?'

He was answered calmly and firmly, while the countenance of the speaker wore a cast of triumph, and even contempt.

'Albert Lee of Ditchley, a faithful subject of King Charles.'

'I might have guessed it,' said Cromwell.—'Ay, and to King Charles shalt thou go as soon as it is noon on the dial.—Pearson,' he continued, 'let him be carried to the others; and let them be executed at twelve exactly.'

'All, sir?' said Pearson, surprised, for Cromwell, though he at times made formidable examples, was, in general, by no means sanguinary.

'*All*,' repeated Cromwell, fixing his eye on young Lee. 'Yes, young sir, your conduct has devoted to death thy father, thy kinsman, and the stranger that was in thine household. Such wreck hast thou brought on thy father's house.'

'My father, too—my aged father!' said Albert, looking upward, and endeavouring to raise his hands in the same direction, which was prevented by his bonds. 'The Lord's will be done!'

'All this havoc can be saved, if,' said the General, 'thou wilt answer one question—Where is the young Charles Stuart, who was called King of Scotland?'

'Under Heaven's protection, and safe from thy power,' was the firm and unhesitating answer of the young Royalist.

'Away with him to prison!' said Cromwell; 'and from thence to execution with the rest of them, as malignants taken in the fact. Let a court-martial sit on them presently.'

'One word,' said young Lee, as they led him from the room.

'Stop, stop,' said Cromwell, with the agitation of renewed hope—'let him be heard.'

'You love texts of Scripture,' said Albert—'Let this be the subject of your next homily—"Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?"'

'Away with him,' said the General; 'let him die the death!—I have said it.'

As Cromwell spoke these words, his aide-de-camp observed that he became unwontedly pale.

'Your Excellency is overtoiled in the public service,' said Pearson; 'a course of the stag in the evening will refresh you. The old knight hath a noble hound here, if we can but get him to hunt without his master, which may be hard, as he is faithful and'——

'Hang him up,' said Cromwell.

'What—whom—hang the noble dog? Your Excellency was wont to love a good hound.'

'It matters not,' said Cromwell; 'let him be killed. Is it not written, that they slew in the valley of Achor, not only the accursed Achan, with his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and asses, and his sheep, and every live thing belonging unto him? And even thus shall we do to the malignant family of Lee, who have aided Sisera in his flight, when Israel might have been delivered of his trouble for ever. But send out couriers and patrols—Follow, pursue, watch in every direction—Let my horse be ready at the door in five minutes, or bring me the first thou canst find.'

It seemed to Pearson that this was something wildly spoken, and that the cold perspiration was standing upon the General's brow as he said it. He therefore again pressed the necessity of repose, and it would appear that nature seconded strongly the representation. Cromwell arose, and made a step or two towards the door of the apartment; but stopped, staggered, and, after a pause, sat down in a chair. 'Truly, friend Pearson,' he said, 'this weary carcass of ours is an impediment to us, even in our most necessary business, and I am fitter to sleep than to watch, which is not my wont. Place guards, therefore, till we repose ourselves for an hour or two. Send out in every direction, and spare not for horses' flesh. Wake me if the court-martial should require instruction, and forget not to see the sentence punctually executed on the Lees, and those who were arrested with them.'

As Cromwell spoke thus, he arose and half-opened a bedroom door, when Pearson again craved pardon for asking if he had rightly understood his Excellency, that all the prisoners were to be executed.

'Have I not said it?' answered Cromwell displeasedly. 'Is it because thou art a man of blood, and hast ever been, that thou dost affect these scruples, to show thyself tender-hearted at my expense? I tell thee, that if there lack one in the full tale of execution, thine own life shall pay the forfeit.'

So saying, he entered the apartment, followed by the groom of his chamber, who attended upon Pearson's summons.

When his General had retired, Pearson remained in great perplexity what he ought to do; and that from no scruples of conscience, but from uncertainty whether he might not err either in postponing, or in too hastily and too literally executing, the instructions he had received.

In the meantime, Strickalthrow and Robins had returned, after lodging Albert in prison, to the room where Pearson was still musing on his General's commands. Both these men were adjutators in their army, and old soldiers, whom Cromwell was accustomed to treat with great familiarity; so that Robins had no hesitation to ask Captain Pearson, 'Whether he meant to execute the commands of the General, even to the letter?'

Pearson shook his head with an air of doubt, but added,

'There was no choice left.'

'Be assured,' said the old man, 'that if thou dost this folly, thou wilt cause Israel to sin, and that the General will not be pleased with your service. Thou knowest, and none better than thou that Oliver, although he be like unto David the son of Jesse, in faith, and wisdom, and courage, yet there are times when the evil spirit cometh upon him as it did upon Saul, and he uttereth commands which he will not thank any one for executing.'

Pearson was too good a politician to assent directly to a proposition which he could not deny—he only shook his head once more, and said that it was easy for those to talk who were not responsible, but the soldier's duty was to obey his orders, and not to judge of them.

'Very righteous truth,' said Merciful Strickalthrow, a grim old Scotchman; 'I marvel where our brother Zerubbabel caught up this softness of heart?'

'Why, I do but wish,' said Zerubbabel, 'that four or five human creatures may draw the breath of God's air for a few hours more; there can be small harm done by delaying the execution,—and the General will have some time for reflection.'

'Ay,' said Captain Pearson; 'but I in my service must be more pointedly obsequious than thou in thy plainness art bound to be, friend Zerubbabel.'

'Then shall the coarse frieze cassock of the private soldier help the golden gaberdine of the captain to bear out the blast,' said Zerubbabel. 'Ay, indeed, I can show you warrant why we be aidful to each other in doing acts of kindness and long-suffering, seeing the best of us are poor sinful creatures, who might suffer, being called to a brief accounting.'

'Of a verity you surprise me, brother Zerubbabel,' said Strickalthrow; 'that thou, being an old and experienced soldier, whose head hath grown grey in battle, shouldst give such advice to a young officer. Is not the General's commission to take away the wicked from the land, and to root out the Amalekite, and the Jebusite, and the Perizzite, and the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite? and are not these men justly to be compared to the five kings, who took shelter in the cave of Makkedah, who were delivered into the hands of Joshua the son of Nun? and he caused his captains and his soldiers to come near and tread on their necks—and then he smote them, and he slew them, and then he hanged them on five trees, even till evening—And thou, Gilbert Pearson by name, be not withheld from the duty which is appointed to thee, but do even as has been commanded by him who is raised up to judge and to deliver Israel; for it is written, "Cursed is he who holdeth back his sword from the slaughter."'

Thus wrangled the two military theologians, while Pearson, much more solicitous to anticipate the wishes of Oliver than to know the will of Heaven, listened to them with great indecision and perplexity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

> But let us now, like soldiers on the watch,
> Put the soul's armour on, alike prepared
> For all a soldier's warfare brings.
>
> JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE reader will recollect that, when Rochecliffe and Joceline were made prisoners, the party which escorted them had two other captives in their train, Colonel Everard, namely, and the Reverend Nehemiah Holdenough. When Cromwell had obtained entrance into Woodstock, and commenced his search after the fugitive prince, the prisoners were placed in what had been an old guard-room, and which was by its strength well calculated to serve for a prison, and a guard was placed over them by Pearson. No light was allowed, save that of a glimmering fire of charcoal. The prisoners remained separated from each other, Colonel Everard conversing with Nehemiah Holdenough, at a distance from Doctor Rochecliffe, Sir Henry Lee, and Joceline. The party was soon after augmented by Wildrake, who was brought down to the Lodge, and thrust in with so little ceremony, that, his arms being bound, he had very nearly fallen on his nose in the middle of the prison.

'I thank you, my good friend,' he said, looking back to the door, which they who had pushed him in were securing—'*Point de cérémonie*—no apology for tumbling, so we light in good company.—Save ye, save ye, gentlemen all—What, *à la mort*, and nothing stirring to keep the spirits up, and make a night on't?—the last we shall have, I take it; for a make* to a million, but we trine to the nubbing cheat† to-morrow.—Patron, noble patron, how goes it? This was but a scurvy trick of Noll so far as you were concerned; as for me, why, I might have deserved something of the kind at his hand.'

'Prithee, Wildrake, sit down,' said Everard; 'thou art drunk—disturb us not.'

'Drunk? I drunk?' cried Wildrake; 'I have been splicing the mainbrace, as Jack says at Wapping—have been tasting Noll's brandy in a bumper to the King's health, and another to his Excellency's confusion, and another to the d——n of Parliament—and it may be one or two more, but all to devilish good toasts. But I'm not drunk.'

'Prithee, friend, be not profane,' said Nehemiah Holdenough.

'What, my little Presbyterian parson, my slender Mass-John? thou shalt say amen to this world instantly,' said Wildrake; 'I have had a weary time in't, for one.—Ha, noble Sir Henry, I kiss your hand—I tell thee, knight, the point of my Toledo was near Cromwell's heart last night, as ever a button on the breast of his doublet. Rat him, he wears secret armour—He a soldier! Had it not been for a cursed steel shirt, I would have spitted him like a lark.—Ha, Doctor Rochecliffe!—thou knowest I can wield my weapon.'

'Yes,' replied the doctor, 'and you know I can use mine.'

'I prithee be quiet, Master Wildrake,' said Sir Henry.

'Nay, good knight,' answered Wildrake, 'be somewhat more cordial with a comrade in distress. This is a different scene from the Brentford storming-party. The jade Fortune has been a very stepmother to me. I will sing you a song I made on my own ill-luck.'

'At this moment, Captain Wildrake, we are not in a fitting mood for singing,' said Sir Henry civilly and gravely.

'Nay, it will aid your devotions—Egad, it sounds like a penitential psalm.

> When I was a young lad,
> My fortune was bad,
> If ere I do well, 'tis a wonder,
> I spent all my means
> Amid sharpers and queans;
> Then I got a commission to plunder.
> I have stockings, 'tis true,
> But the devil a shoe,
> I am forced to wear boots in all weather;
> Be d—d the boot sole,
> Curse on the spur-roll,
> Confounded be the upper-leather.'‡

The door opened as Wildrake finished this stanza at the top of his voice, and in rushed a sentinel, who, greeting him by the title of a

* A halfpenny. † Hang on the gallows.

‡ Such a song, or something very like it, may be found in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, among the wild slips of minstrelsy which are there collected.

'blasphemous bellowing bull of Bashan,' bestowed a severe blow with his ramrod on the shoulders of the songster, whose bonds permitted him no means of returning the compliment.

'Your humble servant again, sir,' said Wildrake, shrugging his shoulders,—'sorry I have no means of showing my gratitude. I am bound over to keep the peace, like Captain Bobadil.*—Ha, knight, did you hear my bones clatter? that blow came twangingly off—the fellow might inflict the bastinado, were it in presence of the Grand Seignior—he has no taste for music, knight—is no way moved by the "concord of sweet sounds." I will warrant him fit for treason, stratagem, and spoil—Eh?—all down in the mouth—well—I'll go to sleep to-night on a bench, as I've done many a night, and I will be ready to be hanged decently in the morning, which never happened to me before in all my life—

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad——

Pshaw! This is not the tune it goes to.' Here he fell fast asleep, and sooner or later all his companions in misfortune followed his example.

The benches intended for the repose of the soldiers of the guard afforded the prisoners convenience enough to lie down, though their slumbers, it may be believed, were neither sound nor undisturbed. But when daylight was but a little while broken, the explosion of gunpowder which took place, and the subsequent fall of the turret to which the mine was applied, would have awakened the Seven Sleepers, or Morpheus himself. The smoke, penetrating through the windows, left them at no loss for the cause of the din.

'There went my gunpowder,' said Rochecliffe, 'which has, I trust, blown up as many rebel villains as it might have been the means of destroying otherwise in a fair field. It must have caught fire by chance.'

'By chance?—No,' said Sir Henry; 'depend on it, my bold Albert has fired the train, and that in yonder blast Cromwell was flying towards the heaven whose battlements he will never reach—Ah, my brave boy! and perhaps thou art thyself sacrificed, like a youthful Samson among the rebellious Philistines.—But I will not be long behind thee, Albert.'

Everard hastened to the door, hoping to obtain from the guard, to whom his name and rank might be known, some explanation of the noise, which seemed to announce some dreadful catastrophe.

But Nehemiah Holdenough, whose rest had been broken by the trumpet which gave signal for the explosion, appeared in the very acme of horror—'It is the trumpet of the archangel!' he cried,—'it is the crushing of this world of elements—it is the summons to the Judgment-seat! The dead are obeying the call—they are with us—they are amongst us—they arise in their bodily frames—they come to summon us!'

As he spoke his eyes were riveted upon Doctor Rochecliffe, who stood directly opposite to him. In rising hastily, the cap which he commonly wore, according to a custom then usual both among clergymen and gownmen of a civil profession, had escaped from his head, and carried with it the large silk patch which he probably wore for the purpose of disguise; for the cheek which was disclosed was unscarred, and the eye as good as that which was usually uncovered.

Colonel Everard, returning from the door, endeavoured in vain to make Master Holdenough comprehend what he learned from the guard without, that the explosion had involved only the death of one of Cromwell's soldiers. The Presbyterian divine continued to stare wildly at him of the Episcopal persuasion.

But Doctor Rochecliffe heard and understood the news brought by Colonel Everard, and, relieved from the instant anxiety which had kept him stationary, he advanced towards the retiring Calvinist, extending his hand in the most friendly manner.

'Avoid thee—avoid thee!' said Holdenough; 'the living may not join hands with the dead.'

'But I,' said Rochecliffe, 'am as much alive as you are.'

'Thou alive!—thou! Joseph Albany, whom my own eyes saw precipitated from the battlements of Clidesthrough Castle?'

'Ay,' answered the doctor, 'but you did not see me swim ashore on a marsh covered with sedges—*fugit ad salices*—after a manner which I will explain to you another time.'

Holdenough touched his hand with doubt and uncertainty. 'Thou art indeed warm and alive,' he said; 'and yet, after so many blows, and a fall so tremendous—thou canst not be *my* Joseph Albany.'

'I am Joseph Albany Rochecliffe,' said the doctor, 'become so in virtue of my mother's little estate, which fines and confiscations have made an end of.'

'And is it so indeed?' said Holdenough, 'and have I recovered mine old chum?'

'Even so,' replied Rochecliffe, 'by the same token I appeared to you in the Mirror Chamber—Thou wert so bold, Nehemiah, that our whole scheme would have been shipwrecked, had I not appeared to thee in the shape of a departed friend. Yet, believe me, it went against my heart to do it.'

'Ah, fie on thee, fie on thee!' said Holdenough, throwing himself into his arms, and clasping him to his bosom, 'thou wert ever a naughty wag. How couldst thou play me such a trick?—Ah, Albany, dost thou remember Doctor Purefoy and Caius College?'

'Marry do I,' said the doctor, thrusting his arm through the Presbyterian divine's, and guiding him to a seat apart from the other prisoners, who witnessed this scene with much surprise. 'Remember Caius College?' said Rochecliffe; 'ay, and the good ale we drank, and our parties to Mother Huffcap's.'

'Vanity of vanities,' said Holdenough, smiling kindly at the same time, and still holding his recovered friend's arm enclosed and hand-locked in his.

'But the breaking the Principal's orchard, so

* [A braggart in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*.]

cleanly done,' said the doctor; 'it was the first plot I ever framed, and much work I had to prevail on thee to go into it.'

'O, name not that iniquity,' said Nehemiah, 'since I may well say, as the pious Master Baxter,* that these boyish offences have had their punishment in later years, inasmuch as that inordinate appetite for fruit hath produced stomachic affections under which I yet labour.'

'True, true, dear Nehemiah,' said Rochecliffe, 'but care not for them—a dram of brandy will correct it all. Master Baxter was'—he was about to say 'an ass,' but checked himself, and only filled up the sentence with 'a good man, I daresay, but over scrupulous.'

So they sat down together the best of friends, and for half-an-hour talked with mutual delight over old college stories. By degrees they got on the politics of the day; and though then they unclasped their hands, and there occurred between them such expressions as, 'Nay, my dear brother,' and, 'There I must needs differ,' and, 'On this point I crave leave to think;' yet, a hue and cry against the Independents and other sectarists being started, they followed like brethren in full hollo, and it was hard to guess which was most forward. Unhappily, in the course of this amicable intercourse, something was mentioned about the bishopric of Titus, which at once involved them in the doctrinal question of church government. Then, alas! the floodgates were opened, and they showered on each other Greek and Hebrew texts, while their eyes kindled, their cheeks glowed, their hands became clenched, and they looked more like fierce polemics about to rend each other's eyes out, than Christian divines.

Roger Wildrake, by making himself an auditor of the debate, contrived to augment its violence. He took, of course, a most decided part in a question, the merits of which were totally unknown to him. Somewhat overawed by Holdenough's ready oratory and learning, the Cavalier watched with a face of anxiety the countenance of Doctor Rochecliffe; but when he saw the proud eye and steady bearing of the Episcopal champion, and heard him answer Greek with Greek, and Hebrew with Hebrew, Wildrake backed his arguments, as he closed them, with a stout rap upon the bench, and an exulting laugh in the face of the antagonist. It was with some difficulty that Sir Henry and Colonel Everard, having at length and reluctantly interfered, prevailed on the two alienated friends to adjourn their dispute, removing at the same time to a distance, and regarding each other with looks in which old friendship appeared to have totally given way to mutual animosity.

But while they sat lowering on each other, and longing to renew a contest in which each claimed the victory, Pearson entered the prison, and in a low and troubled voice desired the persons whom it contained to prepare for instant death.

Sir Henry Lee received the doom with the stern composure which he had hitherto displayed. Colonel Everard attempted the interposition of a strong and resentful appeal to the Parliament, against the judgment of the court-martial and the General. But Pearson declined to receive or transmit any such remonstrance, and, with a dejected look and mien of melancholy presage, renewed his exhortation to them to prepare for the hour of noon, and withdrew from the prison.

The operation of this intelligence on the two clerical disputants was more remarkable. They gazed for a moment on each other with eyes in which repentant kindness and a feeling of generous shame quenched every lingering feeling of resentment, and, joining in the mutual exclamation—'My brother—my brother, I have sinned, I have sinned in offending thee!' they rushed into each other's arms, shed tears as they demanded each other's forgiveness, and, like two warriors, who sacrifice a personal quarrel to discharge their duty against the common enemy, they recalled nobler ideas of their sacred character, and, assuming the part which best became them on an occasion so melancholy, began to exhort those around them to meet the doom that had been announced, with the firmness and dignity which Christianity alone can give.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Most gracious prince, good Cannyng cried,
Leave vengeance to our God,
And lay the iron rule aside,
Be thine the olive rod.
BALLAD OF SIR CHARLES BAWDWIN.

THE hour appointed for execution had been long past, and it was about five in the evening when the Protector summoned Pearson to his presence. He went with fear and reluctance, uncertain how he might be received. After remaining about a quarter of an hour, the aide-de-camp returned to Victor Lee's parlour, where he found the old soldier, Zerubbabel Robins, in attendance for his return.

'How is Oliver?' said the old man anxiously.

'Why, well,' answered Pearson, 'and hath asked no questions of the execution, but many concerning the reports we have been able to make regarding the flight of the young Man, and is much moved at thinking he must now be beyond pursuit. Also I gave him certain papers belonging to the malignant Doctor Rochecliffe.'

'Then will I venture upon him,' said the adjutator; 'so give me a napkin that I may look like a sewer, and fetch up the food which I directed should be in readiness.'

Two troopers attended accordingly with a ration of beef, such as was distributed to the private soldiers, and dressed after their fashion—a pewter pot of ale, a trencher with salt, black pepper, and a loaf of ammunition bread. 'Come with me,' he said to Pearson, 'and fear not—Noll loves an innocent jest.' He boldly entered the General's sleeping apartment, and said aloud, 'Arise, thou that art called to be a judge in Israel—let there be no more folding of the hands to sleep. Lo I come as a sign to thee; wherefore arise, eat drink, and let thy heart be glad within

*[Richard Baxter, a celebrated Presbyterian divine, author of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest.*]

thee; for thou shalt eat with joy the food of him that laboureth in the trenches, seeing that since thou wert commander over the host, the poor sentinel hath had such provisions as I have now placed for thine own refreshment.'

'Truly, brother Zerubbabel,' said Cromwell, accustomed to such starts of enthusiasm among his followers, 'we would wish that it were so; neither is it our desire to sleep soft, nor feed more highly than the meanest that ranks under our banners. Verily, thou hast chosen well for my refreshment, and the smell of the food is savoury in my nostrils.'

He arose from the bed, on which he had lain down half-dressed, and, wrapping his cloak around him, sat down by the bedside, and partook heartily of the plain food which was prepared for him. While he was eating, Cromwell commanded Pearson to finish his report—'You need not desist for the presence of a worthy soldier, whose spirit is as my spirit.'

'Nay, but,' interrupted Robins, 'you are to know that Gilbert Pearson hath not fully executed thy commands touching a part of those malignants, all of whom should have died at noon.'

'What execution—what malignants?' said Cromwell, laying down his knife and fork.

'Those in the prison here at Woodstock,' answered Zerubbabel, 'whom your Excellency commanded should be executed at noon, as taken in the fact of rebellion against the Commonwealth.'

'Wretch!' said Cromwell, starting up and addressing Pearson, 'thou hast not touched Mark Everard, in whom there was no guilt, for he was deceived by him who passed between us—neither hast thou put forth thy hand on the pragmatic Presbyterian minister, to have all those of their classes cry sacrilege, and alienate them from us for ever?'

'If your Excellency wish them to live, they live—their life and death are in the power of a word,' said Pearson.

'Enfranchise them; I must gain the Presbyterian interest over to us if I can.'

'Rochecliffe, the arch-plotter,' said Pearson, 'I thought to have executed, but'——

'Barbarous man,' said Cromwell, 'alike ungrateful and impolitic—wouldst thou have destroyed our decoy-duck? This Doctor is but like a well, a shallow one, indeed, but something deeper than the springs which discharge their secret tribute into his keeping; then come I with a pump, and suck it all up to the open air. Enlarge him, and let him have money if he wants it. I know his haunts; he can go nowhere but our eye will be upon him—But you look at each other darkly, as if you had more to say than you durst. I trust you have not done to death Sir Henry Lee?'

'No. Yet the man,' replied Pearson, 'is a confirmed malignant, and'——

'Ay, but he is also a noble relic of the ancient English gentleman,' said the General. 'I would I knew how to win the favour of that race. But we, Pearson, whose royal robes are the armour which we wear on our bodies, and whose leading-staves are our sceptres, are too newly set up to draw the respect of the proud malignants, who cannot brook to submit to less than royal lineage. Yet what can they see in the longest kingly line in Europe, save that it runs back to a successful soldier? I grudge that one man should be honoured and followed because he is the descendant of a victorious commander, while less honour and allegiance is paid to another, who, in personal qualities and in success, might emulate the founder of his rival's dynasty. Well, Sir Henry Lee lives, and shall live for me. His son, indeed, hath deserved the death which he has doubtless sustained.'

'My lord,' stammered Pearson, 'since your Excellency has found I am right in suspending your order in so many instances, I trust you will not blame me in this also—I thought it best to await more special orders.'

'Thou art in a mighty merciful humour this morning, Pearson,' said Cromwell, not entirely satisfied.

'If your Excellency please, the halter is ready, and so is the provost-marshal.'

'Nay, if such a bloody fellow as thou hast spared him, it would ill become me to destroy him,' said the General. 'But then, here is among Rochecliffe's papers the engagement of twenty desperadoes to take us off—some example ought to be made.'

'My lord,' said Zerubbabel, 'consider now how often this young man, Albert Lee, hath been near you, nay, probably, quite close to your Excellency, in these dark passages, which he knew, and we did not. Had he been of an assassin's nature, it would have cost him but a pistol-shot, and the light of Israel was extinguished. Nay, in the unavoidable confusion which must have ensued, the sentinels quitting their posts, he might have had a fair chance of escape.'

'Enough, Zerubbabel; he lives,' said the General. 'He shall remain in custody for some time, however, and be then banished from England. The other two are safe, of course; for you would not dream of considering such paltry fellows as fit victims for my revenge.'

'One fellow, the under-keeper, called Joliffe, deserves death, however,' said Pearson, 'since he has frankly admitted that he slew honest Joseph Tomkins.'

'He deserves a reward for saving us a labour,' said Cromwell; 'that Tomkins was a most double-hearted villain. I have found evidence among these papers here, that if we had lost the fight at Worcester, we should have had reason to regret that we had ever trusted Master Tomkins—it was only our success which anticipated his treachery—write us down debtor, not creditor, to Joceline, an you call him so, and to his quarter-staff.'

'There remains the sacrilegious and graceless Cavalier who attempted your Excellency's life last night,' said Pearson.

'Nay,' said the General, 'that were stooping too low for revenge. His sword had no more power than had he thrusted with a tobacco-pipe. Eagles stoop not to mallards, or wild-drakes either.'

'Yet, sir,' said Pearson, 'the fellow should be punished as a libeller. The quantity of foul and pestilential abuse which we found in his pockets

makes me loath he should go altogether free—Please to look at them, sir.'

'A most vile hand,' said Oliver, as he looked at a sheet or two of our friend Wildrake's poetical miscellanies—'The very handwriting seems to be drunk, and the very poetry not sober—What have we here?

When I was a young lad,
My fortune was bad—
If e'er I do well, 'tis a wonder.—

Why, what trash is this?—and then again—

Now a plague on the poll
Of old politic Noll!
We will drink till we bring
In triumph back the King.

In truth, if it could be done that way, this poet would be a stout champion. Give the poor knave five pieces, Pearson, and bid him go sell his ballads. If he come within twenty miles of our person, though, we will have him flogged till the blood runs down to his heels.'

'There remains only one sentenced person,' said Pearson, 'a noble wolf-hound, finer than any your Excellency saw in Ireland. He belongs to the old knight, Sir Henry Lee. Should your Excellency not desire to keep the fine creature yourself, might I presume to beg that I might have leave?'

'No, Pearson,' said Cromwell; 'the old man, so faithful himself, shall not be deprived of his faithful dog.—I would *I* had any creature, were it but a dog, that followed me because it loved me, not for what it could make of me.'

'Your Excellency is unjust to your faithful soldiers,' said Zerubbabel bluntly, 'who follow you like dogs, fight for you like dogs, and have the grave of a dog on the spot where they happen to fall.

'How now, old grumbler,' said the General, 'what means this change of note?'

'Corporal Humgudgeon's remains are left to moulder under the ruins of yonder tower, and Tomkins is thrust into a hole in a thicket like a beast.'

'True, true,' said Cromwell; 'they shall be removed to the churchyard, and every soldier shall attend with cockades of sea-green and blue ribbon—Every one of the non-commissioned officers and adjutators shall have a mourning-scarf; we ourselves will lead the procession, and there shall be a proper dole of wine, burnt brandy, and rosemary. See that it is done, Pearson. After the funeral Woodstock shall be dismantled and destroyed, that its recesses may not again afford shelter to rebels and malignants.'

The commands of the General were punctually obeyed, and when the other prisoners were dismissed, Albert Lee remained for some time in custody. He went abroad after his liberation, entered into King Charles's Guards, where he was promoted by that monarch. But his fate, as we shall see hereafter, only allowed him a short though bright career.

We return to the liberation of the other prisoners from Woodstock. The two divines, completely reconciled to each other, retreated arm in arm to the parsonage-house, formerly the residence of Doctor Rochecliffe, but which he now visited as the guest of his successor, Nehemiah Holdenough. The Presbyterian had no sooner installed his friend under his roof, than he urged upon him an offer to partake it, and the income annexed to it, as his own. Doctor Rochecliffe was much affected, but wisely rejected the generous offer, considering the difference of their tenets on church government, which each entertained as religiously as his creed. Another debate, though a light one, on the subject of the office of bishops in the primitive Church, confirmed him in his resolution. They parted the next day, and their friendship remained undisturbed by controversy till Master Holdenough's death, in 1658; a harmony which might be in some degree owing to their never meeting again after their imprisonment. Doctor Rochecliffe was restored to his living after the Restoration, and ascended from thence to high clerical preferment.

The inferior personages of the grand jail-delivery at Woodstock Lodge easily found themselves temporary accommodations in the town among old acquaintance; but no one ventured to entertain the old knight, understood to be so much under the displeasure of the ruling powers; and even the innkeeper of the George, who had been one of his tenants, scarce dared to admit him to the common privileges of a traveller, who has food and lodging for his money. Everard attended him unrequested, unpermitted, but also unforbidden. The heart of the old man had been turned once more towards him when he learned how he had behaved at the memorable rencontre at the King's Oak, and saw that he was an object of the enmity, rather than the favour, of Cromwell. But there was another secret feeling which tended to reconcile him to his nephew—the consciousness that Everard shared with him the deep anxiety which he experienced on account of his daughter, who had not yet returned from her doubtful and perilous expedition. He felt that he himself would perhaps be unable to discover where Alice had taken refuge during the late events, or to obtain her deliverance if she was taken into custody. He wished Everard to offer him his service in making a search for her, but shame prevented his preferring the request; and Everard, who could not suspect the altered state of his uncle's mind, was afraid to make the proposal of assistance, or even to name the name of Alice.

The sun had already set—they sat looking each other in the face in silence, when the trampling of horses was heard—there was knocking at the door—there was a light step on the stair, and Alice, the subject of their anxiety, stood before them. She threw herself joyfully into her father's arms, who glanced his eye heedfully round the room, as he said in a whisper, 'Is all safe?'

'Safe and out of danger, as I trust,' replied Alice—'I have a token for you.'

Her eye then rested on Everard—she blushed, was embarrassed and silent.

'You need not fear your Presbyterian cousin,' said the knight, with a good-humoured smile; 'he has himself proved a confessor at least for loyalty, and ran the risk of being a martyr.'

She pulled from her bosom the royal rescript, written on a small and soiled piece of paper, and

tied round with a worsted thread instead of a seal. Such as it was, Sir Henry, ere he opened it, pressed the little packet with Oriental veneration to his lips, to his heart, to his forehead; and it was not before a tear had dropped on it that he found courage to open and read the billet. It was in these words:—

'Loyal our much Esteemed Friend, and our Trusty Subject,—It having become known to us that a purpose of marriage has been entertained betwixt Mistress Alice Lee, your only daughter, and Markham Everard, Esquire, of Eversly Chase, her kinsman, and by affiancy your nephew: And being assured that this match would be highly agreeable to you, had it not been for certain respects to our service, which induced you to refuse your consent thereto: We do therefore acquaint you, that, far from our affairs suffering by such an alliance, we do exhort, and, so far as we may, require you to consent to the same, as you would wish to do us good pleasure, and greatly to advance our affairs: Leaving to you, nevertheless, as becometh a Christian king, the full exercise of your own discretion concerning other obstacles to such an alliance, which may exist, independent of those connected with our service.—Witness our hand, together with our thankful recollections of your good services to our late Royal Father as well as ourselves, C. R.'

Long and steadily did Sir Henry gaze on the letter, so that it might almost seem as if he were getting it by heart. He then placed it carefully in his pocket-book, and asked Alice the account of her adventures of the preceding night. They were briefly told. Their midnight walk through the Chase had been speedily and safely accomplished. Nor had the king once made the slightest relapse into the naughty Louis Kerneguy. When she had seen Charles and his attendant set off, she had taken some repose in the cottage where they parted. With the morning came news that Woodstock was occupied by soldiers, so that return thither might have led to danger, suspicion, and inquiry. Alice, therefore, did not attempt it, but went to a house in the neighbourhood, inhabited by a lady of established loyalty, whose husband had been major of Sir Henry Lee's regiment, and had fallen at the battle of Naseby. Mistress Aylmer was a sensible woman, and indeed the necessities of the singular times had sharpened every one's faculties for stratagem and intrigue. She sent a faithful servant to scout about the mansion at Woodstock, who no sooner saw the prisoners dismissed and in safety, and ascertained the knight's destination for the evening, than he carried the news to his mistress, and by her orders attended Alice on horseback to join her father.

There was seldom, perhaps, an evening meal made in such absolute silence as by this embarrassed party, each occupied with their own thoughts, and at a loss how to fathom those of the others. At length the hour came when Alice felt herself at liberty to retire to repose after a day so fatiguing. Everard handed her to the door of her apartment, and was then himself about to take leave, when, to his surprise, his uncle asked him to return, pointed to a chair, and, giving him the king's letter to read, fixed his looks on him steadily during the perusal; determined that if he could discover aught short of the utmost delight in the reading, the commands of the king himself should be disobeyed, rather than Alice should be sacrificed to one who received not her hand as the greatest blessing earth had to bestow. But the features of Everard indicated joyful hope, even beyond what the father could have anticipated, yet mingled with surprise; and when he raised his eye to the knight's with timidity and doubt, a smile was on Sir Henry's countenance as he broke silence. 'The King,' he said, 'had he no other subject in England, should dispose at will of those of the House of Lee. But methinks the family of Everard have not been so devoted of late to the crown as to comply with a mandate, inviting its heir to marry the daughter of a beggar.'

'The daughter of Sir Henry Lee,' said Everard, kneeling to his uncle, and perforce kissing his hand, 'would grace the house of a duke.'

'The girl is well enough,' said the knight proudly; 'for myself, my poverty shall neither shame nor encroach on my friends. Some few pieces I have by Doctor Rochecliffe's kindness, and Joceline and I will strike out something.'

'Nay, my dear uncle, you are richer than you think for,' said Everard. 'That part of your estate which my father redeemed, for payment of a moderate composition, is still your own, and held by trustees in your name, myself being one of them. You are only our debtor for an advance of moneys, for which, if it will content you, we will count with you like usurers. My father is incapable of profiting by making a bargain on his own account for the estate of a distressed friend; and all this you would have learned long since, but that you would not—I mean, time did not serve for explanation—I mean'——

'You mean I was too hot to hear reason, Mark, and I believe it is very true. But I think we understand each other *now*. To-morrow I go with my family to Kingston, where is an old house I may still call mine. Come thither at thy leisure, Mark,—or thy best speed, as thou wilt,—but come with thy father's consent.'

'With my father in person,' said Everard, 'if you will permit.'

'Be that,' answered the knight, 'as he and you will—I think Joceline will scarce shut the door in thy face, or Bevis growl as he did after poor Louis Kerneguy.—Nay, no more raptures, but good-night, Mark, good-night; and if thou art not tired with the fatigue of yesterday—why, if you appear here at seven in the morning, I think we must bear with your company on the Kingston road.'

Once more Everard pressed the knight's hand, caressed Bevis, who received his kindness graciously, and went home to dreams of happiness, which were realized, as far as this motley world permits, within a few months afterwards.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

——— My life was of a piece,
Spent in your service—dying at your feet.
DON SEBASTIAN.

YEARS rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed ; and yet time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

After the marriage of Alice and Markham Everard, the old knight resided near them, in an ancient manor-house, belonging to the redeemed portion of his estate, where Joceline and Phœbe, now man and wife, with one or two domestics, regulated the affairs of his household. When he tired of Shakespeare and solitude, he was ever a welcome guest at his son-in-law's, where he went the more frequently that Markham had given up all concern in public affairs, disapproving of the forcible dismissal of the Parliament, and submitting to Cromwell's subsequent domination rather as that which was the lesser evil, than as to a government which he regarded as legal. Cromwell seemed ever willing to show himself his friend ; but Everard, resenting highly the proposal to deliver up the king, which he considered as an insult to his honour, never answered such advances, and became, on the contrary, of the opinion, which was now generally prevalent in the nation, that a settled government could not be obtained without the recall of the banished family. There is no doubt that the personal kindness which he had received from Charles rendered him the more readily disposed to such a measure. He was peremptory, however, in declining all engagements during Oliver's life, whose power he considered as too firmly fixed to be shaken by any plots which could be formed against it.

Meantime, Wildrake continued to be Everard's protected dependent as before, though sometimes the connection tended not a little to his inconvenience. That respectable person, indeed, while he remained stationary in his patron's house, or that of the old knight, discharged many little duties in the family, and won Alice's heart by his attention to the children, teaching the boys, of whom they had three, to ride, fence, toss the pike, and many similar exercises ; and, above all, filling up a great blank in her father's existence, with whom he played at chess and backgammon, or read Shakespeare, or was clerk to prayers when any sequestrated divine ventured to read the service of the Church. Or he found game for him while the old gentleman continued to go a-sporting ; and, especially, he talked over the storming of Brentford, and the battles of Edgehill, Banbury, Roundway-down, and others —themes which the aged Cavalier delighted in, but which he could not so well enter upon with Colonel Everard, who had gained his laurels in the Parliament service.

The assistance which he received from Wildrake's society became more necessary after Sir Henry was deprived of his gallant and only son, who was slain in the fatal battle of Dunkirk, where, unhappily, English colours were displayed on both the contending sides, the French being then allied with Oliver, who sent to their aid a body of auxiliaries, and the troops of the banished king fighting in behalf of the Spaniards. Sir Henry received the melancholy news like an old man, that is, with more external composure than could have been anticipated. He dwelt for weeks and months on the lines forwarded by the indefatigable Doctor Rochecliffe, superscribed in small letters, C. R., and subscribed Louis Kerneguy, in which the writer conjured him to endure this inestimable loss with the greater firmness, that he had still left one son (intimating himself) who would always regard him as a father.

But in spite of this balsam, sorrow, acting imperceptibly, and sucking the blood like a vampire, seemed gradually drying up the springs of life ; and, without any formed illness or outward complaint, the old man's strength and vigour gradually abated, and the ministry of Wildrake proved daily more indispensable.

It was not, however, always to be had. The Cavalier was one of those happy persons, whom a strong constitution, an unreflecting mind, and exuberant spirits, enabled to play through their whole lives the part of a schoolboy—happy for the moment, and careless of consequences.

Once or twice every year, when he had collected a few pieces, the Cavaliero Wildrake made a start to London, where, as he described it, he went on the ramble, drank as much wine as he could come by, and led a *skeldering* life, to use his own phrase, among roystering Cavaliers like himself, till by some rash speech or wild action he got into the Marshalsea, the Fleet, or some other prison, from which he was to be delivered at the expense of interest, money, and sometimes a little reputation.

At length Cromwell died, his son resigned the government, and the various changes which followed induced Everard, as well as many others, to adopt more active measures in the king's behalf. Everard even remitted considerable sums for his service, but with the utmost caution, and corresponding with no intermediate agent, but with the Chancellor himself, to whom he communicated much useful information upon public affairs. With all his prudence, he was very nearly engaged in the ineffectual rising of Booth and Middleton in the west, and with great difficulty escaped from the fatal consequences of that ill-timed attempt. After this, although the estate of the kingdom was trebly unsettled, yet no card seemed to turn up favourable to the royal cause, until the movement of General Monk from Scotland. Even then, it was when at the point of complete success that the fortunes of Charles seemed at a lower ebb than ever, especially when intelligence had arrived at the little court which he then kept in Brussels, that Monk, on arriving in London, had put himself under the orders of the Parliament.

It was at this time, and in the evening, while the king, Buckingham, Wilmot, and some other gallants of his wandering court, were engaged in a convivial party, that the Chancellor (Clarendon)

suddenly craved audience, and, entering with less ceremony than he would have done at another time, announced extraordinary news. For the messenger, he said, he could say nothing, saving that he appeared to have drunk much, and slept little; but that he had brought a sure token of credence from a man for whose faith he would venture his life. The king demanded to see the messenger himself.

A man entered, with something the manners of a gentleman, and more those of a rakehelly debauchee—his eyes swelled and inflamed—his gait disordered and stumbling, partly through lack of sleep, partly through the means he had taken to support his fatigue. He staggered without ceremony to the head of the table, seized the king's hand, which he mumbled like a piece of gingerbread; while Charles, who began to recollect him from his mode of salutation, was not very much pleased that their meeting should have taken place before so many witnesses.

'I bring good news,' said the uncouth messenger, 'glorious news!—the King shall enjoy his own again!—My feet are beautiful on the mountains. Gad, I have lived with Presbyterians till I have caught their language—but we are all one man's children now—all your Majesty's poor babes. The Rump is all ruined in London—Bonfires flaming, music playing, rumps roasting, healths drinking, London in a blaze of light from the Strand to Rotherhithe—tankards clattering'——

'We can guess at that,' said the Duke of Buckingham.

'My old friend Mark Everard sent me off with the news; I'm a villain if I've slept since. Your Majesty recollects me, I am sure. Your Majesty remembers sa—sa—at the King's Oak at Woodstock?—

> O, we'll dance, and sing, and play,
> For 'twill be a joyous day
> When the King shall enjoy his own again.'

'Master Wildrake, I remember you well,' said the king. 'I trust the good news is certain?'

'Certain, your Majesty! did I not hear the bells?—did I not see the bonfires?—did I not drink your Majesty's health so often, that my legs would scarce carry me to the wharf? It is as certain as that I am poor Roger Wildrake, of Squattlesea-mere, Lincoln.'

The Duke of Buckingham here whispered to the king, 'I have always suspected your Majesty kept odd company during the escape from Worcester, but this seems a rare sample.'

'Why, pretty much like yourself, and other company I have kept here so many years—as stout a heart, as empty a head,' said Charles—'as much lace, though somewhat tarnished, as much brass on the brow, and nearly as much copper in the pocket.'

'I would your Majesty would entrust this messenger of good news with me, to get the truth out of him,' said Buckingham.

'Thank your Grace,' replied the king; 'but he has a will as well as yourself, and such seldom agree. My Lord Chancellor hath wisdom, and to that we must trust ourselves.—Master Wildrake, you will go with my Lord Chancellor, who will bring us a report of your tidings; meantime, I assure you that you shall be no loser for being the first messenger of good news.' So saying, he gave a signal to the Chancellor to take away Wildrake, whom he judged, in his present humour, to be not unlikely to communicate some former passages at Woodstock which might rather entertain than edify the wits of his court.

Corroboration of the joyful intelligence soon arrived, and Wildrake was presented with a handsome gratuity and small pension, which, by the king's special desire, had no duty whatever attached to it.

Shortly afterwards, all England was engaged in chorusing his favourite ditty—

> O, the twenty-ninth of May,
> It was a glorious day,
> When the King did enjoy his own again.

On that memorable day the king prepared to make his progress from Rochester to London, with a reception on the part of his subjects so unanimously cordial, as made him say gaily, it must have been his own fault to stay so long away from a country where his arrival gave so much joy. On horseback, betwixt his brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the restored monarch trod slowly over roads strewn with flowers — by conduits running wine, under triumphal arches, and through streets hung with tapestry. There were citizens in various bands, some arrayed in coats of black velvet, with gold chains; some in military suits of cloth of gold, or cloth of silver, followed by all those craftsmen who, having hooted the father from Whitehall, had now come to shout the son into possession of his ancestral palace. On his progress through Blackheath, he passed that army which, so long formidable to England herself, as well as to Europe, had been the means of restoring the monarchy which their own hands had destroyed. As the king passed the last files of this formidable host, he came to an open part of the heath, where many persons of quality, with others of inferior rank, had stationed themselves to gratulate him as he passed towards the capital.

There was one group, however, which attracted peculiar attention from those around, on account of the respect shown to the party by the soldiers who kept the ground, and who, whether Cavaliers or Roundheads, seemed to contest emulously which should contribute most to their accommodation; for both the elder and younger gentlemen of the party had been distinguished in the Civil War.

It was a family group, of which the principal figure was an old man seated in a chair, having a complacent smile on his face, and a tear swelling to his eye, as he saw the banners wave on in interminable succession, and heard the multitude shouting the long-silenced acclamation, 'God save King Charles!' His cheek was ashy pale, and his long beard bleached like the thistle-down; his blue eye was cloudless, yet it was obvious that its vision was failing. His motions were feeble, and he spoke little, except when he answered the prattle of his grand-

children, or asked a question of his daughter, who sat beside him, matured in matronly beauty, or of Colonel Everard, who stood behind. There, too, the stout yeoman, Joceline Joliffe, still in his sylvan dress, leaned, like a second Benaiah, on the quarterstaff that had done the king good service in its day, and his wife, a buxom matron as she had been a pretty maiden, laughed at her own consequence; and ever and anon joined her shrill notes to the stentorian halloo which her husband added to the general exclamation.

Three fine boys and two pretty girls prattled around their grandfather, who made them such answers as suited their age, and repeatedly passed his withered hand over the fair locks of the little darlings, while Alice, assisted by Wildrake (blazing in a splendid dress, and his eyes washed with only a single cup of canary), took off the children's attention from time to time, lest they should weary their grandfather. We must not omit one other remarkable figure in the group—a gigantic dog, which bore the signs of being at the extremity of canine life, being perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old. But though exhibiting the ruin only of his former appearance, his eyes dim, his joints stiff, his head slouched down, and his gallant carriage and graceful motions exchanged for a stiff, rheumatic, hobbling gait, the noble hound had lost none of his instinctive fondness for his master. To lie by Sir Henry's feet in the summer or by the fire in winter, to raise his head to look on him, to lick his withered hand or his shrivelled cheek from time to time, seemed now all that Bevis lived for.

Three or four livery servants attended to protect this group from the thronging multitude; but it needed not. The high respectability and unpretending simplicity of their appearance gave them, even in the eyes of the coarsest of the people, an air of patriarchal dignity, which commanded general regard; and they sat upon the bank which they had chosen for their station by the wayside, as undisturbed as if they had been in their own park.

And now the distant clarions announced the royal presence. Onward came pursuivant and trumpet—onward came plumes and cloth of gold, and waving standards displayed, and swords gleaming to the sun; and at length, heading a group of the noblest in England, and supported by his royal brothers on either side, onward came King Charles. He had already halted more than once, in kindness perhaps as well as policy, to exchange a word with persons whom he recognised among the spectators, and the shouts of the bystanders applauded a courtesy which seemed so well timed. But when he had gazed an instant on the party we have described, it was impossible, if even Alice had been too much changed to be recognised, not instantly to know Bevis and his venerable master. The monarch sprung from his horse, and walked instantly up to the old knight, amid thundering acclamations which rose from the multitudes around, when they saw Charles with his own hand oppose the feeble attempts of the old man to rise to do him homage. Gently replacing him on his seat—'Bless,' he said, 'father, bless your son, who has returned in safety, as you blessed him when he departed in danger.'

'May God bless—and preserve'—muttered the old man, overcome by his feelings; and the king, to give him a few moments' repose, turned to Alice—

'And you,' he said, 'my fair guide, how have you been employed since our perilous night-walk? But I need not ask,' glancing round—'in the service of King and kingdom, bringing up subjects as loyal as their ancestors.—A fair lineage, by my faith, and a beautiful sight to the eye of an English king!—Colonel Everard, we shall see you, I trust, at Whitehall?' Here he nodded to Wildrake. 'And thou, Joceline, thou canst hold thy quarterstaff with one hand, sure?—Thrust forward the other palm.'

Looking down in sheer bashfulness, Joceline, like a bull about to push, extended to the king, over his lady's shoulder, a hand as broad and hard as a wooden trencher, which the king filled with gold coins. 'Buy a headgear for my friend Phœbe with some of these,' said Charles; 'she too has been doing her duty to Old England.'

The king then turned once more to the knight, who seemed making an effort to speak. He took his aged hand in both his own, and stooped his head towards him to catch his accents, while the old man, detaining him with the other hand, said something faltering, of which Charles could only catch the quotation—

> Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,
> And welcome home again discarded faith.

Extricating himself, therefore, as gently as possible, from a scene which began to grow painfully embarrassing, the good-natured king said, speaking with unusual distinctness to insure the old man's comprehending him, 'This is something too public a place for all we have to say. But if you come not soon to see King Charles at Whitehall, he will send down Louis Kerneguy to visit you, that you may see how rational that mischievous lad is become since his travels.'

So saying, he once more pressed affectionately the old man's hand, bowed to Alice and all around, and withdrew; Sir Henry Lee listening with a smile, which showed he comprehended the gracious tendency of what had been said. The old man leaned back on his seat, and muttered the *Nunc dimittis*.

'Excuse me for having made you wait, my lords,' said the king, as he mounted his horse; 'Indeed, had it not been for these good folks, you might have waited for me long enough to little purpose.—Move on, sirs.'

The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent while the king stopped; while the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice's anxiety about her father's health was for a moment suspended, while her eye followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath. When she looked again at Sir Henry, she was

startled to see that his cheek, which had gained some colour during his conversation with the king, had relapsed into earthly paleness; that his eyes were closed, and opened not again; and that his features expressed, amid their quietude, a rigidity which is not that of sleep. They ran to his assistance, but it was too late. The light that burned so low in the socket had leaped up and expired in one exhilarating flash.

The rest must be conceived. I have only to add that his faithful dog did not survive him many days; and that the image of Bevis lies carved at his master's feet, on the tomb which was erected to the memory of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley.*

* It may interest some readers to know that Bevis, the gallant hound, one of the handsomest and active of the ancient Highland deer-hounds, had his prototype in a dog called Maida, the gift of the late Chief of Glengarry to the Author. A beautiful sketch of him was made by Edwin Landseer, and afterwards engraved. I cannot suppress the avowal of some personal vanity, when I mention that a friend, going through Munich, picked up a common snuff-box, such as are sold for one franc, on which was displayed the form of this veteran favourite, simply marked as Der lieblung Hund von Walter Scott. Mr. Landseer's painting is at Blair-Adam, the property of my venerable friend the Right Honourable Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.

BEVIS.

NOTES TO WOODSTOCK.

NOTE A, p. 10.—BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

See 'Vindication of the Book of Common Prayer, against the contumelious Slanders of the Fanatic Party terming it Porridge.'

The author of this singular and rare tract indulges in the allegorical style, till he fairly hunts down the allegory.

'But as for what you call porridge, who hatched the name I know not, neither is it worth the enquiring after, for I hold porridge good food. It is better to a sick man than meat, for a sick man will sooner eat pottage than meat. Pottage will digest with him when meat will not; pottage will nourish the blood, fill the veins, run into every part of a man, make him warmer; so will these prayers do, set our soul and body in a heat, warm our devotion, work fervency in us, lift up our soul to God. For there be herbs of God's own planting in our pottage as you call it—the Ten Commandments, dainty herbs to season any pottage in the world; there is the Lord's Prayer, and that is a most sweet pot-herb, cannot be denied; then there is also David's herbs, his prayers and psalms, helps to make our pottage relish well; the psalm of the blessed Virgin, a good pot-herb. Though they be, as some term them, *cock-crowed* pottage, yet they are as sweet, as good, as dainty, and as fresh as they were at the first. The sun hath not made them sour with its heat, neither hath the cold water taken away their vigour and strength. Compare them with the Scriptures, and see if they be not as well seasoned and crumbed. If you find anything in them that is either too salt, too fresh, or too bitter, that herb shall be taken out and better put in, if it can be got, or none. And as in kitchen pottage there are many good herbs, so there is likewise in this church pottage, as you call it. For first, there is in kitchen pottage good water to make them so; on the contrary, in the other pottage there is the water of life. 2. There is salt to season them; so in the other is a prayer of grace to season their hearts. 3. There is oatmeal to nourish the body, in the other is the bread of life. 4. There is thyme in them to relish them, and it is very wholesome—in the other is the wholesome exhortation not to harden our heart while it is called to-day. This relisheth well. 5. There is a small onion to give a taste—in the other is a good herb, called Lord have mercy on us. These, and many other holy herbs are contained in it, all boiling in the heart of man, will make as good pottage as the world can afford, especially if you use these herbs for digestion,—the herb repentance, the herb grace, the herb faith, the herb love, the herb hope, the herb good works, the herb feeling, the herb zeal, the herb fervency, the herb ardency, the herb constancy, with many more of this nature, most excellent for digestion.' *Ohe! jam satis.* In this manner the learned divine hunts his metaphor at a very cold scent, through a pamphlet of six mortal quarto pages.

NOTE B, p. 52.—TUTBURY BULL-RUNNING.

[John of Gaunt, lord of the Castle and Honour of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, granted in 1381 a charter to the 'King of the Minstrels in the Honour of Tutbury,' to hold a court there with great ceremonies every year on 16th August. In the evening, after the business of the Minstrels' Court was come to an end, a bull, given by the Priory of Tutbury, but later by the Earl of Devonshire, was turned loose, after having had 'his horns cut off, his ears cropped, his tail cut near the stump, his body smeared over with soap, and his nose blown full of beaten pepper; in short, being driven as mad as it was possible for him to be.' If he could be caught by the minstrels before sunset, and they could hold him so long as to cut off the smallest piece of hair, he was carried to the bull-ring in the High Street and there baited with dogs; and afterwards he became the property of the minstrels, to deal with as they thought fit.]

NOTE C, p. 83.—DOCTOR MICHAEL HUDSON.

Michael Hudson, the *plain-dealing* chaplain of King Charles I., resembled, in his loyalty to that unfortunate monarch, the fictitious character of Doctor Rochecliffe; and the circumstances of his death were copied in the narrative of the Presbyterian's account of the slaughter of his schoolfellow;—he was chosen by Charles I., along with John Ashburnham, as his guide and attendant, when he adopted the ill-advised resolution of surrendering his person to the Scots army.

He was taken prisoner by the Parliament, remained long in their custody, and was treated with great severity. He made his escape for about a year in 1647; was retaken, and again escaped in 1648, and, heading an insurrection of Cavaliers, seized on a strong moated house in Lincolnshire,* called Woodcroft House. He gained the place without resistance; and there are among Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa* several accounts of his death, among which we shall transcribe that of Bishop Kenneth, as the most correct and concise:—

'I have been on the spot,' saith his Lordship, 'and made all possible inquiries, and find that the relation given by Mr. Wood may be a little rectified and supplied.

'Mr. Hudson and his party did not fly to Woodford, but had quietly taken possession of it, and held it for a garrison, with a good party of horse, who made a stout defence, and frequent sallies, against a party of the Parliament at Stamford, till the colonel commanding them sent a stronger detachment, under a captain, his own kinsman, who was shot from the house, upon which the colonel himself came up to renew the attack, and to demand surrendry, and brought them to capitulate upon terms of safe quarter. But the colonel, in base revenge, commanded that they should not spare that rogue Hudson. Upon which Hudson fought his way up to the leads; and when he saw they were pushing in upon him, threw himself over the battlements (another account says, he caught hold of a spout or outstone), and hung by the hands as intending to fall into the moat beneath, till they cut off his wrists and let him drop, and then ran down to hunt him in the water, where they found him paddling with his stumps, and barbarously knocked him on the head.'—PECK'S *Desiderata Curiosa*, Book ix.

Other accounts mention he was refused the poor charity of coming to die on land, by one Egborough, servant to Mr. Spinks, the intruder into the parsonage. A man called Walker, a chandler or grocer, cut out the tongue of the unfortunate divine, and showed it as a trophy through the country. But it was remarked, with vindictive satisfaction, that Egborough was killed by the bursting of his own gun; and that Walker, obliged to abandon his trade through poverty, became a scorned mendicant.

For some time a grave was not vouchsafed to the remains of this brave and loyal divine, till one of the other party said, 'Since he is dead, let him be buried.'

* [Woodcroft Castle stands, not in Lincolnshire, but in Northamptonshire.]

Note D, p. 100.—Cannibalism imputed to the Cavaliers.

The terrors preceding the Civil Wars, which agitated the public mind, rendered the grossest and most exaggerated falsehoods current among the people. When Charles I. appointed Sir Thomas Lunsford to the situation of Lord Lieutenant of the Tower, the celebrated John Lillburn * takes to himself the credit of exciting the public hatred against this officer and Lord Digby, as pitiless bravoes of the most bloody-minded description, from whom the people were to expect nothing but bloodshed and massacre. Of Sir Thomas Lunsford, in particular, it was reported that his favourite food was the flesh of children, and he was painted like an ogre in the act of cutting a child into steaks and broiling them. The colonel fell at the siege of Bristol in 1643, but the same calumny pursued his remains, and the credulous multitude were told,

> The post who came from Coventry,
> Riding in a red rocket,
> Did tidings tell how Lunsford fell,
> *A child's hand in his pocket.*

Many allusions to this report, as well as to the credulity of those who believed it, may be found in the satires and lampoons of the time, although, says Dr. Grey, Lunsford was a man of great sobriety, industry, and courage. Butler says that the preachers

> Made children with their lives to run for't,
> As bad as Bloodybones or Lunsford.

But this extraordinary report is chiefly insisted upon in a comedy called the *Old Troop*, written by John Lacy, the comedian. The scene is laid during the Civil Wars of England, and the persons of the drama are chiefly those who were in arms for the king. They are represented as plundering the country without mercy, which Lacy might draw from the life, having, in fact, begun his career as a lieutenant of cavalry, in the service of Charles I. The troopers find the peasants loath to surrender to them their provisions, on which, in order to compel them, they pretend to be in earnest in the purpose of eating the children. A scene of coarse but humorous comedy is then introduced, which Dean Swift had not, perhaps, forgotten, when he recommended the eating of the children of the poor as a mode of relieving the distresses of their parents.

'*Lieutenant.*—Second me, and I'll make them bring out all they have, I warrant you. Do but talk as if we used to eat children.—Why, look you, good woman, we do believe you are poor, so we'll make a shift with our old diet—you have children in the town?

'*Woman.*—Why do you ask, sir?

'*Lieutenant.*—Only have two or three to supper. Fleaflint, you have the best way of cooking children.

'*Fleaflint.*—I can powder them to make you taste your liquor. I am never without a dried child's tongue or ham.

'*Woman.*—O! bless me!

'*Flea-flint.*—Mine's but the ordinary way; but Foordfarm is the man; he makes you the savouriest pie of a child chaldron that was ever eat.

'*Lieutenant.*—A plague! all the world cannot cook a child like Mr. Raggou [a French cook or messman to the troop, and the buffoon of the piece].

'*Raggou.*—Begar me think so; for vat was me bred in the King of Mogol's kitchen? dere we kill twenty shild of a day. Take you one shild by both his two heels, and put his head between your two knees, and take your knife and slice off all buttocks,—so fashion; begar, that make a de best Scots collop in de world.

'*Lieutenant.*—Ah, he makes the best pottage of a child's head and feet, however; but you must boil it with bacon—Woman, you must get bacon.

'*Woman.*—O Lud—yes, sir!

'*Ford.*—And then it must be very young.

'*Lieutenant.*—Yes, yes—Good woman, it must be a fine squab child of half-a-year old—a man child, dost hear?'—The Old Troop, *Act III.*

After a good deal more to this purpose, the villagers determine to carry forth their sheep, poultry, etc., to save their children. In the meantime, the Cavaliers are in some danger of being cross-bit, as they then called it; that is, caught in their own snare. A woman enters, who announces herself thus:—

'*Woman.*—By your leave, your good worships, I have made bold to bring you in some provisions.

'*Ford.*—Provisions? where, where is this provision?

'*Woman.*—Here, if it please you, I have brought you a couple of fine fleshy children.

'*Coronet.*—Was ever such a horrid woman! what shall we do?

'*Woman.*—Truly, gentlemen, they are fine squab children; shall I turn them up?—they have the bravest brawn and buttocks.

'*Lieutenant.*—No, no; but, woman, art thou not troubled to part with thy children?

'*Woman.*—Alas, sir, they are none of mine, they are only nurse children.

'*Lieutenant.*—What a beast is this—whose children are they?

'*Woman.*—A laundress that owes me for a year's nursing; I hope they'll prove excellent meat; they are twins too.

'*Raggou.*—Aha, but! but begar we never eat no twin shild, the law forbid that.'—*Ibidem.*

In this manner the Cavaliers escape from the embarrassing consequences of their own stratagem, which, as the reader will perceive, has been made use of in the text.

Note E, p. 142.—The Familists.

The Familists were originally founded by David George of Delft, an enthusiast, who believed himself the Messiah. They branched off into various sects of Grindletonians, Familists of the Mountains, of the Valleys, Familists of Cape Order, etc. etc., of the Scattered Flock, etc. etc. Among doctrines too wild and foul to be quoted, they held the lawfulness of occasional conformity with any predominant sect when it suited their convenience, of complying with the order of any magistrate, or superior power, however sinful. They disowned the principal doctrines of Christianity, as a law which had been superseded by the advent of David George—nay, obeyed the wildest and loosest dictates of evil passions, and are said to have practised among themselves the grossest libertinism. See Edward's *Gangræna*, Pagitt's *Heresiographia*, and a very curious work written by Ludovic Claxton, one of the leaders of the sect, called the *Lost Sheep Found*, small quarto, London, 1660.

Note F, p. 152.—Patrick Carey.

'You do not know Patrick Carey,' says King Charles in the novel; and, what is more singular, Patrick Carey has had two editors, each unknown alike to the other, except by name only. In 1771, Mr. John Murray published Carey's poems, from a collection said to be in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Pierspoint Crimp. A very probable conjecture is stated, that the author was only known to private friendship. As late as 1819, the Author of Waverley, ignorant of the edition of 1771, published a second quarto from an elaborate manuscript, though in bad order, apparently the autograph of the first. Of Carey, the second editor, like the first, only knew the name and the spirit of the verses. He has since been enabled to ascertain that the poetic Cavalier was a younger brother of the celebrated Henry Lord Carey, who fell at the battle of Newbery, and escaped the researches of Horace Walpole, to whose list of noble authors he would have been an important addition. So completely has the fame of the great Lord Falkland eclipsed that of his brothers, that this brother Patrick has been overlooked even by genealogists.

Note G, p. 155.—Signal of Danger.

On a particular occasion, a lady, suspecting, by the passage of a body of guards through her estate, that the arrest of her neighbour, Patrick Home of Polwarth, afterwards first Earl of Marchmont, was designed, sent him a feather by a shepherd boy, whom she dared not trust with a more explicit message. Danger sharpens the intellect, and this hint was the commencement of those romantic adventures which gave Grizzel Lady Murray the materials from which she compiled her account of her grandfather's escape, published [in 1822] by Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy Clerk-Register of Scotland. The anecdote of the feather does not occur there, but the Author has often heard it from the late Lady Diana Scott, the lineal descendant and representative of Patrick, Earl of Marchmont.

* [John Lilburne, a victim of the Star Chamber, became the head of the Levellers or ultra-Republican party.]

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION.

No. I.

THE WOODSTOCK SCUFFLE;

OR,

MOST DREADFUL APPARITIONS THAT WERE LATELY SEENE IN THE MANNOR-HOUSE OF WOODSTOCK, NEERE OXFORD, TO THE GREAT TERROR AND WONDERFUL AMAZEMENT OF ALL THERE THAT DID BEHOLD THEM.

[Printed in the year 1649. 4to.]

It were a wonder if one unites,
And not of wonders and strange sights;
For ev'ry where such things affrights
Poore people,

That men are ev'n at their wits' end;
God judgments ev'ry where doth send,
And yet we don't our lives amend,
But tipple,

And sweare, and lie, and cheat, and ——,
Because the world shall drown no more,
As if no judgments were in store
But water;

But by the stories which I tell,
You'll heare of terrors come from hell,
And fires, and shapes most terrible
For matter.

It is not long since that a child
Spake from the ground in a large field,
And made the people almost wild
That heard it,

Of which there is a printed book,
Wherein each man the truth may look;
If children speak, the matter's took
For verdict.

But this is stranger than that voice,
The wonder's greater, and the noyse;
And things appeare to men, not boyes,
At *Woodstock;*

Where *Rosamond* had once a bower,
To keep her from Queen *Elinour*,
And had escap'd her poys'nous power
By good-luck,

But fate had otherwise decreed,
And *Woodstock* Mannor saw a deed,
Which is in *Hollinshed** or *Speed** Chro-nicled;

But neither *Hollinshed* nor *Stow*,*
Nor no historians such things show,
Though in them wonders we well know
Are pickled;

For nothing else is history
But pickle of antiquity,
While things are kept in memory
From stincking,

Which otherwaies would have lain dead,
As in oblivion buried,
Which now you may call into head
With thinking.

The dreadfull story, which is true,
And now committed unto view,
By better pen, had it its due,
Should see light.

But I, contented, doe indite,
Not things of wit, but things of right;
You can't expect that things that fright
Should delight.

O hearken, therefore, harke and shake!
My very pen and hand doth quake!
While I the true relation make
O' th' wonder,

Which hath long time, and still appeares
Unto the State's Commissioners,
And puts them in their beds to feares
From under.

They come, good men, imploi'd by th' State,
To sell the lands of Charles the late,
And there they lay, and long did waite
For chapmen.

You may have easy pen'worths, woods,
Lands, ven'son, householdstuf, and goods;
They little thought of dogs that wou'd
There snap men.

But when they'd sup'd and fully fed,
They set up remnants, and to bed,
Where scarce they had laid down a head
To slumber,

But that their beds were heav'd on high;
They thought some dog under did lie,
And meant i' th' chamber (fie, fie, fie)
To scumber.

Some thought the cunning cur did mean
To eat their mutton (which was lean)
Reserv'd for breakfast, for the men
Were thrifty;

And up one rises in his shirt,
Intending the slie cur to hurt,
And forty thrusts made at him for't,
Or fifty.

* [English chroniclers.]

But empty came his sword again,
He found he thrust but all in vain ;
The mutton safe, hee went amain
To's fellow.

And now (assured all was well)
The bed again began to swell,
The men were frighted, and did smell
O' th' yellow.

From heaving, now the cloaths it pluckt ;
The men, for feare, together stuck,
And in their sweat each other duckt.
They wished

A thousand times that it were day ;
'Tis sure the divell ! Let us pray.
They pray'd amain ; and, as they say,
* * *

Approach of day did cleere the doubt,
For all devotions were run out,
They now waxt strong and something stout ;
One peaked

Under the bed, but nought was there ;
Hee view'd the chamber ev'ry where,
Nothing apear'd but what, for feare,
They leaked.

Their stomachs then return'd apace,
They found the mutton in the place,
And fell unto it with a grace.
They laughed

Each at the other's pannick feare,
And each his bed-fellow did jeere,
And having sent for ale and beere,
They quaffed.

And then abroad the summons went,
Who'll buy king's-land o' th' Parliament?
A paper book contein'd the rent,
Which lay there ;

That did contein the severall farmes,
Quit-rents, knight services, and armes ;
But that they came not in by swarmes
To pay there.

Night doth invite to bed again,
The grand Commissioners were lain,
But then the thing did heave amain,
It busled,

And with great clamor fill'd their eares,
The noyse was doubled, and their feares ;
Nothing was standing but their haires,
They nuzled.

Oft were the blankets pul'd, the sheete
Was closely twin'd betwixt their feete,
It seems the spirit was discreete
And civill.

Which makes the poore Commissioners
Feare they shall get but small arreares,
And that there's yet for Cavaliers
One divell.

They cast about what best to doe ;
Next day they would to wise men goe,
To neighb'ring towns som cours to know
For schollars

Come not to Woodstock as before,
And Allen's dead as a nayle-doore,
And so's old John (eclep'd the poore)
His follower ;

Rake Oxford o're, there's not a man
That rayse or lay a spirit can,
Or use the circle, or the wand,
Or conjure ;

Or can say (Boh !) unto a divell,
Or to a goose that is uncivill,
Nor where Keimbolton * purg'd out evill,
'Tis sin sure.

* [Lord Kimbolton, the earlier title of the Earl of Manchester, who commanded the Parliamentary army in the eastern counties.]

There were two villages hard by,
With teachers of presbytery,
Who knew the house was hidiously
Be-pestred ;

But 'lasse ! their new divinity
Is not so deep, or not so high ;
Their witts doe (as their meanes did) lie
Sequestred ;

But Master Joffman was the wight
Which was to exorcise the spright ;
Hee'll preach and pray you day and night
At pleasure.

And by that painfull, gainfull trade,
He hath himselfe full wealthy made ;
Great store of guilt he hath, 'tis said,
And treasure.

But no intreaty of his friends
Could get him to the house of fiends.
He came not over for such ends
From Dutch-land

But worse divinity hee brought,
And hath us reformation taught,
And, with our money, he hath bought
Him much land.

Had the old parsons preached still,
The div'l should nev'r have had his wil ;
But those that had or art or skill
Are outed ;

And those to whom the pow'r was giv'n
Of driving spirits, are out-driv'n ;
Their colledges dispos'd, and livings,
To grout-heads.

There was a justice who did boast,
Hee had as great a gift almost,
Who did desire him to accost
This evill.

But hee would not employ his gifts,
But found out many sleights and shifts ;
Hee had no prayers, nor no snifts,
For th' divell.

Some other way they cast about,
These brought him in, they throw not out
A woman great with child will do't ;
They got one.

And she i' th' room that night must lie ;
But when the thing about did flie,
And broke the windows furiously,
And hot one

Of the contractors o're the head,
Who lay securely in his bed,
The woman, shee, affrighted, fled,
* * *

And now they lay the cause on her,
That e're that night the thing did stir,
Because her selfe and grandfather
Were Papists ;

They must be barnes-regenerate
(A *Hans en Kelder* † of the state,
Which was in reformation gatt),
They said, which

Doth make the divell stand in awe,
Pull in his hornes, his hoof, his claw ;
But having none, they did in draw
* * *

But in the night there was such worke,
The spirit swaggered like a Turke ;
The bitch had spi'd where it did lurke,
And howled

† [A favourite Dutch toast at private gatherings, where a lady was present who had expectations of shortly being a mother, was to *Hans en Kelder*, or Jack in the kitchen, the invisible stranger. The toast was drunk in a cup of peculiar formation, there being a contrivance whereby the act of pouring in the wine caused the figure of a tiny infant to present itself before the eyes of the company.]

In such a wofull manner, that
Their very hearts went pit-a-pat;
* * * * *
* * *
The stately rooms, where kings once lay;
But the contractors shew'd the way.
But mark what now I tell you, pray,
'Tis worth it.

That book I told you of before,
Wherein were tenants written store,
A register for many more
Not forth yet;

That very book, as it did lie,
Took of a flame, no mortall eye
Seeing one jot of fire thereby,
Or taper;

For all the candles about flew,
And those that burned, burned blew,
Never kept soldiers such a doe
Or vaper.

The book thus burnt, and none knew how,
The poore contractors made a vow
To work no more; this spoil'd their plow
In that place.

Some other part o' th' house they'll find,
To which the devill hath no mind,
But hee, it seems, is not inclin'd
With that grace;

But other pranks it plaid elsewhere.
An oake there was stood many a yeere,
Of goodly growth as any where,
Was hewn down,

Which into fewell-wood was cut,
And some into a wood-pile put,
But it was hurled all about
And thrown down.

In sundry formes it doth appeare;
Now like a grasping claw to teare;
Now like a dog; anon a beare,
It tumbles;

And all the windows battered are,
No man the quarter enter dare;
All men (except the glasier)
Doe grumble.

Once in the likenesse of woman,
Of stature much above the common,
'Twas seene, but spak a word to no man,
And vanish'd.

'Tis thought the ghost of some good wife
Whose husband was deprived of life,
Her children cheated, land in strife
She banist.

No man can tell the cause of these
So wondrous dreadfull outrages;
Yet if upon your sinne you please
To discant,

You'le find our actions out doe hell's;
O wring your hands, and cease the bells,
Repentance must, or nothing else
Appease can't.

No. II.

THE JUST DEVIL OF WOODSTOCK;

OR,

A TRUE NARRATIVE OF THE SEVERAL APPARITIONS, THE FRIGHTS AND PUNISHMENTS, INFLICTED UPON THE RUMPISH COMMISSIONERS SENT THITHER TO SURVEY THE MANNORS AND HOUSES BELONGING TO HIS MAJESTIE.

London, printed in the year 1660. 4to.

THE names of the persons in the ensuing Narrative mentioned, with others:—

CAPTAIN COCKAINE.	Mr. CROOK, the Lawyer.
CAPTAIN HART.	Mr. BROWNE, the Surveyor.
CAPTAIN CROOK.	Their three Servants.
CAPTAIN CARELESSE.	Their Ordinary-keeper, and others.
CAPTAIN ROE.	The Gatekeeper, with the Wife and Servants.

Besides many more, who each night heard the noise; as Sir Gerrard Fleetwood and his lady, with his family; Mr. Hyans, with his family, and several others, who lodged in the outer courts; and during the three last nights, the inhabitants of Woodstock town, and other neighbor villages.

And there were many more, both divines and others, who came out of the country, and from Oxford, to see the glass and stones, and other stuffe, the devil had brought, wherewith to beat out the Commissioners; the marks upon some walls remain, and many, this to testifie.

THE PREFACE TO THE ENSUING NARRATIVE.

SINCE it hath pleased the Almighty God, out of his infinite mercy, so to make us happy, by restoring of our native King to us, and us unto our native liberty through him, that now the good may say, *magna temporum felicitas ubi sentire quæ velis, et dicere licet quæ sentias*, we cannot but esteem ourselves engaged in the highest of degrees to render unto him the highest thanks we can express. Although, surpris'd with joy, we become as lost in the performance; when gladness and admiration strikes us silent, as we look back upon the precipiece of our late condition, and those miraculous deliverances beyond expression. Freed from the slavery, and those desperate perils, we dayly lived in fear of, during the tyrannical times of that detestable usurper, Oliver Cromwell; he who had raked up such judges, as would wrest the most innocent language into high treason, when he had the cruel conscience to take away our lives upon no other ground of justice or reason (the stones of London streets would rise to witness it, if all the citizens were silent). And with these judges had such councillors, as could advise him unto worse, which will less want of witness. For should the many auditors be silent, the press (as God would have it) hath given it us in print, where one of them (and his conscience-keeper, too) speaks out. What shall we do with these men? saith he; *Æger intemperans crudelem facit medicum, et immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum.* Who these men are that should be brought to such Sicilian vespers,* the former page sets forth—those which conceit *Vtopias*, and have their day-dreams

* [On 30th March 1282 the Sicilians rose against the French, who had harshly oppressed them for sixteen years, and massacred all they could lay hands on. The outbreak began at Palermo.]

of the return of, I know not what golden age, with the old line. What usage, when such a privy councillor had power, could he expect, who then had published this narrative? This much so plainly shows the devil himself dislikit their doings (so much more bad were they than he would have them be), severer sure then was the devil to their Commissioners at Woodstock; for he warned them, with dreadful noises, to drive them from their work. This councillor, without more ado, would have all who retain'd conceits of allegiance to their soveraign, to be absolutely cut off by the usurper's sword. A sad sentence for a loyal party to a lawful King. But Heaven is always just; the party is repriv'd, and do acknowledge the hand of God in it, as is rightly apply'd, and as justly sensible of their deliverance: in that the foundation which this councillor saith was already so well laid, is now turned up, and what he calls day-dreams are come to passe. That old line which (as with him) there seemed, *aliquid divini*, to the contrary, is now restored. And that rock which, as he saith, the prelates and all their adherents, nay, and their master and supporter, too, with all his posterity, have split themselves upon, is nowhere to be heard. And that posterity are safely arrived in their ports, and masters of that mighty navy, their enemies so much encreased to keep them out with. The eldest sits upon the throne, his place by birthright and descent,

Pacatumque regit Patriis virtutibus orbem;

upon which throne long may he sit and reign in peace. That by his just government, the enemies of ours, the true Protestant Church, of that glorious martyr, our late sovereign, and of his royal posterity, may be either absolutely converted or utterly confounded.

If any shall now ask thee why this narrative was not sooner published, as neerer to the times wherein the things were acted, he hath the reason for it in the former lines; which will the more clearly appear unto his apprehension, if he shall perpend how much cruelty is requisite to the maintenance of rebellion; and how great care is necessary in the supporters, to obviate and divert the smallest things that tend to the unblinding of the people; so that it needs will follow, that they must have accounted this amongst the great obstructions to their sales of his majestie's lands, the devil not joining with them in the security; and greater to the pulling down the royal pallaces, when their chapmen should conceit the devil would haunt them in their houses, for building with so ill got materials; as no doubt but that he hath, so numerous and confident are the relations made of the same, though scarce any so totally remarkeable as this (if it be not that others have been more concealed), in regard of the strange circumstances as long continuances, but especially the number of the persons together, to whom all things were so visibly both seen and done, so that surely it exceeds any other; for the devils thus manifesting themselves, it appears evidently that there are such things as devils, to persecute the wicked in this world as in the next.

Now, if to these were added the diverse reall phantasms seen at White-Hall in Cromwell's times, which caused him to keep such mighty guards in and about his bed-chamber, and yet so oft to change his lodgings; if those things done at Saint James', where the devil so joal'd the centinels against the sides of the queen's chappell doors, that some of them fell sick upon it; and others, not taking warning by it, kild one outright, whom they buried in the place; and all other such dreadful things, those that inhabited the royal houses have been affrighted with.

And if to these were likewise added, a relation of all those regicides and their abettors the devil hath entred into, as he did the Gadarenes' swine, with so many more of them who hath fallen mad, and dyed in hideous forms of such distractions, that which hath been of this within these 12 last years in England (should all of this nature our chronicles do tell, with all the superstitious monks have writ, be put together), would make the greater volume, and of more strange occurrents.

And now as to the penman of this narrative, know that he was a divine, and at the time of those things acted, which are here related, the minister and schoolmaster of Woodstock; a person learned and discreet, not byassed with factious humours, his name Widows, who each day put in writing what he heard from their mouthes (and such things as they told to have befallen them the night before), therein keeping to their own words; and, never thinking that what he had writ should happen to be made publick, gave it no better dress to set it forth. And because to do it now shall not be construed to change the story, the reader hath it here accordingly exposed.

THE JUST DEVIL OF WOODSTOCK.

The 16th day of *October*, in the year of our Lord 1649, the Commissioners for surveying and valuing his majestie's mannor-house, parks, woods, deer, demesnes, and all things thereunto belonging, by name Captain Crook, Captain Hart, Captain Cockaine, Captain Carelesse, and Captain Roe, their messenger, with Mr. Browne, their secretary, and two or three servants, went from Woodstock town (where they had lain some nights before), and took up their lodgings in his majestie's house after this manner: The bed-chamber and withdrawing-room they both lodged in and made their kitchen; the presence-chamber their room for dispatch of their business with all commers; of the council hall their brew-house, as of the dining-room their wood-house, where they laid in the clefts of that antient standard in the High Park, for many ages beyond memory known by the name of the King's Oak, which they had chosen out, and caused to be dug up by the roots.

October 17.—About the middle of the night, these new guests were first awaked by a knocking at the presence-chamber door, which they also conceived did open, and something to enter, which came through the room, and also walkt about that room with a heavy step during half-an-hour, then crept under the bed where Captain Hart and Captain Carelesse lay, where it did seem (as it were) to bite and gnaw the mat and bed-coards, as if it would tear and rend the feather beds; which having done a while, then would heave a while, and rest; then heave them up again in the bed more high than it did before, sometime on the one side, sometime on the other, as if it had tried which Captain was heaviest. Thus having heaved some half-an-hour, from thence it walkt out and went under the servants' bed, and did the like to them; hence it walkt into a withdrawing-room, and there did the same to all who lodged there. Thus having welcomed them for more than two hours' space, it walkt out as it came in, and shut the outer door again, but with a clap of some mightie force. These guests were in a sweat all this while, but out of it falling into a sleep again, it became morning first before they spake their minds; then would they have it to be a dog, yet they described it more to the likenesse of a great bear; so fell to the examining under the beds, where, finding only the mats scracht, but the bed-coards whole, and the quarter of beef which lay on the floor untoucht, they entertained other thoughts.

October 18.—They were all awaked as the night before, and now conceived that they heard all the great clefts of the King's Oak brought into the presence-chamber, and there thumpt down, and after roul about the room; they could hear their chairs and stools tost from one side of the room unto the other, and then (as it were) altogether josled. Thus having done an hour together, it walkt into the withdrawing-room, where lodged the two captains, the secretary, and two servants: here stopt the thing a while, as if it did take breath, but raised a hideous one, then walkt into the bed-chamber, where lay those as before, and under the bed it went, where it did heave and heave again, that now they in bed were put to catch hold upon bed-posts, and sometimes one of the other, to prevent their being tumbled out upon the ground; then coming out as from under the bed, and taking hold upon the bed-posts, it would shake the whole bed, almost as if a cradle rocked. Thus having done here for half-an-hour, it went into the withdrawing-room, where first it came and stood at the bed's feet, and heaving up the bed's feet, flopt down again a while, until at last it heaved the feet so high that those in bed thought to have been set upon their heads; and having thus for two hours entertained them, went out as in the night before, but with a great noise.

October 19.—This night they awaked not until the midst of the night; they perceived the room to shake with something that walkt about the bed-chamber, which having done so a while, it walkt into a withdrawing-room, where it took up a brasse warming-pan, and returning with it into the bed-chamber, therein made so loud a noise, in these captains' own words, it was as loud and scurvie as a ring of five untuned bells rung backward; but the captains, not to seem afraid, next day made mirth of what had past, and jested at the devil in the pan.

October 20.—These captains and their company, still lodging as before, were wakened in this night with some things flying about the rooms, and out of one room into the other, as thrown with some great force. Captain Hart, being in a slumber, was taken by the shoulder and shaked until he did sit up in his bed, thinking that it had been one of his fellows, when suddenly he was taken on the pate with a trencher, that it made him shrink down into the bed-clothes, and all of them, in both rooms, kept their heads

at least within their sheets, so fiercely did three dozen of trenchers fly about the rooms; yet Captain Hart ventured again to peep out to see what was the matter, and what it was that threw, but then the trenchers came so fast and neer about his ears, that he was fain quickly to couch again. In the morning they found all their trenchers, pots, and spits, upon and about their beds, and all such things as were of common use scattered about the rooms. This night there were also, in several parts of the room and outer rooms, such noises of beating at doors, and on the walls, as if that several smiths had been at work; and yet our captains shrunk not from their work, but went on in that, and lodged as they had done before.

October 21.—About midnight they heard great knocking at every door; after a while the doors flew open, and into the withdrawing-room entered something as of a mighty proportion, the figure of it they knew not how to describe. This walkt awhile about the room shaking the floor at every step, then came it up close to the bed-side, where lay Captains Crook and Carelesse; and after a little pause, as it were, the bed-curtains, both at sides and feet, were drawn up and down slowly, then faster again for a quarter of an hour, then from end to end as fast as imagination can fancie the running of the rings, then shaked it the beds, as if the joints thereof had crackt; then walkt the thing into the bed-chamber, and so plaied with those beds there; then took up eight peuter dishes, and bouled them about the room and over the servants in the truckle-beds; then sometimes were the dishes taken up and thrown crosse the high beds and against the walls, and so much battered; but there were more dishes wherein was meat in the same room, that were not all removed. During this, in the presence-chamber there was stranger noise of weightie things thrown down, and, as they supposed, the clefts of the King's Oak did roul about the room, yet at the wonted hour went away, and left them to take rest, such as they could.

October 22.—Hath mist of being set down, the officers imployed in their work farther off, came not that day to Woodstock.

October 23.—Those that lodged in the withdrawing-room, in the midst of the night were awakened with the cracking of fire, as if it had been with thorns and sparks of fire burning, whereupon they supposed that the bed-chamber had taken fire, and listning to it farther, they heard their fellows in bed sadly groan, which gave them to suppose they might be suffocated: wherefore they called upon their servants to make all possible hast to help them. When the two servants were come in, they found all asleep, and so brought back word, but that there were no bed-clothes upon them; wherefore they were sent back to cover them, and to stir up and mend the fire. When the servants had covered them and were come to the chimney, in the corners they found their wearing apparel, boots, and stockings, but they had no sooner toucht the embers, when the firebrands flew about their ears so fast, that away ran they into the other room for the shelter of their coverlids; then after them walkt something that stampt about the room as if it had been exceeding angry, and likewise threw about the trenchers, platters, and all such things in the room—after two hours went out, yet stampt again over their heads.

October 24.—They lodged all abroad.

October 25.—This afternoon was come unto them Mr. Richard Crook the lawyer, brother to Captain Crook, and now deputy-steward of the mannor, unto Captain Parsons and Major Butler, who had put out Mr. Hyans, his majestie's officer. To entertain this new guest the Commissioners caused a very great fire to be made, of neer the chimney full of wood of the King's Oak, and he was lodged in the withdrawing-room with his brother, and his servant in the same room. About the midst of the night a wonderful knocking was heard, and into the room something did rush, which coming to the chimney-side, dasht out the fire as with the stamp of some prodigious foot, then threw down such weighty stuffe, what ere it was (they took it to be the residue of the clefts and roots of the King's Oak), close by the bed-side, that the house and bed shook with it. Captain Cockaine and his fellow arose, and took their swords to go unto the Crooks. The noise ceased at their rising, so that they came to the door and called. The two brothers, though fully awaked, and heard them call, were so amazed, that they made no answer until Captain Cockaine had recovered the boldness to call very loud, and came unto the bed-side; then faintly first, after some more assurance, they came to understand one another, and comforted the lawyer. Whilst this was thus, no noise was heard, which made them think the time was past of that night's trouble, so that, after some little conference, they applied themselves to take some rest. When Captain Cockaine was come to his own bed, which he had left open, he found it closely covered, which he much wondered at; but turning the clothes down, and opening it to get in, he found the lower sheet strewed over with trenchers. Their whole three dozen of trenchers were orderly disposed between the sheets, which he and his fellow endeavouring to cast out, such noise arose about the room, that they were glad to get into bed with some of the trenchers. The noise lasted a full half hour after this. This entertainment so ill did like the lawyer, and being not so well studied in the point as to resolve this the devil's law case, that he next day resolved to be gone; but having not dispatcht all that he came for, profit and perswasions prevailed with him to stay the other hearing, so that he lodged as he did the night before.

October 26.—This night each room was better furnished with fire and candle than before; yet about twelve at night came something in that dasht all out, then did walk about the room, making a noise, not to be set forth by the comparison with any other thing; sometimes came it to the bed-sides, and drew the curtains to and fro, then twerle them, then walk about again, and return to the bed-posts, shake them with all the bed, so that they in bed were put to hold one upon the other, then walk about the room again, and come to the servants' bed, and gnaw and scratch the wainscot head, and shake altogether in that room; at the time of this being in doing, they in the bedchamber heard such strange dropping down from the roof of the room, that they supposed 'twas like the fall of money by the sound. Captain Cockaine, not frightened with so small a noise (and lying near the chimney), stept out and made shift to light a candle, by the light of which he perceived the room strewed over with broken glass, green, and some of it as it were pieces of broken bottles; he had not long been considering what it was, when suddenly his candle was hit out, and glass flew about the room, that he made haste to the protection of the coverlets; the noise of thundering rose more hideous then at any time before; yet, at a certain time all vanisht into calmness. The morning after was the glass about the room, which the maid that was to make clean the rooms swept up into a corner, and many came to see it. But Mr. Richard Crook would stay no longer, yet as he stopt, going through Woodstock town, he was there heard to say, that he would not lodge amongst them another night for a fee of £500.

October 27.—The Commissioners had not yet done their work, wherefore they must stay; and being all men of the sword, they must not seem afraid to encounter with anything, though it be the devil; therefore, with pistols charged, and drawn swords laied by their bed-sides, they applied themselves to take some rest, when something in the midst of night so opened and shut the window casements with such claps, that it awakened all that slept; some of them peeping out to look what was the matter with the windows, stones flew about the rooms as if hurled with many hands; some hit the walls, and some the beds' heads close above the pillows, the dints of which were then, and yet (it is conceived) are to be seen, thus sometime throwing stones, and sometime making thundering noise for two hours' space, it ceast, and all was quiet till the morn. After their rising, and the maid come in to make the fire, they looked about the rooms; they found fourscore stones brought in that night, and going to lay them together in the corner where the glass (before mentioned) had been swept up, they found that every piece of glass had been carried away that night. Many people came next day to see the stones, and all observed that they were not of such kind of stones as are naturall in the countrey thereabout; with these were noise like claps of thunder, or report of cannon planted against the rooms, heard by all that lodged in the outer courts, to their astonishment, and at Woodstock town, taken to be thunder.

October 28.—This night, both strange and differing noise from the former first wakened Captain Hart, who lodged in the bedchamber, who, hearing Roe and Brown to groan, called out to Cockaine and Crook to come and help them, for Hart could not now stir himself; Cockaine would fain have answered, but he could not, or look about; something, he thought, stopt both his breath and held down his eye-lids. Amazed thus, he struggles and kickt about, till he had awaked Captain Crook, who, half asleep, grew very angry at his kicks, and multiplied words, it grew to an appointment in the field; but this fully recovered Cockaine to remember that Captain Hart had called for help, wherefore to them he ran in the other room, whom he found sadly groaning, where, scraping in the chimney, be both found a candle and fire to light it; but had not gone two steps, when something blew the

candle out, and threw him in the chair by the bed-side, when presently cried out Captain Carelesse, with a most pittiful voice, 'Come hither, O come hither, brother Cockaine, the thing's gone of me.' Cockaine, scarce yet himself, helpt to set him up in his bed, and after Captain Hart, and having scarce done that to them, and also to the other two, they heard Captain Crook crying out, as if something had been killing him. Cockaine snacht up the sword that lay by their bed, and ran into the room to save Crook, but was in much more likelyhood to kill him, for at his coming, the thing that pressed Crook went of him, at which Crook started out of his bed, whom Cockaine thought a spirit, made at him, at which Crook cried out 'Lord help, Lord save me;' Cockaine let fall his hand, and Crook, embracing Cockaine, desired his reconcilement, giving him many thanks for his deliverance. Then rose they all and came together, discoursed sometimes godly and sometimes praied, for all this while was there such stamping over the roof of the house, as if 1000 horse had there been trotting; this night all the stones brought in the night before, and laid up in the withdrawing-room, were all carried again away by that which brought them in, which at the wonted time left of, and, as it were, went out, and so away.

October 29.—Their businesse having now received so much forwardnesse as to be neer dispatcht, they encouraged one the other, and resolved to try further; therefore, they provided more lights and fires, and further for their assistance, prevailed with their ordinary keeper to lodge amongst them, and bring his mastive bitch; and it was so this night with them, that they had no disturbance at all.

October 30.—So well they had passed the night before, that this night they went to bed confident and carelesse; untill about twelve of the clock, something knockt at the door as with a smith's great hammer, but with such force as if it had cleft the door; then ent'red something like a bear, but seem'd to swell more big, and walkt about the room, and out of one room into the other, treading so heavily, as the floare had not been strong enough to bear it. When it came into the bedchamber, it dasht against the beds' heads some kind of glass vessell, that broke in sundry pieces, and sometimes would take up those pieces, and hurle them about the room, and into the other room; and when it did not hurle the glasse at their heads, it did strike upon the tables, as if many smiths, with their greatest hammers, had been laying on as upon an anvil; sometimes it thumpt against the walls as if it would beat a hole through; then upon their heads, such stamping, as if the roof of the house were beating down upon their heads; and having done thus, during the space (as was conjectured) of two hours, it ceased and vanished, but with a more fierce shutting of the doors than at any time before. In the morning they found the pieces of glass about the room, and observed that it was much differing from that glasse brought in three nights before, this being of a much thicker substance, which severall persons which came in carried away some pieces of. The Commissioners were in debate of lodging there no more; but all their businesse was not done, and some of them were so conceited as to believe, and to attribute the rest they enjoyed, the night before this last, unto the mastive bitch; wherefore, they resolved to get more company, and the mastive bitch, and try another night.

October 31.—This night the fires and lights prepared, the ordinary keeper and his bitch, with another man perswaded by him, they all took their beds and fell asleep. But about twelve at night, such rapping was on all sides of them, that it wakened all of them; as the doors did seem to open, the mastive bitch fell fearfully a yelling, and presently ran fiercely into the bed to them in the truckle-bed; as the thing came by the table, it struck so fierce a blow on that, as that it made the frame to crack, then took the warming-pan from off the table, and stroke it against the walls with so much force as that it was beat flat together, lid and bottom. Now were they hit as they lay covered over head and ears within the bed-clothes. Captain Carelesse was taken a sound blow on the head with the shoulder-blade bone of a dead horse (before they had been but thrown at, when they peept up, and mist); Browne had a shrewd blow on the leg with the backbone, and another on the head, and every one of them felt severall blows of bones and stones through the bed-clothes, for now these things were thrown as from an angry hand that meant further mischief; the stones flew in at window as shot out of a gun, nor was the bursts lesse (as from without) than of a cannon, and all the windows broken down. Now, as the hurling of the things did cease, and the thing walkt up and down, Captain Cockaine and Hart cried out, In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what are you? What would you have? What have we done that you disturb us thus? No voice replied (as the Captain said, yet some of their servants have said otherwise), and the noise ceast. Hereupon Captains Hart and Cockaine rose, who lay in the bedchamber, renewed the fire and lights, and one great candle in a candlestick, they placed in the door, that might be seen by them in both the rooms. No sooner were they got to bed, but the noise arose on all sides more loud and hideous than at any time before, insomuch as (to use the Captain's own words) it returned and brought seven devils worse than itself; and presently they saw the candle and candlestick in the passage of the door, dasht up to the roof of the room by a kick of the hinder parts of a horse, and after with the hoof trode out the snuff, and so dasht out the fire in the chimnies. As this was done, there fell, as from the sieling, upon them in the truckle-beds, such quantities of water, (as if it had been poured out of buckets, which stunk worse than any earthly stink could make; and as this was in doing, something crept under the high beds, tost them up to the roof of the house with the Commissioners in them, until the testers of the beds were beaten down upon, and the bedsted-frames broke under them; and here some pause being made, they all, as if with one consent, started up, and ran down the stairs until they came into the Councel Hall, where two sate up a-brewing, but now were fallen asleep; those they scared much with wakening of them, having been much perplext before with the strange noise, which commonly was taken by them abroad for thunder, sometimes for rumbling wind. Here the Captains and their company got fire and candle, and every one carrying something of either, they returned into the Presence-Chamber, where some applied themselves to make the fire, whilst others fell to prayers, and having got some clothes about them, they spent the residue of the night in singing psalms and prayers; during which no noise was in that room, but most hideously round about, as at some distance.

It should have been told before, how that when Captain Hart first rose this night (who lay in the bedchamber next the fire), he found their book of valuations crosse the embers smoaking, which he snacht up and cast upon the table there, which the night before was left upon the table in the presence amongst their other papers; this book was in the morning found a handful burnt, and had burnt the table where it lay; Browne the clerk said, he would not for a 100 and a £100 that it had been burnt a handful further.

This night it happened that there were six cony-stealers, who were come with their nets and ferrets to the cony-burrows by Rosamond's Well; but with the noise this night from the Mannor-house, they were so terrified, that like men distracted away they ran, and left their haies all ready pitched, ready up, and the ferrets in the cony-burrows.

Now the Commissioners, more sensible of their danger, considered more seriously of their safety, and agreed to go and confer with Mr. Hoffman, the minister of Wotton (a man not of the meanest note for life or learning, by some esteemed more high), to desire his advice, together with his company and prayers. Mr. Hoffman held it too high a point to resolve on suddenly and by himself, wherefore desired time to consider upon it, which being agreed unto, he forthwith rode to Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Wheat, the two next Justices of Peace, to try what warrant they could give him for it. They both (as 'tis said from themselves) encouraged him to be assisting to the Commissioners, according to his calling.

But certain it is, that when they came to fetch him to go with them, Mr. Hoffman answered, that he would not lodge there one night for £500, and being asked to pray with them, he held up his hands and said, that he would not meddle upon any terms.

Mr. Hoffman refusing to undertake the quarrel, the Commissioners held it not safe to lodge where they had been thus entertained any longer, but caused all things to be removed into the chambers over the gatehouse, where they stayed but one night, and what rest they enjoyed there, we have but an uncertain relation of, for they went away early the next morning; but if it may be held fit to set down what hath been delivered by the report of others, they were also the same night much affrighted with dreadful apparitions; but observing that these passages spread much in discourse, to be also in particulars taken notice of, and that the nature of it made not for their cause, they agreed to the concealing of things for the future; yet this is well known and certain, that the gate-keeper's wife was in so strange an agony in her bed, and in her bedchamber such noise (whilst her husband was above with the Commissioners), that two maids in the next room to her, durst not venture to assist her, but

affrighted ran out to call company, and their master, and found the woman (at their coming in) gasping for breath; and the next day said, that she saw and suffered that, which for all the world she would not be hired to again.

From Woodstock the Commissioners removed unto Euelme, and some of them returned to Woodstock the Sunday se'nnight after (the book of Valuations wanting something that was for haste left imperfect), but lodged not in any of those rooms where they had lain before, and yet were not unvisited (as they confess themselves) by the devil, whom they called their nightly guest; Captain Crook came not untill Tuesday night, and how he sped that night the gate-keeper's wife can tell if she dareth, but what she hath whispered to her gossips, shall not be made a part of this our narrative, nor many more particulars which have fallen from the Commissioners themselves and their servants to other persons; they are all or most of them alive, and may add to it when they please, and surely have not a better way to be revenged of him who troubled them, than according to the proverb, tell truth and shame the devil.

There remains this observation to be added, that on a Wednesday morning all these officers went away; and that since then diverse persons of severall qualities, have lodged often and sometimes long in the same rooms, both in the presence, withdrawing room, and bedchamber belonging unto his sacred Majesty; yet none have had the least disturbance, or heard the smallest noise, for which the cause was not as ordinary as apparent, except the Commissioners and their company, who came in order to the alienating and pulling down the house, which is well-nigh performed.

A SHORT SURVEY OF WOODSTOCK, NOT TAKEN BY ANY OF THE BEFORE-MENTIONED COMMISSIONERS.*

The noble seat, called Woodstock, is one of the ancient honours belonging to the crown. Severall mannors owe suite and service to the place; but the custom of the countrey giving it but the title of a mannor, we shall erre with them to be the better understood.

The mannor-house hath been a large fabrick, and accounted among his majestie's standing houses, because there was alwaies kept a standing furniture. This great house was built by King Henry the First, but ampleyfied with the gatehouse and outsides of the outer-court, by King Henry the Seventh, the stables by King James.

About a bow-shot from the gate south-west, remain foundation signs of that structure, erected by King Henry the Second, for the security of Lady Rosamond, daughter of Walter Lord Clifford, which some poets have compared to the Dedalian labyrinth,† but the form and circuit both of the place and ruins show it to have been a house and of one pile, perhaps of strength, according to the fashion of those times, and probably was fitted with-secret places of recess, and avenues to hide or convey away such persons as were not willing to be found if narrowly sought after. About the midst of the place ariseth a spring, called at present Rosamond's Well; it is but shallow, and shews to have been paved and walled about, likely contrived for the use of them within the house, when it should be of danger to go out.

A quarter of a mile distant from the King's house is seated Woodstock town, new and old. This new Woodstock did arise by some buildings which Henry the Second gave leave to be erected (as received by tradition), at the suit of the Lady Rosamond, for the use of out-servants upon the wastes of the mannor of Bladon, where is the mother church; this is a hamlet belonging to it, though encreased to a market town by the advantage of the Court residing sometime near, which of late years they have been sensible of the want of; this town was made a corporation in the 11th year of Henry the Sixth, by charter, with power to send two burgesses to Parliament or not, as they will themselves.

Old Woodstock is seated on the west side of the brook, named Glyme, which also runneth through the park; the town consists not of above four or five houses, but it is to be conceived that it hath been much larger (but very anciently so), for in some old law historians there is mention of the assize at Woodstock, for a law made in a Micelgemote (the name of Parliaments before the coming of the Norman) in the days of King Ethelred.

And in like manner, that thereabout was a king's house, if not in the same place where Henry the First built the late standing pile before his; for in such days those great councils were commonly held in the King's palaces. Some of those lands have belonged to the orders of the Knights Templers, there being records which call them *Terras quas Rex excambiavit cum Templariis.*

But now this late large mannor-house is in a manner almost turned into heaps of rubbish; some seven or eight rooms left for the accommodation of a tenant that should rent the King's meadows (of those who had no power to let them), with several high uncovered walls standing, the prodigious spectacles of malice unto monarchy, which ruines still bear semblance of their state, and yet aspire in spight of envy, or of weather, to show, What kings do build, subjects may sometimes shake, but utterly can never overthrow.

That part of the park called the High-park, hath been lately subdivided by Sir Arthur Haselrig, to make pastures for his breed of colts, and other parts plowed up. Of the whole saith Roffus Warwicensis, in MS. Hen. I., p. 122, *Fecit iste Rex Parcum de Woodstock, cum Palatio, infra prædictum Parcum, qui Parcus erat primus Parcus Angliæ, et continet in circuitu septem Miliaria; con structus erat Anno 14 hujus Regis, aut parum post.* Without the Park the King's demesne woods were, it cannot well be said now are, the timber being all sold off, and underwoods so cropt and spoiled by that beast the Lord Munson, and other greedy cattle, that they are hardly recoverable. Beyond which lieth Stonefield, and other mannors that hold of Woodstock, with other woods, that have been aliened by former kings, but with reservation of liberty for his majestie's deer, and other beasts of forrest, to harbour in at pleasure, as in due place is to be shewed.

* The Survey of Woodstock is appended to the preceding pamphlet.

† [A labyrinth or maze made by the legendary Dædalus for the king of ancient Crete, an island in the Mediterranean.]

No. III.

[THE following extract from a letter is docqueted by the Author 'to be inserted as an illustration of Woodstock.' It does not seem to have been included in previous editions, but is now added, according to the Author's apparent wish—1871.]

OXFORD, *Sept.* 3.

HAVING got sight of a letter concerning the sickness and death of old Mr. Lenthal from a person of known worth and integrity, I could not conceal it from you, being, as I conceive, of publick concern, which letter was as followeth:—

SIR—When I came to his presence he told me 'he was very glad to see me, for he had two great works to do, and I must assist him in both: to fit his body for the earth, and his soul for heaven,' to which purpose he desired me to pray with him. I told him the Church had appointed an office at the visitation of the sick, and I must use that. He said, 'Yes, he chiefly desired the prayers of the Church,' wherein he joined with a great fervency and devotion. After prayers he desired absolution. I told him I was very ready and willing to pronounce it, but he must first come to Christian contrition for the sins and failings of his life. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'then instruct me to my duty.'

I desired him to examine his life by the ten commandments, and wherein he found his failings to fly to the gospel of mercy. Then I read the ten commandments in order to him, mentioning the principal sins against each commandment. To pass by other things (under the seal

of this office), when I came to the fifth commandment, and remembered him that Disobedience, Rebellion, and Schism were the great sins against this commandment—'Yes, sir,' he said, 'there's my trouble, my disobedience, not against my natural parents, but against the *Pater patriæ* our deceased sovereign. I confess with Paul I held their clothes whilst they murthered him, but herein I was not so criminal as Paul was, for God thou knowest I never consented to his death. I ever prayed and endeavoured what I could against it, but I did too much, Almighty God forgive me.'

I then desired him to deal freely and openly in that business, and if he knew any of those villains that plotted or contrived that horrid murder which were not yet detected, now to discover 'em. He answered, 'he was a stranger to that business, his soul never entered into that secret, but what concerns myself I will confess freely. Three things are especially laid to my charge, wherein I am indeed too guilty: that I went from the Parliament to the army, that I proposed the bloody question for trying the king, and that I sat after the king's death. To the first I may give this in answer, that Cromwell and his agents deceived a wiser man than myself, that excellent King, and then might well deceive me also, and so they did. I knew the Presbyterians would never restore the king to his just rights, these men swore they would.

'For the second no excuse can be made, but I have the king's pardon, and I hope Almighty God will grant me his mercy also. Yet, sir, even then, when I put the question, I hoped the very putting the question would have cleared him, because I believed four for one were against it, but they deceived me also.

'To the third I make this candid confession, that 'twas my own baseness, and cowardice, and unworthy fear to submit my life and estate to the mercy of those men that murthered the king, that hurried me on against my own conscience to act with them. Yet then I thought I might do some good and hinder some ill. Something I did for the Church and Universities, something for the king when I broke the oath of abjuration, as that Sir O—— B—— and yourself knows; something also for his return, as my L. G., and Mr. J—— T—— and yourself know; but the ill I did overweighed the little good I would have done. God forgive me for this also.'

After this I remembered him that the Fathers of the Church also had been barbarously murthered and ruined, and asked whether he had any hand or gave any consent therein. He answered, 'None; for I always did believe that was the primitive and best government of the Church,' and said he died a dutiful son of the Church of England as it was established before these times; for he had not yet seen the alteration of the Liturgy.

After this office, wherein he indeed showed himself a very hearty penitent, he again desired the absolution of the Church, which I then pronounced, and which he received with much content and satisfaction; for, says he, 'Now, now indeed do I feel the joy and benefit of that office which Christ hath left to his Church.' Then praying for the *King*, that he might long and happily reign over us, and for the peace of the Church, he again desired prayers. The next day he received the sacrament, and after that work I desired him to express himself to Doctor Dickenson, a learned physician, Fellow of Merton College, who received the sacrament with him, concerning the King's death, because he had only done it to me in confession; which he did to the same effect as he had spake to me. The rest of his time was spent in devotion and penitential meditations to his last.

'Twere vain to add one word to this letter, yet who can but observe that September the 3d, the day of renowned Montrose's banishment, of the battles of Dunbar and Worcester, and of that monster Oliver Cromwell's death, was also the day when Master Lenthal (Speaker of that long and fatal Parliament) ended his life; the candour and manner of whose departure such as were Members (if yet there be any rumps of that Rump) will do well to imitate.

CROMWELL'S HOUSE, WHITEHALL.

GLOSSARY TO WOODSTOCK.

Actum atque tractatum, done and performed.
Adust, looking as if burned or scorched.
Æger intemperans, etc. (p. 188), an intractable patient makes the doctor cruel, and a wound that will not heal must be cut out with the knife.
A la mort, all melancholy, despondent.
Alert, alerte, an, an alarm, intimation of danger.
Alicant, a strong, sweet Spanish wine, made at Alicante.
Aliquid divini, something of the divine about it.
Andrew Ferrara, a Scottish broadsword.
Animus mundi, the creative power in nature.
Arcadians, pastoral and poetic creatures.
Assentation, the giving of obsequious assent to another's opinions.

Bane, bone.
Bastinado, a mode of punishment by beating the soles of the feet with a rod, practised in Turkey and Persia.
Bide the bit and the buffet, to put up with the food and the insult.
Bilbo, a rapier, sword, supposed to have been first made at Bilboa, in the north of Spain.
Bilk, to cheat, trick, deceive.
Black-jack, a large beer-jug, usually made of waxed leather, though sometimes of metal.
Blaud, a rough blow
Bon camarado, a good comrade.
Bonos socios, good company.
Boreas, the ancient Greek personification of the north wind.
Boulters, boulders, large stones.
Bow-pot, a pot or vase for holding boughs or flowers.
Brae, sloping ground, the declivity of a hill.
Bread of Gude, God's bread, an oath.
Bulla, an ornament worn by young Romans round their neck, but laid aside on their attaining manhood.
Busle, to bustle.
Buss, a kiss.

Carolus, a gold coin struck in the reign of Charles (Lat. *Carolus*) I., and worth 20s. or a little more.
Cast, a touch, stroke.
Castor, a beaver hat.
Chaldron, or *chaudron*, entrails.
Cheveron, or *chevron*, a glove.
Chouse, to cheat, defraud.
Clouterly, clumsy, awkward.
Collet, the edge round the setting of a precious stone.
Colluvies omnium gentium, refuse, off-scourings of all nations.
Cordovan, made at Cordoba or Cordova in Spain.
Corps de garde, the guard or sentinel detachment; also guard-house.
Counter, to hunt, to hunt, not following in the track of the game, but backwards along the way it has come.
Couteau de chasse, a hanger, hunting-knife.
Cross (in purse), money stamped or marked with a cross.
Cuerpo, in, without upper cloak, with body exposed.
Culverin, an early form of cannon, very long in shape.
Cutter's law, that those who have something shall share with those who have nothing; cutter means a ruffian, bravo

Defensio Populi Anglicani, defence of the people of England.
De quoi, the wherewithal, the essential thing.
Deus adjutor meus, the Lord is my helper.
Devinctus beneficio, bound by an obligation of kindness.
Divertisement, amusement, pastime.
Doric, rustic.
Dowsets, or *doucets*, testicles of the deer.
Dramatis personæ, the characters of the play.
Drumble, to mumble.
Dudgeon-dagger, a small dagger.
Duello, a duel, combat.
Duke of Norfolk, a fencing term.
Dunny, dull of apprehension.

Editio princeps, the standard edition.
En berger, en bergère, after the manner of the swains and shepherdesses in pastoral poems.
Exeunt omnes, all depart, marking the conclusion of a play.

Fecit iste Rex, etc. (p. 192). This king made the park of Woodstock, and the palace there; this was the first park in England, and measured seven miles in circumference; it was laid out in the fourteenth year of this king, or a little later.
Foin, to thrust in fencing.
Fox (*broadsword*), an old slang expression for a sword.

Frank, a pen, pig-sty, used jocularly.
Fugit ad salices, fled for refuge to the willows (or osiers).

Gamashes, leggings.
Gambade, a curvet, gambol.
Garred, made, caused, forced.
Gossipred, intimacy, friendship.
Grande Monarque, the Great King, *i.e.* Louis XIV. of France.
Grout-head, or *growt-head*, a lout, blockhead.
Gudgeon, to cheat, impose on.

Haie, a snare or net for catching rabbits and other animals.
Haro, to cry, raise a hue and cry.
Hidalgo, a Spanish nobleman.
Hors d'œuvre, an extra dish.
Hot, hit.
Hunt counter, to go away from the game, back along the track, instead of forwards.

Incognito, under disguise.
In cuerpo, without upper cloak, with body exposed.
In verbo sacerdotis, on the word of a priest.
Ipse dixit, the mere statement, the simple assertion.

Jack-pudding, a buffoon or merryandrew, who performed common conjuring tricks.
Joal, to dash violently.

Latus clavus, the broad stripe placed on his tunic by a young Roman of noble rank when he became a senator.
Laving, to lift up water and pour it into a utensil, lade out.
Leak, to void urine.
Lee Victor sic voluit, such was the will of Victor Lee.

Madrier, the plank on which the petard was fixed or mounted.
Magna temporum felicitas, etc. (p. 188), happy are the times in which you are allowed to think what you like, and say what you think.
Make-bate, one who stirs up quarrels and dissensions.
Malleus hæresis, the hammer of heresy.
Manchet, a small loaf of fine white bread.
Manège, a riding school.
Maravedi, a copper coin, worth one-twelfth of a penny.
Mas-John, any Presbyterian divine.
Meikle, much, a good deal.
Mêlée, a hand to hand combat or scuffle amongst several persons.
Moriscoes, the descendants of the Moors who were settled in Spain.
Muscadine, a sweet, strong wine made in Italy and France.

Nisi dignus vindice nodus, unless the difficulty call for such a deliverer.
Noble, a coin made of the noble metal, gold, worth 6s. 8d.
Nom de guerre, a name assumed on enlisting or entering a gentleman's service.
Nullifidian, one who believes nothing, an unbeliever.
Nunc dimittis, the well-known canticle of the Prayer-Book.
Nuzle, or *Nuzzle*, to hide the head under the bedclothes.

Odds pittikins, or *Ods pitikins*, a corruption of God's pity! a kind of oath.
Œil-de-bœuf, an oval window, a small octagonal hall.
Ohe, jam satis, Ah! enough, enough!
Other-guess, other-gates, or *other-guise*, of another sort or fashion.
Over-red, to cover over with red colouring matter, to summon up courage against (*Macbeth*, Act v. sc. 3).

Pacatumque regit Patriis virtutibus orbem, he rules over a world brought to peace by the virtues of his forefathers.
Parma non bene relicta, his shield, unfortunately, being left behind him.
Pasquinade, a satire, lampoon.
Passado, a forward thrust in fencing.
Passmented, laced.
Pater patriæ, the father of his country.
Pax nascitur ex bello, peace grows out of war.
Paynim, pagan.
Peak, to peep, pry.
Peccadillo, a slight offence, fault.
Percussum Egyptium abscondit sabulo, he hid the Egyptian that he had killed in the sand.
Periapt, an amulet, charm.
Petard, a military engine for holding gunpowder or some similar explosive, and used for bursting open doors and gates.
Petronel, a horseman's pistol or small carbine.
Pis aller, the last resource.
Plait-il? Your pleasure?
Point de cérémonie, make no ceremony.
Propria quæ maribus, the right thing for men.
Protégé, one protected and favoured.
Pulvis fulminans, fulminating powder.

Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt, The Jews will sell you whatever dreams you wish for.
Quasi arrière, as it were *arrière, i.e.* behind.
Quillet, a subtlety, nicety, quibble.
Quoit down, to throw hurl down.

Ratio, reason, conclusion.
Rectus in curia, right with the court, of good character before the court.
Rondelai, a song in which a refrain keeps recurring.
Rouse, a bumper.
Rustica Fidele, rustic fidelity.

Sack-posset, a drink made of Canary wine, milk, etc.
Salvo, reservation.
Sanctum sanctorum, holy of holies, most private apartment.
Sasine and livery, in English law, livery with seisin, an old form of conveyancing land, etc.
Saunders Gardner, a fencing term.
Scald, scurvy, paltry, contemptible.
Scrambling, irregular, rambling.
Scumber, to dung.
Siserary, a telling blow, vehement attack.
Skelder, to live by begging.
Skink, to pour out wine, etc.
Slie, sly.
Slot, the track, footmarks.
Snift, a snivel.
Spadroon, a long sword, but lighter than the broadsword.
Splendida moles, a grand work.
Squab, plump, fat.
Stramaçon, or *estramaçon*, a sword-stroke; also a sword.
Sub ferula, under the master's rod, under tutelage.
Swatter, to splutter and move rapidly in water.

Tanquam deus ex machina, like the personal interference of a deity.
Tantivy boy, a roystering Royalist.
Terras quas Rex, etc.

(p. 192), lands which the king exchanged for lands belonging to the Templars.

Tester, an old French silver coin, worth sixpence, originally 1s. 6d.

Tiffany, a kind of gauze or thin silk.

Tike, a dog.

Tire upon, to seize and tear the quarry.

Toledo, a sword made at Toledo in Spain.

Topiary art, landscape gardening.

Tuck-sword, a long, narrow sword, a rapier.

Umbles, or *humbles*, entrails of the deer.

Unco, unusually, uncommonly.

Utopia. See *Vtopia*.

Valeat quantum, so far as is requisite.

Verdurer, an officer who has charge of the trees and underwood in a royal forest.

Vtopia, an ideal state with an ideal society and an ideal government.

Wanion, with a, mischief be to him (it).

Word, to dispute, contend in words.

THE 'BAUBLE.

THE

FAIR MAID OF PERTH

OR ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE—SECOND SERIES

By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

DEATH OF TORQUIL, *page* 368

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1892

PROUDFUTE UNHORSED BY DEVIL'S DICK.—PAGE 236.

INTRODUCTION

In continuing the lucubrations of Chrystal Croftangry, it occurred that, although the press had of late years teemed with works of various descriptions concerning the Scottish Gael, no attempt had hitherto been made to sketch their manners, as these might be supposed to have existed at the period when the Statute-book, as well as the page of the chronicler, begins to present constant evidence of the difficulties to which the crown was exposed, while the haughty House of Douglas all but overbalanced its authority on the Southern border, and the North was at the same time torn in pieces by the yet untamed savageness of the Highland races, and the daring loftiness to which some of the remoter chieftains still carried their pretensions. The well-authenticated fact of two powerful clans having deputed each thirty champions to fight out a quarrel of old standing, in presence of King Robert III., his brother the Duke of Albany, and the whole court of Scotland, at Perth, in the year of grace 1396, seemed to mark with equal distinctness the rancour of these mountain-feuds, and the degraded condition of the general government of the country; and it was fixed upon accordingly as the point on which the main incidents of a romantic narrative might be made to hinge. The characters of Robert III., his ambitious brother, and his dissolute son, seemed to offer some opportunities of interesting contrast;—and the tragic fate of the heir of the throne, with its immediate consequences, might serve to complete the picture of cruelty and lawlessness.

Two features of the story of this barrier-battle on the Inch of Perth—the flight of one of the appointed champions, and the reckless heroism of a townsman, that voluntarily offered for a small piece of coin to supply his place in the mortal encounter—suggested the imaginary persons, on whom much of the novel is expended. The fugitive Celt might have been easily dealt with, had a ludicrous style of colouring been adopted; but it appeared to the Author that there would be more of novelty, as well as of serious interest, if he could succeed in gaining for him something of that sympathy which is incompatible with the total absence of respect. Miss Baillie had drawn a coward by nature capable of acting as a hero under the strong impulse of filial affection. It seemed not impossible to conceive the case of one constitutionally weak of nerve, being supported by feelings of honour and of jealousy up to a certain point, and then suddenly giving way, under circumstances to which the bravest heart could hardly refuse compassion.†*

The controversy as to who really were the clans that figured in the barbarous conflict of the Inch, has been revived since the publication of the Fair Maid of Perth, and treated in particular at great length by Mr. Robert Mackay of Thurso, in his very curious History of the House and Clan of Mackay.‡ *Without pretending to say that he has settled any part of the question in the affirmative, this gentleman certainly seems to have quite succeeded in proving that his own worthy sept had no part in the transaction. The Mackays were in that age seated, as they have since con-*

* [One of Joanna Baillie's *Plays of the Passions*, viz. on Fear.]

† [Mr. Lockhart informs us that the Author, in portraying the character of Conachar, had in mind the unhappy fate of his own brother.—See chapters xix. and lxxv. of Scott's *Memoirs*.]

‡ Edinburgh, 4to, 1829.

tinued to be, in the extreme north of the island; and their chief at the time was a personage of such importance, that his name and proper designation could not have been omitted in the early narratives of the occurrence. He on one occasion brought four thousand of his clan to the aid of the royal banner against the Lord of the Isles. This historian is of opinion that the Clan Quhele of Wyntoun were the* Camerons, *who appear to have about that period been often designated as* Macewans, *and to have gained much more recently the name of* Cameron, *i.e.* Wrynose, *from a blemish in the physiognomy of some heroic chief of the line of Lochiel. This view of the case is also adopted by Douglas in his* Baronage, *where he frequently mentions the bitter feuds between Clan Chattan and Clan Kay, and identifies the latter sept, in reference to the events of 1396, with the Camerons. It is perhaps impossible to clear up thoroughly this controversy, little interesting in itself, at least to readers on this side of Inverness. The names, as we have them in Wyntoun, are* Clanwhewyl *and* Clachinya, *the latter probably not correctly transcribed. In the* Scoti-Chronicon *they are* Clanquhele *and* Clankay. *Hector Boece writes* Clanchattan *and* Clankay, *in which he is followed by Leslie; while Buchanan disdains to disfigure his page with their Gaelic designations at all, and merely describes them as two powerful races in the wild and lawless region beyond the Grampians. Out of this jumble what Sassenach can pretend* dare lucem? *The name Clanwheill appears so late as 1594, in an Act of James VI. Is it not possible that it may be, after all, a mere corruption of Clan Lochiel?*

The reader may not be displeased to have Wyntoun's original rhymes:—

A thousand and thre hunder yere,
Nynty and sex to mak all clere—
Of thre-score wyld Scottis men,
Thretty agane thretty then,
In felny bolnit of auld fede,†
As thare fore-elders ware slane to deae.
Tha thre-score ware Clannys twa,
Clahynnhè Qwhewyl and Clachinyha:
Of thir twa Kynnys ware tha men,
Thretty agane thretty then:
And thare thai had thair Chiftanys twa,
Scha‡ Fergwharis' son wes ane of tha,
The tother Cristy Johnesone.
A selcouth thing be tha was done,
At Sanct Johnstone§ besyde the Freris,
All thai enterit in barreris
Wyth bow and ax, knyf and swerd,
To deil amang thaim thair last werd.‖
Thare thai laid on that time sa fast,
Quha had the ware¶ thare at the last
I will nocht say; but quha best had,
*He was but dout bathe muth and mad.***
Fifty or má ware slane that day,
Suá rew wyth lif than past away.'

The Prior of Lochleven makes no mention either of the evasion of one of the Gaelic champions, or of the gallantry of the Perth artisan, in offering to take a share in the conflict. Both incidents, however, were introduced, no doubt from tradition, by the continuator of Fordun, whose narrative is in these words:—

'Anno Dom. millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo sexto, magna pars borealis Scotiæ, trans Alpes, inquietata fuit per duos pestiferos Cateranos, et eorum sequaces, viz. Scheabeg et suos consanguinarios, qui Clankay; et Cristi-Jonson, ac suos, qui Clanquhele dicebantur; qui nullo pacto vel tractatu pacificari poterant, nullâque arte regis vel gubernatoris poterant edomari, quoadusque nobilis et industriosus D. David de Lindesay de Crawford, et dominus Thomas comes Moraviæ, diligentiam et vires apposuerunt, ac inter partes sic tractaverunt, ut coram domino rege certo die convenirent apud Perth, et alterutra pars eligeret de progenie sua triginta personas adversus triginta de parte contraria, gladiis tantùm, arcubus et sagittis, absque deploidibus, vel armaturis aliis, præter bipennes; et sic congredientes finem liti ponerent, et terra pace potiretur. Utrique igitur parti summè placuit contractus, et die Lunæ proximo ante festum Sancti Michaëlis, apud North-insulam de Perth, coram Rege et Gubernatore, et innumerabili multitudine comparentes, conflictum acerrimum inierunt: ubi de sexaginta interfecti sunt omnes, excepto uno ex parte Clankay, et undecim exceptis ex parte altera. Hoc etiam ibi accidit, quòd omnes in præcinctu belli constituti, unus eorum locum diffugii considerans, inter omnes in amnem elabitur, et aquam de Thaya natando transgreditur; à millenis insequitur, sed nusquam apprehenditur. Stant igitur partes attonitæ, tanquam non ad conflictum progressuri, ob defectum evasi: noluit enim pars integrum habens numerum sociorum consentire, ut unus de suis demeretur; nec potuit pars altera quocumque pretio alterum ad supplendum vicem fugientis inducere. Stupent igitur omnes hærentes, de damno fugitivi conquerentes. Et cùm totum illud opus cessare putaretur, ecce in medio prorupit unus stipulosus vernaculus, staturâ modicus, sed efferus, dicens; Ecce ego! quis me conducet intrare cum operariis istis ad hunc ludum theatralem? Pro dimidia enim marca ludum experiar, ultra hoc petens, ut si vivus de palæstra evasero, victum à quocumque vestrûm recipiam dum vixero: quia, sicut dicitur, "Majorem caritatem nemo habet, quàm ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis." Quali mercede donabor, qui animam meam pro inimicis reipublicæ et regni pono? Quod petiit, à rege et diversis magnatibus conceditur. Cum hoc arcus ejus extenditur, et primò sagittam in partem contrariam transmittit, et unum interficit. Confestim hinc inde sagittæ volitant, bipennes librant, gladios vibrant, alterutro certant, et veluti, carnifices boves in macello, sic inconsternatè ad invicem se trucidant. Sed nec inter tantos repertus est vel unus, qui, tanquam vecors aut timidus, sive post tergum alterius declinans, seipsum à tanta cæde prætendit excusare. Iste tamen tyro superveniens finaliter illæsus exivit; et dehinc multo tempore Boreas quievit; nec ibidem fuit, ut suprà, Cateranorum excursus.'††

The scene is heightened with many florid additions by Boece and Leslie, and the contending

* [The chieftain who ruled over the Western Isles of Scotland.]

† *i.e.* Boiled with the cruelty of an old feud.

‡ *Scha* is supposed to be *Toshach*, *i.e.* Macintosh; the father of the chief of this sept at the time was named Ferchard. In Bowar he is *Scheabeg*, *i.e.* Toshach the Little.

§ [Perth was formerly called also Saint Johnstoun.]

‖ *i.e.* Fate, doom. ¶ The *waur*—the worse.

** *Muth and mad*, *i.e.* exhausted both in body and mind.

†† Note A. Translation of Fordun.

savages in Buchanan utter speeches after the most approved pattern of Livy.

The devotion of the young Chief of Clan Quhele's foster-father and foster-brethren, in the novel, is a trait of clannish fidelity, of which Highland story furnishes many examples. In the battle of Inverkeithing, between the Royalists and Oliver Cromwell's troops, a foster-father and seven brave sons are known to have thus sacrificed themselves for Sir Hector Maclean of Duart—the old man, whenever one of his boys fell, thrusting forward another to fill his place at the right hand of the beloved chief, with the very words adopted in the novel—'Another for Hector!'

Nay, the feeling could outlive generations. The late much-lamented General Stewart of Garth, in his account of the battle of Killiekrankie, informs us that Lochiel was attended on the field by the son of his foster-brother. 'This faithful adherent followed him like his shadow, ready to assist him with his sword, or cover him from the shot of the enemy. Suddenly the chief missed his friend from his side, and, turning round to look what had become of him, saw him lying on his back with his breast pierced by an arrow. He had hardly breath, before he expired, to tell Lochiel that, seeing an enemy, a Highlander in General Mackay's army, aiming at him with a bow and arrow, he sprang behind him, and thus sheltered him from instant death. This,' observes the gallant David Stewart, 'is a species of duty not often practised, perhaps, by our aide-de-camps of the present day.'—Sketches of the Highlanders, vol. i. p. 65.

*I have only to add, that the Second Series of 'Chronicles of the Canongate,' with the Chapter Introductory which now follows, appeared in May 1828, and had a favourable reception.**

ABBOTSFORD, *Aug.* 15, 1831.

* [Mr. Senior, in criticising The Fair Maid, while he picks many holes in the plot, estimates the characters very highly. Of the glee-maiden he says, 'Louise is a delightful sketch—nothing can be more exquisite than the manner in which her story is partly told, and partly hinted, or than the contrast between her natural and her professional character; and after discussing at some length Rothsay, Henbane, Ramorny, etc., he declares Conachar's character to be 'perfectly tragic, neither too bad for sympathy, nor so good as to render his calamity revolting; its great merit being in the boldness with which we are called upon to sympathize with a deficiency which is generally the subject of unmitigated scorn.']

CURFEW STREET AND SIMON GLOVER'S HOUSE, PERTH.

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

SECOND SERIES.

INTRODUCTORY.

The ashes here of murder'd kings
Beneath my footsteps sleep;
And yonder lies the scene of death,
Where Mary learn'd to weep.
CAPTAIN MARJORIBANKS.

EVERY quarter of Edinburgh has its own peculiar boast, so that the city together combines within its precincts (if you take the word of the inhabitants on the subject), as much of historical interest as of natural beauty. Our claims in behalf of the Canongate are not the slightest. The Castle may excel us in extent of prospect and sublimity of site; the Calton had always the superiority of its unrivalled panorama, and has of late added that of its towers, and triumphal arches, and the pillars of its Parthenon. The High Street, we acknowledge, had the distinguished honour of being defended by fortifications, of which we can show no vestiges. We will not descend to notice the claims of more upstart districts, called Old New Town and New New Town, not to mention the favourite Moray Place, which is the newest New Town of all. We will not match ourselves except with our equals, and with our equals in age only, for in dignity we admit of none. We boast being the Court end of the town, possessing the Palace and the sepulchral remains of monarchs, and that we have the power to excite, in a degree unknown to the less honoured quarters of the city, the dark and solemn recollections of ancient grandeur, which occupied the precincts of our venerable Abbey from the time of Saint David, till her deserted halls were once more made glad, and her long silent echoes awakened, by the visit of our present gracious sovereign.†*

My long habitation in the neighbourhood, and the quiet respectability of my habits, have given me a sort of intimacy with good Mistress Policy, the housekeeper in that most interesting part of the old building called Queen Mary's Apartments. But a circumstance which lately happened has conferred upon me greater privileges; so that, indeed, I might, I believe, venture on the exploit of Chatelet, who was executed for being found secreted at midnight in the very bedchamber of Scotland's Mistress.

It chanced that the good lady I have mentioned was, in the discharge of her function, showing the apartments to a cockney from London;—not one of your quiet, dull, commonplace visitors, who gape, yawn, and listen with an acquiescent umph *to the information doled out by the provincial cicerone. No such thing—this was the brisk, alert agent of a great house in the city, who missed no opportunity of doing business, as he termed it, that is, of putting off the goods of his employers, and improving his own account of commission. He had fidgeted through the suite of apartments, without finding the least opportunity to touch upon that which he considered as the principal end of his existence. Even the story of Rizzio's assassination presented no ideas to this emissary of commerce, until the housekeeper appealed, in support of her narrative, to the dusky stains of blood upon the floor.*

'These are the stains,' she said; 'nothing will remove them from the place—there they have been for two hundred and fifty years, and there they will remain while the floor is left standing—neither water nor anything else will ever remove them from that spot.'

Now, our cockney, amongst other articles, sold Scouring Drops, as they are called, and a stain of two hundred and fifty years' standing was interesting to him, not because it had been caused by the blood of a queen's favourite, slain in her apartment, but because it offered so admirable an opportunity to prove the efficacy of his unequalled Detergent Elixir. Down on his knees went our friend, but neither in horror nor devotion.

'Two hundred and fifty years, ma'am, and nothing take it away? Why, if it had been five

* This 'newest New Town,' in case Mr. Croftangry's lucubrations should outlive its possession of any right to that designation, was begun, I think, in 1824, on the park and gardens [of Drumsheugh] attached to a quondam pretty suburban residence of the Earls of Moray—from whose different titles, and so forth, the names of the *places* and streets erected were, of course, taken.—Aug. 1831.

† The visit of George IV. to Scotland, in August 1822, will not soon be forgotten. It satisfied many who had shared Doctor Johnson's doubts on the subject, that the old feelings of loyalty, in spite of all the derision of modern wits, continued firmly rooted, and might be appealed to with confidence, even under circumstances apparently the most unfavourable. Who that had observed the state of public feeling with respect to this most amiable prince's domestic position at a period but a few months earlier, would have believed that he should ever witness such scenes of enthusiastic and rapturous devotion to his person, as filled up the whole panorama of his fifteen days at Edinburgh?—Aug. 1831.

hundred, I have something in my pocket will fetch it out in five minutes. D'ye see this elixir, ma'am? I will show you the stain vanish in a moment.'

Accordingly, wetting one end of his handkerchief with the all-deterging specific, he began to rub away on the planks, without heeding the remonstrances of Mistress Policy. She, good soul, stood at first in astonishment, like the Abbess of Saint Bridget's, when a profane visitant drunk up the phial of brandy which had long passed muster among the relics of the cloister for the tears of the blessed saint. The venerable guardian of Saint Bridget probably expected the interference of her patroness—She of Holy Rood might, perhaps, hope that David Rizzio's spectre would arise to prevent the profanation. But Mistress Policy stood not long in the silence of horror. She uplifted her voice, and screamed as loudly as Queen Mary herself, when the dreadful deed was in the act of perpetration—

'Harrow now out! and walawa!' she cried.

I happened to be taking my morning walk in the adjoining gallery, pondering in my mind why the kings of Scotland, who hung around me, should be each and every one painted with a nose like the knocker of a door, when lo! the walls once more re-echoed with such shrieks, as formerly were as often heard in the Scottish palaces as were sounds of revelry and music. Somewhat surprised at such an alarm in a place so solitary, I hastened to the spot, and found the well-meaning traveller scrubbing the floor like a housemaid, while Mistress Policy, dragging him by the skirts of the coat, in vain endeavoured to divert him from his sacrilegious purpose. It cost me some trouble to explain to the zealous purifier of silk stockings, embroidered waistcoats, broadcloth, and deal-planks, that there were such things in the world as stains which ought to remain indelible, on account of the associations with which they are connected. Our good friend viewed everything of the kind only as the means of displaying the virtue of his vaunted commodity. He comprehended, however, that he would not be permitted to proceed to exemplify its powers on the present occasion, as two or three inhabitants appeared, who, like me, threatened to maintain the housekeeper's side of the question. He therefore took his leave, muttering that he had always heard the Scots were a nasty people, but had no idea they carried it so far as to choose to have the floors of their palaces blood-boltered, like Banquo's ghost, when to remove them would have cost but a hundred drops of the Infallible Detergent Elixir, prepared and sold by Messrs. Scrub and Rub, in five shilling and ten shilling bottles, each bottle being marked with the initials of the inventor, to counterfeit which would be to incur the pains of forgery.

Freed from the odious presence of this lover of cleanliness, my good friend Mistress Policy was profuse in her expressions of thanks; and yet her gratitude, instead of exhausting itself in these declarations, according to the way of the world, continues as lively at this moment as if she had never thanked me at all. It is owing to her recollection of this piece of good service, that I have the permission of wandering, like the ghost of some departed gentleman-usher, through these deserted halls, sometimes, as the old Irish ditty expresses it,

Thinking upon things that are long enough ago;

and sometimes wishing I could, with the good-luck of most editors of romantic narrative, light upon some hidden crypt or massive antique cabinet, which should yield to my researches an almost illegible manuscript, containing the authentic particulars of some of the strange deeds of those wild days of the unhappy Mary.

My dear Mistress Baliol used to sympathize with me when I regretted that all godsends of this nature had ceased to occur, and that an author might chatter his teeth to pieces by the sea-side, without a wave ever wafting to him a casket containing such a history as that of Automathes; that he might break his shins in stumbling through a hundred vaults, without finding anything but rats and mice, and become the tenant of a dozen sets of shabby tenements, without finding that they contained any manuscript but the weekly bill for board and lodging. A dairymaid of these degenerate days might as well wash and deck her dairy in hopes of finding the fairy tester in her shoe.*

'It is a sad, and too true a tale, cousin,' said Mistress Baliol. 'I am sure we have all occasion to regret the want of these ready supplements to a failing invention. But you, most of all, have right to complain that the fairies have not favoured your researches—you, who have shown the world that the age of chivalry still exists—you, the Knight of Croftangry, who braved the fury of the "London 'prentice bold," in behalf of the fair Dame Policy, and the memorial of Rizzio's slaughter! Is it not a pity, cousin, considering the feat of chivalry was otherwise so much according to rule—is it not, I say, a great pity that the lady had not been a little younger, and the legend a little older?'

'Why, as to the age at which a fair dame loses the benefit of chivalry, and is no longer entitled to crave boon of brave knight, that I leave to the statutes of the Order of Errantry; but for the blood of Rizzio I take up the gauntlet, and maintain against all and sundry that I hold the stains to be of no modern date, but to have been actually the consequence and the record of that terrible assassination.'

'As I cannot accept the challenge to the field, fair cousin, I am contented to require proof.'

'The unaltered tradition of the Palace, and the correspondence of the existing state of things with that tradition.'

'Explain, if you please.'

'I will—The universal tradition bears, that when Rizzio was dragged out of the chamber of the Queen, the heat and fury of the assassins, who struggled which should deal him most wounds, despatched him at the door of the anteroom. At the door of the apartment, therefore, the greater quantity of the ill-fated minion's blood was spilled, and there the marks of it are still shown. It is reported further by historians, that Mary continued her entreaties for his life, mingling her prayers with screams and exclamations, until she knew

* [See the philosophical romance by John Kirkby, entitled *The Capacity and Extent of the Human Understanding, exemplified in the Extraordinary Case of Automathes*, etc., London, 1745.]

that he was assuredly slain, on which she wiped her eyes, and said, "I will now study revenge."'

'All this is granted.—But the blood? would it not wash out, or waste out, think you, in so many years?'

'I am coming to that presently. The constant tradition of the Palace says that Mary discharged any measures to be taken to remove the marks of slaughter, which she had resolved should remain as a memorial to quicken and confirm her purposed vengeance. But it is added that, satisfied with the knowledge that it existed, and not desirous to have the ghastly evidence always under her eye, she caused a traverse, as it is called (that is, a temporary screen of boards), to be drawn along the under part of the anteroom, a few feet from the door, so as to separate the place stained with the blood from the rest of the apartment, and involve it in considerable obscurity. Now this temporary partition still exists, and, by running across and interrupting the plan of the roof and cornices, plainly intimates that it has been intended to serve some temporary purpose, since it disfigures the proportions of the room, interferes with the ornaments of the ceiling, and could only have been put there for some such purpose, as hiding an object too disagreeable to be looked upon. As to the objection that the blood-stains would have disappeared in course of time, I apprehend that if measures to efface them were not taken immediately after the affair happened—if the blood, in other words, were allowed to sink into the wood, the stain would become almost indelible. Now, not to mention that our Scottish palaces were not particularly well washed in those days, and that there were no Patent Drops to assist the labours of the mop, I think it very probable that these dark relics might subsist for a long course of time, even if Mary had not desired or directed that they should be preserved, but screened by the traverse from public sight. I know several instances of similar blood-stains remaining for a great many years, and I doubt whether, after a certain time, anything can remove them, save the carpenter's plane. If any seneschal, by way of increasing the interest of the apartments, had, by means of paint, or any other mode of imitation, endeavoured to palm upon posterity supposititious stigmata, I conceive the impostor would have chosen the Queen's cabinet and the bedroom for the scene of his trick, placing his bloody tracery where it could be distinctly seen by visitors, instead of hiding it behind the traverse in this manner. The existence of the said traverse, or temporary partition, is also extremely difficult to be accounted for, if the common and ordinary tradition be rejected. In short, all the rest of this striking locality is so true to the historical fact, that I think it may well bear out the additional circumstance of the blood on the floor.'

'I profess to you,' answered Mistress Baliol, 'that I am very willing to be converted to your faith. We talk of a credulous vulgar, without always recollecting that there is a vulgar incredulity, which, in historical matters, as well as in those of religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine, and endeavours to assume the credit of an esprit fort, *by denying whatever happens to be a little beyond the very limited comprehension of the sceptic.—And so, that point being settled, and you possessing, as we understand, the Open Sesame into these secret apartments, how, if we may ask, do you intend to avail yourself of your privilege? —Do you propose to pass the night in the royal bedchamber?'*

'For what purpose, my dear lady?—if to improve the rheumatism, this east wind may serve the purpose.'

'Improve the rheumatism—Heaven forbid! that would be worse than adding colours to the violet. No, I mean to recommend a night on the couch of the Rose of Scotland, merely to improve the imagination. Who knows what dreams might be produced by a night spent in a mansion of so many memories! For aught I know, the iron door of the postern stair might open at the dead hour of midnight, and, as at the time of the conspiracy, forth might sally the phantom assassins, with stealthy step and ghastly look, to renew the semblance of the deed. There comes the fierce fanatic Ruthven—party hatred enabling him to bear the armour which would otherwise weigh down a form extenuated by wasting disease. See how his writhen features show under the hollow helmet, like those of a corpse tenanted by a demon, whose vindictive purpose looks out at the flashing eyes, while the visage has the stillness of death.—Yonder appears the tall form of the boy Darnley, as goodly in person as vacillating in resolution; yonder he advances with hesitating step, and yet more hesitating purpose, his childish fear having already overcome his childish passion. He is in the plight of a mischievous lad who has fired a mine, and who now, expecting the explosion in remorse and terror, would give his life to quench the train which his own hand lighted.—Yonder—yonder—But I forget the rest of the worthy cutthroats. Help me, if you can.'

'Summon up,' said I, 'the Postulate, George Douglas, the most active of the gang. Let him arise at your call—the claimant of wealth which he does not possess—the partaker of the illustrious blood of Douglas, but which in his veins is sullied with illegitimacy. Paint him the ruthless, the daring, the ambitious—so near greatness, yet debarred from it—so near to wealth, yet excluded from possessing it—a political Tantalus, ready to do or dare anything to terminate his necessities and assert his imperfect claims.'*

'Admirable, my dear Croftangry! But what is a Postulate?'

'Pooh, my dear madam, you disturb the current of my ideas—the Postulate was, in Scottish phrase, the candidate for some benefice which he had not yet attained—George Douglas, who stabbed Rizzio, was the Postulate for the temporal possessions of the rich Abbey of Arbroath.'

'I stand informed—Come, proceed; who comes next?' continued Mistress Baliol.

'Who comes next? Yon tall, thin-made, savage-looking man, with the petronel in his hand, must be Andrew Ker of Faldonside,† a

* [In Greek mythology, a king, who, for having offended the gods, was placed in the midst of a lake, the waters of which always flowed away from him when he attempted to drink of them, whilst grapes hung above his head, but just beyond his reach, and a huge rock continually threatened to fall upon him and crush him.]

† [Of this 'stout and zealous promoter of the Reformation,' see the editor's Preface, p. lxviii., to Knox's Works, vol. vi., 1864. He married, in 1574, Margaret Stewart widow of John Knox, the Reformer.]

brother's son, I believe, of the celebrated Sir David Ker of Cessford; his look and bearing those of a Border freebooter; his disposition so savage, that, during the fray in the cabinet, he presented his loaded piece at the bosom of the young and beautiful Queen, that Queen also being within a few weeks of becoming a mother.'

'Brave, beau cousin!—*Well, having raised your bevy of phantoms, I hope you do not intend to send them back to their cold beds to warm them? You will put them to some action, and since you do threaten the Canongate with your desperate quill, you surely mean to novelize, or to dramatize if you will, this most singular of all tragedies?'*

'Worse—that is less interesting—periods of history have been, indeed, shown up, for furnishing amusement to the peaceable ages which have succeeded; but, dear lady, the events are too well known in Mary's days, to be used as vehicles of romantic fiction. What can a better writer than myself add to the elegant and forcible narrative of Robertson? So adieu to my vision—I awake, like John Bunyan, "and behold it is a dream."—Well, enough that I awake without a sciatica, which would have probably rewarded my slumbers had I profaned Queen Mary's bed, by using it as a mechanical resource to awaken a torpid imagination.'*

'This will never do, cousin,' answered Mistress Baliol; 'you must get over all these scruples if you would thrive in the character of a romantic historian, which you have determined to embrace. What is the classic Robertson to you? The light which he carried was that of a lamp to illuminate the dark events of antiquity; yours is a magic lantern to raise up wonders which never existed. No reader of sense wonders at your historical inaccuracies, any more than he does to see Punch in the show-box seated on the same throne with King Solomon in his glory, or to hear him hollowing out to the patriarch, amid the deluge, "Mighty hazy weather, Master Noah."'

'Do not mistake me, my dear madam,' said I; 'I am quite conscious of my own immunities as a tale-teller. But even the mendacious Mr. Fagg, in Sheridan's Rivals, *assures us that though he never scruples to tell a lie at his master's command, yet it hurts his conscience to be found out. Now, this is the reason why I avoid in prudence all well-known paths of history, where every one can read the finger-posts carefully set up to advise them of the right turning; and the very boys and girls, who learn the history of Britain by way of question and answer, hoot at a poor author if he abandons the highway.'*

'Do not be discouraged, however, cousin Chrystal. There are plenty of wildernesses in Scottish history, through which, unless I am greatly misinformed, no certain paths have been laid down from actual survey, but which are only described by imperfect tradition, which fills up with wonders and with legends the periods in which no real events are recognised to have taken place. Even thus, as Mat Prior says—

Geographers on pathless downs,
Place elephants instead of towns.'

'If such be your advice, my dear lady,' said I, 'the course of my story shall take its rise, upon this occasion, at a remote period of history, and in a province removed from my natural sphere of the Canongate.'

It was under the influence of those feelings that I undertook the following Historical Romance, which, often suspended and flung aside, is now arrived at a size too important to be altogether thrown away, although there may be little prudence in sending it to the press.

I have not placed in the mouth of the characters the Lowland Scotch dialect now spoken, because unquestionably the Scottish of that day resembled very closely the Anglo-Saxon, with a sprinkling of French or Norman to enrich it. Those who wish to investigate the subject may consult the Chronicles of Winton, *and the* History of Bruce, *by Archdeacon Barbour. But supposing my own skill in the ancient Scottish were sufficient to invest the dialogue with its peculiarities, a translation must have been necessary for the benefit of the general reader. The Scottish dialect may be therefore considered as laid aside, unless where the use of peculiar words may add emphasis or vivacity to the composition.*

April 1828.

* [William Robertson, author of the celebrated *History of Scotland*, 1758–59.]

FATHER CLEMENT AND CATHARINE GLOVER.—PAGE 268.

CHAPTER. I.

'Behold the Tiber!' the vain Roman cried
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglie's side;
But where's the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay?*

ANONYMOUS.

AMONG all the provinces in Scotland, if an intelligent stranger were asked to describe the most varied and the most beautiful, it is probable he would name the county of Perth. A native, also, of any other district of Caledonia, though his partialities might lead him to prefer his native county in the first instance, would certainly class that of Perth in the second, and thus give its inhabitants a fair right to plead that—prejudice apart—Perthshire forms the fairest portion of the northern kingdom. It is long since Lady Mary Wortley Montague, with that excellent taste which characterizes her writings, expressed her opinion that the most interesting district of every country, and that which exhibits the varied beauties of natural scenery in greatest perfection, is that where the mountains sink down upon the champaign, or more level land. The most picturesque, if not the highest hills, are also to be found in the county of Perth. The rivers find their way out of the mountainous region by the wildest leaps, and through the most romantic passes connecting the Highlands with the Lowlands. Above, the vegetation of a happier climate and soil is mingled with the magnificent characteristics of mountain-scenery; and woods, groves, and thickets in profusion clothe the base of the hills, ascend up the ravines, and mingle with the precipices. It is in such favoured regions that the traveller finds what the poet Gray, or some one else, has termed, Beauty lying in the lap of Terror.

From the same advantage of situation, this favoured province presents a variety of the most pleasing character. Its lakes, woods, and mountains may vie in beauty with any that the Highland tour exhibits; while Perthshire contains amidst this romantic scenery, and in some places in connection with it, many fertile and habitable tracts, which may vie with the richness of merry England herself. The county has also been the scene of many remarkable exploits and events, some of historical importance, others interesting to the poet and romancer, though recorded in popular tradition alone. It was in these vales that the Saxons of the plain and the Gael of the mountains had many a desperate and bloody encounter, in which it was frequently impossible to decide the palm of victory between the mailed chivalry of the Low Country, and the plaided clans whom they opposed.

Perth, so eminent for the beauty of its situation, is a place of great antiquity; and old tradition assigns to the town the importance of a Roman foundation. That victorious nation, it is said, pretended to recognise the Tiber in the much more magnificent and navigable Tay, and to acknowledge the large level space, well known by the name of the North Inch, as having

* Such is the Author's opinion, founded, perhaps, on feelings of national pride, of the relative claims of the classical river and the Scottish one. Should he ever again be a blotter of paper, he hopes to be able to speak on this subject the surer language of personal conviction.—Aug. 1831.

a near resemblance to the Campus Martius. The city was often the residence of our monarchs, who, although they had no palace at Perth, found the Cistercian Convent amply sufficient for the reception of their court. It was here that James the First, one of the wisest and best of the Scottish kings, fell a victim to the jealousy of the vengeful aristocracy. Here, also, occurred the mysterious conspiracy of Gowrie,* the scene of which has only of late been effaced, by the destruction of the ancient palace in which the tragedy was acted. The Antiquarian Society of Perth,† with just zeal for the objects of their pursuit, have published an accurate plan of this memorable mansion, with some remarks upon its connection with the narrative of the plot, which display equal acuteness and candour.

One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or perhaps the world, can afford, is, or rather we may say was, the prospect from a spot called the Wicks of Baiglie, being a species of niche, at which the traveller arrived, after a long stage from Kinross, through a waste and uninteresting country, and from which, as forming a pass over the summit of a ridgy eminence which he had gradually surmounted, he beheld, stretching beneath him, the valley of the Tay, traversed by its ample and lordly stream; the town of Perth, with its two large meadows or Inches, its steeples and its towers; the hills of Moncreiff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed with woods; the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions; and the distant view of the huge Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape. The alteration of the road, greatly, it must be owned, to the improvement of general intercourse, avoids this magnificent point of view, and the landscape is introduced more gradually and partially to the eye, though the approach must be still considered as extremely beautiful. There is yet, we believe, a footpath left open, by which the station at the Wicks of Baiglie may be approached; and the traveller, by quitting his horse or equipage, and walking a few hundred yards, may still compare the real landscape with the sketch which we have attempted to give. But it is not in our power to communicate, or in his to receive, the exquisite charm which surprise gives to pleasure, when so splendid a view arises when least expected or hoped for, and which Chrystal Croftangry experienced when he beheld, for the first time, the matchless scene.‡

Childish wonder, indeed, was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old; and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift like those in a theatre before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, and the period is now more than fifty years past, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing when much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection. It is therefore natural that, whilst deliberating on what might be brought forward for the amusement of the public, I should pitch upon some narrative connected with the splendid scenery which made so much impression on my youthful imagination, and which may perhaps have that effect in setting off the imperfections of the composition, which ladies suppose a fine set of china to possess in heightening the flavour of indifferent tea.§

The period at which I propose to commence, is, however, considerably earlier than either of the remarkable historical transactions to which I have already alluded, as the events which I am about to recount occurred during the last years of the fourteenth century, when the Scottish sceptre was swayed by the gentle, but feeble hand of John, who, on being called to the throne, assumed the title of Robert the Third.

CHAPTER II.

A country lip may have the velvet touch:
Though she's no lady, she may please as much.
DRYDEN.

PERTH, boasting, as we have already mentioned, so large a portion of the beauties of inanimate nature, has at no time been without its own share of those charms which are at once more interesting and more transient. To be called the Fair Maid of Perth would at any period have been a high distinction, and have inferred no mean superiority in beauty, where there were many to claim that much-envied attribute. But, in the feudal times, to which we now call the reader's attention, female beauty was a quality of much higher importance than it has been since the ideas of chivalry have been in a great measure extinguished. The love of the ancient cavaliers was a licensed species of idolatry, which the love of Heaven alone was theoretically supposed to approach in intensity, and which in practice is seldom equalled. God and the ladies were familiarly appealed to in the same breath; and devotion to the fair sex was as peremptorily enjoined upon the aspirant to the honour of chivalry, as that which was due

* [A reputed attempt, on the part of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother Ruthven, to kidnap and slay King James VI. at Perth in 1600; but in which both the earl and Ruthven met their death. It is also alleged that the killing of these two noblemen was at all events welcome to James, if not indeed planned by him.]

† [The first volume, printed at Perth, 1827, is all that ever appeared.]

‡ Note B. View from the Wicks of Baiglie.

§ Chrystal Croftangry expresses here the feelings of the Author, as nearly as he could recall them, after such a lapse of years. I am, however, informed, by various letters from Perthshire, that I have made some little mistakes about names. Sure enough the general effect of the valley of the Tay and the ancient town of Perth, rearing its grey head among the rich pastures, and beside the gleaming waters of that noblest of Scottish streams, must remain so as to justify warmer language than Mr. Croftangry had at his command.—Aug. 1831.

to Heaven. At such a period in society the power of beauty was almost unlimited. It could level the highest rank with that which was immeasurably inferior.

It was but in the reign preceding that of Robert III., that beauty alone had elevated a person of inferior rank and indifferent morals to share the Scottish throne;* and many women, less artful or less fortunate, had risen to greatness from a state of concubinage, for which the manners of the times made allowance and apology. Such views might have dazzled a girl of higher birth than Catharine or Katie Glover, who was universally acknowledged to be the most beautiful young woman of the city or its vicinity, and whose renown, as the Fair Maid of Perth, had drawn on her much notice from the young gallants of the royal court, when it chanced to be residing in or near Perth; insomuch that more than one nobleman of the highest rank, and most distinguished for deeds of chivalry, were more attentive to exhibit feats of horsemanship as they passed the door of old Simon Glover, in what was called Couvrefew, or Curfew Street, than to distinguish themselves in the tournaments, where the noblest dames of Scotland were spectators of their address.

But the Glover's daughter — for, as was common with the citizens and artisans of that early period, her father Simon derived his surname from the trade which he practised— showed no inclination to listen to any gallantry which came from those of a station highly exalted above that which she herself occupied; and though probably in no degree insensible to her personal charms, seemed desirous to confine her conquests to those who were within her own sphere of life. Indeed, her beauty being of that kind which we connect more with the mind than with the person, was, notwithstanding her natural kindness and gentleness of disposition, rather allied to reserve than to gaiety, even when in company with her equals; and the earnestness with which she attended upon the exercises of devotion, induced many to think that Catharine Glover nourished the private wish to retire from the world, and bury herself in the recesses of the cloister. But to such a sacrifice, should it be meditated, it was not to be expected her father, reputed a wealthy man, and having this only child, would yield a willing consent.

In her resolution of avoiding the addresses of the gallant courtiers, the reigning beauty of Perth was confirmed by the sentiments of her parent. 'Let them go,' he said; 'let them go, Catharine, those gallants, with their capering horses, their jingling spurs, their plumed bonnets, and their trim moustaches; they are not of our class, nor will we aim at pairing with them. To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird chooses her mate; but you will not see the linnet pair with the sparrow-hawk, nor the robin-redbreast with the kite. My father was an honest burgher of Perth, and could use his needle as well as I can. Did there come war to the gates of our fair burgh, down went needles, thread, and shamoy leather, and out came the good headpiece and target from the dark nook, and the long lance from above the chimney. Show me a day that either he or I was absent when the Provost made his musters!—Thus we have led our lives, my girl; working to win our bread, and fighting to defend it. I will have no son-in-law that thinks himself better than me; and for these lords and knights, I trust thou wilt always remember thou art too low to be their lawful love, and too high to be their unlawful loon. And now lay by thy work, lass, for it is holytide eve, and it becomes us to go to the evening service, and pray that Heaven may send thee a good Valentine to-morrow.'

So the Fair Maid of Perth laid aside the splendid hawking-glove which she was embroidering for the Lady Drummond, and, putting on her holiday kirtle, prepared to attend her father to the Blackfriars Monastery, which was adjacent to Couvrefew Street, in which they lived. On their passage, Simon Glover, an ancient and esteemed burgess of Perth, somewhat stricken in years and increased in substance, received from young and old the homage due to his velvet jerkin and his gold chain, while the well-known beauty of Catharine, though concealed beneath her screen,—which resembled the mantilla still worn in Flanders,—called both obeisances and doffings of the bonnet from young and old.

As the pair moved on arm in arm, they were followed by a tall handsome young man, dressed in a yeoman's habit of the plainest kind, but which showed to advantage his fine limbs, as the handsome countenance that looked out from a quantity of curled tresses, surmounted by a small scarlet bonnet, became that species of head-dress. He had no other weapon than a staff in his hand, it not being thought fit that persons of his degree (for he was an apprentice to the old Glover) should appear on the street armed with sword or dagger, a privilege which the jackmen, or military retainers of the nobility, esteemed exclusively their own. He attended his master at holytide, partly in the character of a domestic, or guardian, should there be cause for his interference; but it was not difficult to discern, by the earnest attention which he paid to Catharine Glover, that it was to her rather than to her father that he desired to dedicate his good offices. Generally speaking, there was no opportunity for his zeal displaying itself; for a common feeling of respect induced passengers to give way to the father and daughter.

But when the steel-caps, barrets, and plumes of squires, archers, and men-at-arms began to be seen among the throng, the wearers of these warlike distinctions were more rude in their demeanour than the quiet citizens. More than once, when from chance, or perhaps from an assumption of superior importance, such an individual took the wall of Simon in passing, the Glover's youthful attendant bristled up with a look of defiance, and the air of one who sought to distinguish his zeal in his mistress's service by its ardour. As frequently did Conachar, for such was the lad's name, receive a check from his master, who gave him to understand that he did not wish his interference before he required

* Note C. Royal Marriages.

it. 'Foolish boy!' he said, 'hast thou not lived long enough in my shop to know that a blow will breed a brawl—that a dirk will cut the skin as fast as a needle pierces leather—that I love peace, though I never feared war, and care not which side of the causeway my daughter and I walk upon, so we may keep our road in peace and quietness?' Conachar excused himself as zealous for his master's honour, yet was scarce able to pacify the old citizen. — 'What have we to do with honour?' said Simon Glover. 'If thou wouldst remain in my service, thou must think of honesty, and leave honour to the swaggering fools who wear steel at their heels and iron on their shoulders. If you wish to wear and use such garniture, you are welcome; but it shall not be in my house, or in my company.'

Conachar seemed rather to kindle at this rebuke than to submit to it. But a sign from Catharine—if that slight raising of her taper finger was indeed a sign—had more effect than the angry reproof of his master; and the youth laid aside the military air which seemed natural to him, and relapsed into the humble follower of a quiet burgher.

Meantime the party were overtaken by a tall young man wrapped in a cloak, which obscured or muffled a part of his face—a practice often used by the gallants of the time, when they did not wish to be known, or were abroad in quest of adventures. He seemed, in short, one who might say to the world around him, 'I desire, for the present, not to be known, or addressed in my own character; but as I am answerable to myself alone for my actions, I wear my incognito but for form's sake, and care little whether you see through it or not.'—He came on the right side of Catharine, who had hold of her father's arm, and slackened his pace as if joining the party.

'Good even to you, goodman.'

'The same to your worship, and thanks.—May I pray you to pass on?—Our pace is too slow for that of your lordship—our company too mean for that of your father's son.'

'My father's son can best judge of that, old man. I have business to talk of with you and with my fair Saint Catharine here, the loveliest and most obdurate saint in the calendar.'

'With deep reverence, my lord,' said the old man, 'I would remind you that this is good Saint Valentine's Eve, which is no time for business, and that I can have your worshipful commands by a serving-man as early as it pleases you to send them.'

'There is no time like the present,' said the persevering youth, whose rank seemed to be of a kind which set him above ceremony. 'I wish to know whether the buff doublet be finished which I commissioned some time since;—and from you, pretty Catharine' (here he sank his voice to a whisper), 'I desire to be informed whether your fair fingers have been employed upon it, agreeably to your promise? But I need not ask you, for my poor heart has felt the pang of each puncture that pierced the garment which was to cover it. Traitress, how wilt thou answer for thus tormenting the heart that loves thee so dearly?'

'Let me entreat you, my lord,' said Catharine, 'to forego this wild talk—it becomes not you to speak thus, or me to listen. We are of poor rank, but honest manners; and the presence of the father ought to protect the child from such expressions, even from your lordship.'

This she spoke so low, that neither her father nor Conachar could understand what she said.

'Well, tyrant,' answered the persevering gallant, 'I will plague you no longer now, providing you will let me see you from your window to-morrow when the sun first peeps over the eastern hill, and give me right to be your Valentine for the year.'

'Not so, my lord; my father but now told me that hawks, far less eagles, pair not with the humble linnet. Seek some court lady, to whom your favours will be honour; to me—your highness must permit me to speak the plain truth—they can be nothing but disgrace.'

As they spoke thus, the party arrived at the gate of the church. 'Your lordship will, I trust, permit us here to take leave of you?' said her father. 'I am well aware how little you will alter your pleasure for the pain and uneasiness you may give to such as us; but, from the throng of attendants at the gate, your lordship may see that there are others in the church to whom even your gracious lordship must pay respect.'

'Yes—respect; and who pays any respect to me?' said the haughty young lord. 'A miserable artisan and his daughter, too much honoured by my slightest notice, have the insolence to tell me that my notice dishonours them. Well, my princess of white doeskin and blue silk, I will teach you to rue this.'

As he murmured thus, the Glover and his daughter entered the Dominican Church, and their attendant Conachar, in attempting to follow them closely, jostled, it may be not unwillingly, the young nobleman. The gallant, starting from his unpleasing reverie, and perhaps considering this as an intentional insult, seized on the young man by the breast, struck him, and threw him from him. His irritated opponent recovered himself with difficulty, and grasped towards his own side, as if seeking a sword or dagger in the place where it was usually worn; but finding none, he made a gesture of disappointed rage, and entered the church. During the few seconds he remained, the young nobleman stood with his arms folded on his breast, with a haughty smile, as if defying him to do his worst. When Conachar had entered the church, his opponent, adjusting his cloak yet closer about his face, made a private signal by holding up one of his gloves. He was instantly joined by two men, who, disguised like himself, had waited his motions at a little distance. They spoke together earnestly, after which the young nobleman retired in one direction, his friends or followers going off in another.

Simon Glover, before he entered the church, cast a look towards the group, but had taken his place among the congregation before they separated themselves. He knelt down with the air of a man who has something burdensome on his mind; but when the service was ended, he seemed free from anxiety, as one who had referred himself and his troubles to the disposal of

Heaven. The ceremony of high mass was performed with considerable solemnity, a number of noblemen and ladies of rank being present. Preparations had indeed been made for the reception of the good old king himself, but some of those infirmities to which he was subject had prevented Robert III. from attending the service, as was his wont. When the congregation were dismissed, the Glover and his beautiful daughter lingered for some time, for the purpose of making their several shrifts in the confessionals, where the priests had taken their places for discharging that part of their duty. Thus it happened that the night had fallen dark, and the way was solitary, when they returned along the now deserted streets to their own dwelling. Most persons had betaken themselves to home and to bed. They who still lingered in the streets were night-walkers or revellers, the idle and swaggering retainers of the haughty nobles, who were much wont to insult the peaceful passengers, relying on the impunity which their masters' court favour was too apt to secure them.

It was perhaps in apprehension of mischief from some character of this kind, that Conachar, stepping up to the Glover, said, 'Master, walk faster—we are dogged.'

'Dogged, say'st thou? By whom, and by how many?'

'By one man muffled in his cloak, who follows us like our shadow.'

'Then will I never mend my pace along the Couvrefew Street for the best one man that ever trod it.'

'But he has arms,' said Conachar.

'And so have we, and hands and legs and feet. Why, sure, Conachar, you are not afraid of one man?'

'Afraid!' answered Conachar, indignant at the insinuation; 'you shall soon know if I am afraid.'

'Now you are as far on the other side of the mark, thou foolish boy—thy temper has no middle course; there is no occasion to make a brawl, though we do not run. Walk thou before with Catharine, and I will take thy place. We cannot be exposed to danger so near home as we are.'

The Glover fell behind accordingly, and certainly observed a person keep so close to them, as, the time and place considered, justified some suspicion. When they crossed the street, he also crossed it, and when they advanced or slackened their pace, the stranger's was in proportion accelerated or diminished. The matter would have been of very little consequence had Simon Glover been alone; but the beauty of his daughter might render her the object of some profligate scheme, in a country where the laws afforded such slight protection to those who had not the means to defend themselves. Conachar and his fair charge having arrived on the threshold of their own apartment, which was opened to them by an old female servant, the burgher's uneasiness was ended. Determined, however, to ascertain, if possible, whether there had been any cause for it, he called out to the man whose motions had occasioned the alarm, and who stood still, though he seemed to keep out of reach of the light—'Come, step forward, my friend, and do not play at bo-peep; knowest thou not that they who walk like phantoms in the dark, are apt to encounter the conjuration of a quarterstaff? Step forward, I say, and show us thy shapes, man.'

'Why, so I can, Master Glover,' said one of the deepest voices that ever answered question. 'I can show my shapes well enough, only I wish they could bear the light something better.'

'Body of me,' exclaimed Simon, 'I should know that voice!—And is it thou, in thy bodily person, Harry Gow? Nay, beshrew me if thou passest this door with dry lips. What, man, curfew has not rung yet, and if it had, it were no reason why it should part father and son. Come in, man; Dorothy shall get us something to eat, and we will jingle a can ere thou leave us. Come in, I say; my daughter Kate will be right glad to see thee.'

By this time he had pulled the person whom he welcomed so cordially into a sort of kitchen, which served also upon ordinary occasions the office of parlour. Its ornaments were trenchers of pewter, mixed with a silver cup or two, which, in the highest degree of cleanliness, occupied a range of shelves like those of a beauffet, popularly called *the bink*. A good fire, with the assistance of a blazing lamp, spread light and cheerfulness through the apartment, and a savoury smell of some victuals which Dorothy was preparing did not at all offend the unrefined noses of those whose appetite they were destined to satisfy.

Their unknown attendant now stood in full light among them, and though his appearance was neither dignified nor handsome, his face and figure were not only deserving of attention, but seemed in some manner to command it. He was rather below the middle stature, but the breadth of his shoulders, length and brawniness of his arms, and the muscular appearance of the whole man, argued a most unusual share of strength, and a frame kept in vigour by constant exercise. His legs were somewhat bent, but not in a manner which could be said to approach to deformity; on the contrary, which seemed to correspond to the strength of his frame, though it injured in some degree its symmetry. His dress was of buff-hide; and he wore in a belt around his waist a heavy broadsword, and a dirk or poniard, as if to defend his purse, which (burgher-fashion) was attached to the same cincture. The head was well proportioned, round, close-cropped, and curled thickly with black hair. There was daring and resolution in the dark eye, but the other features seemed to express a bashful timidity, mingled with good-humour, and obvious satisfaction at meeting with his old friends. Abstracted from the bashful expression, which was that of the moment, the forehead of Henry Gow, or Smith (for he was indifferently so called),* was high and noble, but the lower part of the face was less happily formed. The mouth was large, and well furnished with a set of firm and beautiful teeth, the appearance of which corresponded with the air of personal health and muscular strength which the whole frame indicated. A

* *Gow* is Gaelic for *Smith*.

short thick beard, and moustaches which had lately been arranged with some care, completed the picture. His age could not exceed eight-and-twenty.

The family appeared all well pleased with the unexpected appearance of an old friend. Simon Glover shook his hand again and again, Dorothy made her compliments, and Catharine herself offered freely her hand, which Henry held in his massive grasp as if he designed to carry it to his lips, but, after a moment's hesitation, desisted, from fear lest the freedom might be ill taken. Not that there was any resistance on the part of the little hand which lay passive in his grasp; but there was a smile mingled with the blush on her cheek, which seemed to increase the confusion of the gallant. Her father, on his part, called out frankly, as he saw his friend's hesitation,—

'Her lips, man, her lips! and that's a proffer I would not make to every one who crosses my threshold. But, by good Saint Valentine (whose holiday will dawn to-morrow), I am so glad to see thee in the bonnie city of Perth again, that it would be hard to tell the thing I could refuse thee.'

The Smith—for, as has been said, such was the craft of this sturdy artisan—was encouraged modestly to salute the Fair Maid, who yielded the courtesy with a smile of affection that might have become a sister, saying at the same time, 'Let me hope that I welcome back to Perth a repentant and amended man.'

He held her hand as if about to answer, then suddenly, as one who lost courage at the moment, relinquished his grasp; and, drawing back as if afraid of what he had done, his dark countenance glowing with bashfulness, mixed with delight, he sat down by the fire on the opposite side from that which Catharine occupied.

'Come, Dorothy, speed thee with the food, old woman;—and Conachar—where is Conachar?'

'He is gone to bed, sir, with a headache,' said Catharine, in a hesitating voice.

'Go, call him, Dorothy,' said the old Glover; 'I will not be used thus by him; his Highland blood, forsooth, is too gentle to lay a trencher or spread a napkin, and he expects to enter our ancient and honourable craft without duly waiting and tending upon his master and teacher in all matters of lawful obedience. Go, call him, I say; I will not be thus neglected.'

Dorothy was presently heard screaming upstairs, or more probably up a ladder, to the cockloft, to which the recusant apprentice had made an untimely retreat; a muttered answer was returned, and soon after Conachar appeared in the eating apartment. There was a gloom of deep sullenness on his haughty, though handsome features, and as he proceeded to spread the board, and arrange the trenchers, with salt, spices, and other condiments,—to discharge, in short, the duties of a modern domestic, which the custom of the time imposed upon all apprentices,—he was obviously disgusted and indignant with the mean office imposed upon him. The Fair Maid of Perth looked with some anxiety at him, as if apprehensive that his evident sullenness might increase her father's displeasure; but it was not till her eyes had sought out his for a second time, that Conachar condescended to veil his dissatisfaction, and throw a greater appearance of willingness and submission into the services which he was performing.

And here we must acquaint our reader, that though the private interchange of looks betwixt Catharine Glover and the young mountaineer indicated some interest on the part of the former in the conduct of the latter, it would have puzzled the strictest observer to discover whether that feeling exceeded in degree what might have been felt by a young person towards a friend and inmate of the same age, with whom she had lived on habits of intimacy.

'Thou hast had a long journey, son Henry,' said Glover, who had always used that affectionate style of speech, though noways akin to the young artisan; 'ay, and hast seen many a river besides Tay, and many a fair bigging besides Saint Johnston.'*

'But none that I like half so well, and none that are half so much worth my liking,' answered the Smith; 'I promise you, father, that when I crossed the Wicks of Baiglie, and saw the bonnie city lie stretched fairly before me, like a fairy queen in romance, whom the knight finds asleep among a wilderness of flowers, I felt even as a bird, when it folds its wearied wings to stoop down on its own nest.'

'Aha! so thou canst play the Maker† yet?' said the Glover. 'What, shall we have our ballets and our roundels again? our lusty carols for Christmas, and our mirthful springs to trip it round the Maypole?'

'Such toys there may be forthcoming, father,' said Henry Smith, 'though the blast of the bellows and the clatter of the anvil make but coarse company to lays of minstrelsy; but I can afford them no better, since I must mend my fortune, though I mar my verses.'

'Right again—my own son, just,' answered the Glover; 'and I trust thou hast made a saving voyage of it?'

'Nay, I made a thriving one, father—I sold the steel habergeon that you wot of for four hundred marks to the English Warden of the East Marches, Sir Magnus Redman.‡ He scarce scrupled a penny after I gave him leave to try a sword-dint upon it. The beggarly Highland thief who bespoke it boggled at half the sum, though it had cost me a year's labour.'

'What dost thou start at, Conachar?' said Simon, addressing himself, by way of parenthesis, to the mountain disciple; 'wilt thou never learn to mind thy own business, without listening to what is passing round thee? What is it to thee that an Englishman thinks that cheap, which a Scottishman may hold dear?'

Conachar turned round to speak; but, after a moment's consideration, looked down, and endeavoured to recover his composure, which had been deranged by the contemptuous manner

* [A former name of Perth.]

† Old Scottish for *Poet*, and indeed the literal translation of the original Greek, Ποιητής.

‡ Sir Magnus Redman, sometime Governor of Berwick, fell in one of the battles on the Border, which followed on the treason of the Earl of March, alluded to hereafter.

in which the Smith had spoken of his Highland customer. Henry went on without paying any attention to him.

'I sold at high prices some swords and whingers when I was at Edinburgh. They expect war there; and if it please God to send it, my merchandise will be worth its price. Saint Dunstan make us thankful, for he was of our craft. In short, this fellow' (laying his hand on his purse), 'who, thou knowest, father, was somewhat lank and low in condition when I set out four months since, is now as round and full as a six-weeks' porker.'

'And that other leathern-sheathed, iron-hilted fellow who hangs beside him,' said the Glover, 'has he been idle all this while?—Come, jolly Smith, confess the truth—how many brawls hast thou had since crossing the Tay?'

'Nay, now you do me wrong, father, to ask me such a question' (glancing a look at Catharine) 'in such a presence,' answered the armourer; 'I make swords, indeed, but I leave it to other people to use them. No, no—seldom have I a naked sword in my fist, save when I am turning them on the anvil or grindstone; and they slandered me to your daughter Catharine, that led her to suspect the quietest burgess in Perth of being a brawler. I wish the best of them would dare say such a word at the Hill of Kinnoul, and never a man on the green but he and I.'

'Ay, ay,' said the Glover, laughing, 'we should then have a fine sample of your patient sufferance.—Out upon you, Henry, that you will speak so like a knave to one who knows thee so well! You look at Kate, too, as if she did not know that a man in this country must make his hand keep his head, unless he will sleep in slender security.—Come, come; beshrew me, if thou hast not spoiled as many suits of armour as thou hast made.'

'Why, he would be a bad armourer, father Simon, that could not, with his own blow, make proof of his own workmanship. If I did not sometimes cleave a helmet, or strike a sword's point through a harness, I should not know what strength of fabric to give them; and might jingle together such pasteboard work as yonder Edinburgh smiths think not shame to put out of their hands.'

'Aha—now would I lay a gold crown thou hast had a quarrel with some Edinburgh Burn-the-wind * upon that very ground?'

'A quarrel!—no, father,' replied the Perth armourer, 'but a measuring of swords with such a one upon Saint Leonard's Crags, for the honour of my bonnie city, I confess. Surely you do not think I would quarrel with a brother craftsman?'

'Ah, to a surety, no. But how did your brother craftsman come off?'

'Why, as one with a sheet of paper on his bosom might come off from the stroke of a lance—or rather, indeed, he came not off at all; for, when I left him, he was lying in the Hermit's Lodge, daily expecting death, for which Father Gervis said he was in heavenly preparation.'

'Well—any more measuring of weapons?' said the Glover.

'Why, truly, I fought an Englishman at Berwick besides, on the old question of the Supremacy, as they call it—I am sure you would not have me slack at that debate, and I had the luck to hurt him on the left knee.'

'Well done for Saint Andrew!—to it again.—Whom next had you to deal with?' said Simon, laughing at the exploits of his pacific friend.

'I fought a Scotchman in the Torwood,'† answered Henry Smith, 'upon a doubt which was the better swordsman, which, you are aware, could not be known or decided without a trial. The poor fellow lost two fingers.'

'Pretty well for the most peaceful lad in Perth, who never touches a sword but in the way of his profession.—Well, anything more to tell us?'

'Little—for the drubbing of a Highlandman is a thing not worth mentioning.'

'For what didst thou drub him, O man of peace?' inquired the Glover.

'For nothing that I can remember,' replied the Smith, 'except his presenting himself on the south side of Stirling Bridge.'‡

'Well, here is to thee, and thou art welcome to me, after all these exploits.—Conachar, bestir thee. Let the cans clink, lad, and thou shalt have a cup of the nut-brown for thyself, my boy.'

Conachar poured out the good liquor for his master and for Catharine, with due observance. But that done, he set the flagon on the table, and sat down.

'How now, sirrah!—be these your manners? Fill to my guest, the worshipful Master Henry Smith.'

'Master Smith may fill for himself, if he wishes for liquor,' answered the youthful Celt. 'The son of my father has demeaned himself enough already for one evening.'

'That's well crowed for a cockerel,' said Henry; 'but thou art so far right, my lad, that the man deserves to die of thirst who will not drink without a cupbearer.'

But his entertainer took not the contumacy of the young apprentice with so much patience.—'Now, by my honest word, and by the best glove I ever made,' said Simon, 'thou shalt help him with liquor from that cup and flagon, if thee and I are to abide under one roof.'

Conachar arose sullenly upon hearing this threat, and, approaching the Smith, who had just taken the tankard in his hand and was raising it to his head, he contrived to stumble against him and jostle him so awkwardly, that the foaming ale gushed over his face, person, and dress. Good-natured as the Smith, in spite of his warlike propensities, really was in the utmost degree, his patience failed under such a provocation. He seized the young man's throat, being the part which came readiest to his grasp, as Conachar arose from the pretended stumble, and pressing it severely as he cast the lad from him, exclaimed, 'Had this been in another place,

* *Burn-the-wind*, an old cant term for blacksmith, appears in Burns—

Then *Burnewin* came on like death,
At every chaup, etc.

† [A forest that has now disappeared, between Falkirk and Stirling.]

‡ [Which would be equivalent to passing from the Highlands to the Lowlands.]

young gallows-bird, I had stowed the lugs out of thy head, as I have done to some of thy clan before thee.'

Conachar recovered his feet with the activity of a tiger, and exclaiming, 'Never shall you live to make that boast again!' drew a short sharp knife from his bosom, and, springing on Henry Smith, attempted to plunge it into his body over the collar-bone, which must have been a mortal wound. But the object of this violence was so ready to defend himself by striking up the assailant's hand, that the blow only glanced on the bone, and scarce drew blood. To wrench the dagger from the boy's hand, and to secure him with a grasp like that of his own iron vice, was for the powerful Smith the work of a single moment. Conachar felt himself at once in the absolute power of the formidable antagonist whom he had provoked; he became deadly pale, as he had been the moment before glowing red, and stood mute with shame and fear, until, relieving him from his powerful hold, the Smith quietly said, 'It is well for thee that thou canst not make me angry—thou art but a boy, and I, a grown man, ought not to have provoked thee. But let this be a warning.'

Conachar stood an instant as if about to reply, and then left the room, ere Simon had collected himself enough to speak. Dorothy was running hither and thither for salves and healing herbs. Catharine had swooned at the sight of the trickling blood.

'Let me depart, father Simon,' said Henry Smith mournfully; 'I might have guessed I should have my old luck, and spread strife and bloodshed where I would wish most to bring peace and happiness. Care not for me—look to poor Catharine; the fright of such an affray hath killed her, and all through my fault.'

'Thy fault, my son!—It was the fault of yon Highland cateran,* whom it is my curse to be cumbered with; but he shall go back to his glens to-morrow, or taste the tolbooth of the burgh. An assault upon the life of his master's guest in his master's house!—It breaks all bonds between us. But let me see to thy wound.'

'Catharine!' repeated the armourer; 'look to Catharine.'

'Dorothy will see to her,' said Simon; 'surprise and fear kill not—skenes and dirks do. And she is not more the daughter of my blood than thou, my dear Henry, art the son of my affections. Let me see the wound. The skene-occle† is an ugly weapon in a Highland hand.'

'I mind it no more than the scratch of a wild-cat,' said the armourer; 'and now that the colour is coming to Catharine's cheek again, you shall see me a sound man in a moment.' He turned to a corner in which hung a small mirror, and hastily took from his purse some dry lint to apply to the slight wound he had received. As he unloosed the leathern jacket from his neck and shoulders, the manly and muscular form which they displayed was not more remarkable than the fairness of his skin, where it had not, as in hands and face, been exposed to the effects of rough weather and of his laborious trade. He hastily applied some lint to stop the bleeding; and a little water having removed all other marks of the fray, he buttoned his doublet anew, and turned again to the table where Catharine, still pale and trembling, was, however, recovered from her fainting fit.

'Would you but grant me your forgiveness for having offended you in the very first hour of my return? The lad was foolish to provoke me, and yet I was more foolish to be provoked by such as he. Your father blames me not, Catharine, and cannot you forgive me?'

'I have no power to forgive,' answered Catharine, 'what I have no title to resent. If my father chooses to have his house made the scene of night brawls, I must witness them—I cannot help myself. Perhaps it was wrong in me to faint and interrupt, it may be, the further progress of a fair fray. My apology is, that I cannot bear the sight of blood.'

'And is this the manner,' said her father, 'in which you receive my friend after his long absence? My friend, did I say? nay, my son. He escapes being murdered by a fellow whom I will to-morrow clear this house of, and you treat him as if he had done wrong in dashing from him the snake which was about to sting him!'

'It is not my part, father,' returned the Maid of Perth, 'to decide who had the right or wrong in the present brawl; nor did I see what happened distinctly enough to say which was assailant or which defender. But sure our friend Master Henry will not deny that he lives in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood, and quarrels. He hears of no swordsman but he envies his reputation, and must needs put his valour to the proof. He sees no brawl but he must strike into the midst of it. Has he friends, he fights with them for love and honour; has he enemies, he fights with them for hatred and revenge. And those men who are neither his friends nor foes, he fights with them because they are on this or that side of the river. His days are days of battle, and doubtless he acts them over again in his dreams.'

'Daughter,' said Simon, 'your tongue wags too freely. Quarrels and fights are men's business, not women's, and it is not maidenly to think or speak of them.'

'But if they are so rudely enacted in our presence,' said Catharine, 'it is a little hard to expect us to think or speak of anything else. I will grant you, my father, that this valiant burgess of Perth is one of the best-hearted men that draws breath within its walls—that he would walk a hundred yards out of the way rather than step upon a worm—that he would be as loath, in wantonness, to kill a spider, as if he were a kinsman to King Robert, of happy memory‡—that in the last quarrel before his departure he fought with four butchers, to prevent their killing a poor mastiff that had misbehaved in the bull-ring, and narrowly escaped the fate of the cur that he was protecting. I will grant you, also, that the poor never pass

* *Cateran*, or *robber*, the usual designation of the Celtic borderers on the lands of the Sassenach. The beautiful Lake of the Trossachs is supposed to have taken its name from the habits of its frequenters.

† *Skene-occle, i.e.* knife of the armpit—the Highlander's stiletto.

‡ Note D. Robert Bruce.

the house of the wealthy armourer but they are relieved with food and alms. But what avails all this, when his sword makes as many starving orphans and mourning widows as his purse relieves?'

'Nay, but, Catharine, hear me but a word before going on with a string of reproaches against my friend, that sound something like sense, while they are, in truth, inconsistent with all we hear and see around us. What,' continued the Glover, 'do our King and our court, our knights and ladies, our abbots, monks, and priests themselves, so earnestly crowd to see? Is it not to behold the display of chivalry, to witness the gallant actions of brave knights in the tilt and tourney ground, to look upon deeds of honour and glory achieved by arms and bloodshed? What is it these proud knights do, that differs from what our good Henry Gow works out in his sphere? Who ever heard of his abusing his skill and strength to do evil or forward oppression, and who knows not how often it has been employed as that of a champion in the good cause of the burgh? And shouldst not thou, of all women, deem thyself honoured and glorious, that so true a heart and so strong an arm has termed himself thy bachelor? In what do the proudest dames take their loftiest pride, save in the chivalry of their knight; and has the boldest in Scotland done more gallant deeds than my brave son Henry, though but of low degree? Is he not known to Highland and Lowland as the best armourer that ever made sword, and the truest soldier that ever drew one?'

'My dearest father,' answered Catharine, 'your words contradict themselves, if you will permit your child to say so. Let us thank God and the good saints that we are in a peaceful rank of life, below the notice of those whose high birth, and yet higher pride, lead them to glory in their bloody works of cruelty, which haughty and lordly men term deeds of chivalry. Your wisdom will allow that it would be absurd in us to prank ourselves in their dainty plumes and splendid garments; why, then, should we imitate their full-blown vices? Why should we assume their hard-hearted pride and relentless cruelty, to which murder is not only a sport, but a subject of vain-glorious triumph? Let those whose rank claims as its right such bloody homage, take pride and pleasure in it; we, who have no share in the sacrifice, may the better pity the sufferings of the victim. Let us thank our lowliness, since it secures us from temptation. But forgive me, father, if I have stepped over the limits of my duty in contradicting the views which you entertain, with so many others, on these subjects.'

'Nay, thou hast even too much talk for me, girl,' said her father, somewhat angrily. 'I am but a poor workman, whose best knowledge is to distinguish the left hand glove from the right. But if thou wouldst have my forgiveness, say something of comfort to my poor Henry. There he sits, confounded and dismayed with all the preachment thou hast heaped together; and he to whom a trumpet sound was like the invitation to a feast, is struck down at the sound of a child's whistle.'

The armourer, indeed, while he heard the lips that were dearest to him paint his character in such unfavourable colours, had laid his head down on the table, upon his folded arms, in an attitude of the deepest dejection, or almost despair. 'I would to Heaven, my dearest father,' answered Catharine, 'that it were in my power to speak comfort to Henry, without betraying the sacred cause of the truths I have just told you. And I may, nay, I must have such a commission,' she continued, with something that the earnestness with which she spoke, and the extreme beauty of her features, caused for the moment to resemble inspiration. 'The truth of Heaven,' she said, in a solemn tone, 'was never committed to a tongue, however feeble, but it gave a right to that tongue to announce mercy, while it declared judgment.—Arise, Henry—rise up, noble-minded, good, and generous, though widely mistaken man—Thy faults are those of this cruel and remorseless age—thy virtues all thine own.'

While she thus spoke, she laid her hand upon the Smith's arm, and, extricating it from under his head by a force which, however gentle, he could not resist, she compelled him to raise towards her his manly face, and the eyes into which her expostulations, mingled with other feelings, had summoned tears. 'Weep not,' she said, 'or rather weep on—but weep as those who have hope. Abjure the sins of pride and anger, which most easily beset thee—fling from thee the accursed weapons, to the fatal and murderous use of which thou art so easily tempted.'

'You speak to me in vain, Catharine,' returned the armourer; 'I may, indeed, turn monk and retire from the world, but while I live in it I must practise my trade; and while I form armour and weapons for others, I cannot myself withstand the temptation of using them. You would not reproach me as you do, if you knew how inseparably the means by which I gain my bread are connected with that warlike spirit which you impute to me as a fault, though it is the consequence of inevitable necessity. While I strengthen the shield or corselet to withstand wounds, must I not have constantly in remembrance the manner and strength with which they may be dealt; and when I forge the sword, and temper it for war, is it practicable for me to avoid the recollection of its use?'

'Then throw from you, my dear Henry,' said the enthusiastic girl, clasping with both her slender hands the nervous strength and weight of one of the muscular armourer's, which they raised with difficulty, permitted by its owner, yet scarcely receiving assistance from his volition—'cast from you, I say, the art which is a snare to you. Abjure the fabrication of weapons which can only be useful to abridge human life, already too short for repentance, or to encourage with a feeling of safety those whom fear might otherwise prevent from risking themselves in peril. The art of forming arms, whether offensive or defensive, is alike sinful in one to whose violent and ever vehement disposition the very working upon them proves a sin and a snare. Resign utterly the manufacture of weapons of every description, and

been troubled for these two or three years, although you may see he has the natural spirit of his people, obeys the least sign which Catharine makes him, and, indeed, will hardly be ruled by any one else in the house. She takes much pains with him to bring him from his rude Highland habits.'

Here Harry Smith became uneasy in his chair, lifted the flagon, set it down, and at length exclaimed, 'The devil take the young Highland whelp and his whole kindred! What has Catharine to do to instruct such a fellow as he? He will be just like the wolf-cub that I was fool enough to train to the offices of a dog, and every one thought him reclaimed, till, in an ill hour, I went to walk on the hill of Moncreiff, when he broke loose on the laird's flock, and made a havoc that I might well have rued, had the laird not wanted a harness at the time. And I marvel that you, being a sensible man, father Glover, will keep this Highland young fellow—a likely one, I promise you—so nigh to Catharine, as if there were no other than your daughter to serve him for a schoolmistress.'

'Fie, my son, fie! now you are jealous,' said Simon, 'of a poor young fellow, who, to tell you the truth, resides here because he may not so well live on the other side of the hill.'

'Ay, ay, father Simon,' retorted the Smith, who had all the narrow-minded feelings of the burghers of his time; 'an it were not for fear of offence, I would say that you have even too much packing and peeling with yonder loons out of burgh.'

'I must get my deer-hides, buck-skins, kid-skins, and so forth, somewhere, my good Harry; and Highlandmen give good bargains.'

'They can afford them,' replied Henry dryly; 'for they sell nothing but stolen gear.'

'Well, well,—be that as it may, it is not my business where they get the bestial, so I get the hides. But, as I was saying, there are certain considerations why I am willing to oblige the father of this young man, by keeping him here. And he is but half a Highlander neither, and wants a thought of the dour spirit of a Glune-amie;* after all, I have seldom seen him so fierce as he showed himself but now.'

'You could not, unless he had killed his man,' replied the Smith in the same dry tone.

'Nevertheless, if you wish it, Harry, I'll set all other respects aside, and send the land-louper to seek other quarters to-morrow morning.'

'Nay, father,' said the Smith, 'you cannot suppose that Harry Gow cares the value of a smithy-dander† for such a cub as yonder cat-a-mountain? I care little, I promise you, though all his clan were coming down the Shoegate‡ with slogan crying and pipes playing; I would find fifty blades and bucklers would send them back faster than they came. But, to speak truth—though it is a fool's speech, too—I care not to see the fellow so much with Catharine. Remember, father Glover, your trade keeps your eyes and hands close employed, and must have your heedful care, even if this lazy lurdane wrought at it, which you know yourself he seldom does.'

'And that is true,' said Simon; 'he cuts all his gloves out for the right hand, and never could finish a pair in his life.'

'No doubt his notions of skin-cutting are rather different,' said Henry. 'But with your leave, father, I would only say that, work he or be he idle, he has no bleared eyes,—no hands seared with the hot iron, and welked by the use of the fore-hammer,—no hair rusted in the smoke, and singed in the furnace, like the hide of a badger, rather than what is fit to be covered with a Christian bonnet. Now, let Catharine be as good a wench as ever lived, and I will uphold her to be the best in Perth, yet she must see and know that these things make a difference betwixt man and man, and that the difference is not in my favour.'

'Here is to thee, with all my heart, son Harry,' said the old man, filling a brimmer to his companion and another to himself; 'I see that, good smith as thou art, thou ken'st not the mettle that women are made of. Thou must be bold, Henry; and bear thyself not as if thou wert going to the gallows-lee, but like a gay young fellow who knows his own worth, and will not be slighted by the best grandchild Eve ever had. Catharine is a woman like her mother; and thou thinkest foolishly to suppose they are all set on what pleases the eye. Their ear must be pleased too, man; they must know that he whom they favour is bold and buxom, and might have the love of twenty, though he is suing for theirs. Believe an old man, women walk more by what others think than by what they think themselves; and when she asks for the boldest man in Perth, whom shall she hear named but Harry Burn-the-wind?—The best armourer that ever fashioned weapon on anvil? why, Harry Smith again—The tightest dancer at the Maypole? why, the lusty smith—The gayest troller of ballads? why, who but Harry Gow?—The best wrestler, sword-and-buckler player—the king of the weapon-shawing—the breaker of mad horses—the tamer of wild Highlandmen?—evermore it is thee—thee—no one but thee.—And shall Catharine prefer yonder slip of a Highland boy to *thee?*—Pshaw! she might as well make a steel gauntlet out of kid's leather. I tell thee, Conachar is nothing to her, but so far as she would fain prevent the devil having his due of him as of other Highlandmen. God bless her, poor thing! she would bring all mankind to better thoughts if she could.'

'In which she will fail to a certainty,' said the Smith, who, as the reader may have noticed, had no good-will to the Highland race. 'I will wager on Old Nick, of whom I should know something, he being indeed a worker in the same element with myself, against Catharine on that debate—the devil will have the tartan; that is sure enough.'

'Ay, but Catharine,' replied the Glover, 'hath a second thou knowest little of. Father Clement has taken the young reiver in hand, and he fears a hundred devils as little as I do a flock of geese.'

'Father Clement?' said the Smith; 'you are always making some new saint in this godly

* Note E. Glune-amie.
† Cinder.
‡ A principal street in Perth.

city of Saint Johnston. Pray who, for a devil's drubber, may he be?—One of your hermits that is trained for the work like a wrestler for the ring, and brings himself to trim by fasting and penance, is he not?'

'No, that is the marvel of it,' said Simon; 'Father Clement eats, drinks, and lives much like other folk — all the rules of the Church, nevertheless, strictly observed.'

'O, I comprehend!—a buxom priest, that thinks more of good living than of good life, tipples a can on Fastern's Eve, to enable him to face Lent, has a pleasant *in principio*, and confesses all the prettiest women about the town?'

'You are on the bow-hand still, Smith. I tell you, my daughter and I could nose out either a fasting hypocrite or a full one. But Father Clement is neither the one nor the other.'

'But what is he, then, in Heaven's name?'

'One who is either greatly better than half his brethren of Saint Johnston put together, or so much worse than the worst of them, that it is sin and shame that he is suffered to abide in the country.'

'Methinks it were easy to tell whether he be the one or the other,' said the Smith.

'Content you, my friend,' said Simon, 'with knowing, that if you judge Father Clement by what you see him do and hear him say, you will think of him as the best and kindest man in the world—with a comfort for every man's grief, a counsel for every man's difficulty, the rich man's surest guide, and the poor man's best friend. But if you listen to what the Dominicans say of him, he is—Benedicite!'—(here the Glover crossed himself on brow and bosom)—'a foul heretic, who ought, by means of earthly flames, to be sent to those which burn eternally.'

The Smith also crossed himself, and exclaimed,—'Saint Mary! father Simon, and do you, who are so good and prudent that you have been called the Wise Glover of Perth, let your daughter attend the ministry of one who—the saints preserve us!—may be in league with the foul Fiend himself? Why, was it not a priest who raised the devil in the Meal Vennel, when Hodge Jackson's house was blown down in the great wind?—did not the devil appear in the midst of the Tay, dressed in a priest's scapular, gambolling like a pellack amongst the waves, the morning when our stately bridge was swept away?'*

'I cannot tell whether he did or no,' said the Glover; 'I only know I saw him not. As to Catharine, she cannot be said to use Father Clement's ministry, seeing her confessor is old Father Francis the Dominican, from whom she had her shrift to-day. But women will sometimes be wilful, and sure enough she consults with Father Clement more than I could wish; and yet, when I have spoken with him myself, I have thought him so good and holy a man that I could have trusted my own salvation with him. There are bad reports of him among the Dominicans, that is certain. But what have we laymen to do with such things, my son? Let us pay Mother Church her dues, give our alms, confess and do our penances duly, and the saints will bear us out.'

'Ay, truly; and they will have consideration,' said the Smith, 'for any rash and unhappy blow that a man may deal in a fight, when his party was on defence, and standing up to him; and that's the only creed a man can live upon in Scotland, let your daughter think what she pleases. Marry, a man must know his fence, or have a short lease of his life, in any place where blows are going so rife. Five nobles to our altar have cleared me for the best man I ever had misfortune with.'

'Let us finish our flask, then,' said the old Glover; 'for I reckon the Dominican tower is tolling midnight. And hark thee, son Henry; be at the lattice window on our east gable by the very peep of dawn, and make me aware thou art come by whistling the Smith's call gently. I will contrive that Catharine shall look out at the window, and thus thou wilt have all the privileges of being a gallant Valentine through the rest of the year, which, if thou canst not use to thine own advantage, I shall be led to think that, for all thou be'st covered with the lion's hide, Nature has left on thee the long ears of the ass.'

'Amen, father,' said the armourer; 'a hearty good-night to you; and God's blessing on your roof-tree, and those whom it covers. You shall hear the Smith's call sound by cock-crowing; I warrant I put Sir Chanticleer to shame.'

So saying, he took his leave; and, though completely undaunted, moved through the deserted streets like one upon his guard, to his own dwelling, which was situated in the Mill Wynd, at the western end of Perth.

* [The bridge of Saint John at Perth was overthrown during a great flood in 1210.]

CHAPTER IV.

> What's all this turmoil cramm'd into our parts?
> Faith, but the pit-a-pat of poor young hearts.
> DRYDEN.

THE sturdy armourer was not, it may be believed, slack in keeping the appointment assigned by his intended father-in-law. He went through the process of his toilet with more than ordinary care, throwing, as far as he could, those points which had a military air into the shade. He was far too noted a person to venture to go entirely unarmed, in a town where he had indeed many friends, but also, from the character of many of his former exploits, several deadly enemies, at whose hands, should they take him at advantage, he knew he had little mercy to expect. He therefore wore under his jerkin a *secret*, or coat of chain-mail, made so light and flexible that it interfered as little with his movements as a modern under-waistcoat, yet of such proof as he might safely depend upon, every ring of it having been wrought and joined by his own hands. Above this he wore, like others of his age and degree, the Flemish hose and doublet, which, in honour of the holy tide,

were of the best superfine English broadcloth, light blue in colour, slashed out with black satin, and passemented (laced, that is) with embroidery of black silk. His walking boots were of Cordovan leather; his cloak of good Scottish grey, which served to conceal a whinger, or *couteau de chasse*, that hung at his belt, and was his only offensive weapon, for he carried in his hand but a rod of holly. His black velvet bonnet was lined with steel, quilted between the metal and his head, and thus constituted a means of defence which might safely be trusted to.

Upon the whole, Henry had the appearance, to which he was well entitled, of a burgher of wealth and consideration, assuming in his dress as much consequence as he could display, without stepping beyond his own rank and encroaching on that of the gentry. Neither did his frank and manly deportment, though indicating a total indifference to danger, bear the least resemblance to that of the bravoes or swash-bucklers of the day, amongst whom Henry was sometimes unjustly ranked by those who imputed the frays in which he was so often engaged to a quarrelsome and violent temper, resting upon a consciousness of his personal strength and knowledge of his weapon. On the contrary, every feature bore the easy and good-humoured expression of one who neither thought of inflicting mischief nor dreaded it from others.

Having attired himself in his best, the honest armourer next placed nearest to his heart (which throbbed at its touch) a little gift which he had long provided for Catharine Glover, and which his quality of Valentine would presently give him the title to present, and her to receive, without regard to maidenly scruples. It was a small ruby cut into the form of a heart, transfixed with a golden arrow, and was enclosed in a small purse made of links of the finest work in steel, as if it had been designed for a hauberk to a king. Round the verge of the purse were these words—

Love's darts
Cleave hearts
Through mail-shirts.

This device had cost the armourer some thought, and he was much satisfied with his composition, because it seemed to imply that his skill could defend all hearts saving his own. He wrapped himself in his cloak, and hastened through the still silent streets, determined to appear at the window appointed a little before dawn.

With this purpose, he passed up the High Street,* and turned down the opening where Saint John's Church now stands, in order to proceed to Curfew Street,† when it occurred to him, from the appearance of the sky, that he was at least an hour too early for his purpose, and that it would be better not to appear at the place of rendezvous till nearer the time assigned. Other gallants were not unlikely to be on the watch as well as himself, about the house of the Fair Maid of Perth; and he knew his own foible so well as to be sensible of the great chance of a scuffle arising betwixt them. 'I have the advantage,' he thought, 'by my father Simon's friendship; and why should I stain my fingers with the blood of the poor creatures that are not worthy my notice, since they are so much less fortunate than myself? No, no; I will be wise for once, and keep at a distance from all temptation to a broil. They shall have no more time to quarrel with me than just what it may require for me to give the signal, and for my father Simon to answer it. I wonder how the old man will contrive to bring her to the window? I fear, if she knew his purpose, he would find it difficult to carry it into execution.'

While these lover-like thoughts were passing through his brain, the armourer loitered in his pace, often turning his eyes eastward, and eyeing the firmament, in which no slight shades of grey were beginning to flicker, to announce the approach of dawn, however distant, which, to the impatience of the stout armourer, seemed on that morning to abstain longer than usual from occupying her eastern barbican. He was now passing slowly under the wall of Saint Anne's Chapel (not failing to cross himself and say an *ave*, as he trod the consecrated ground), when a voice, which seemed to come from behind one of the flying buttresses of the chapel, said, 'He lingers that has need to run.'

'Who speaks?' said the armourer, looking around him, somewhat startled at an address so unexpected, both in its tone and tenor.

'No matter who speaks,' answered the same voice. 'Do thou make great speed, or thou wilt scarce make good speed. Bandy not words, but begone.'

'Saint or sinner, angel or devil,' said Henry, crossing himself, 'your advice touches me but too dearly to be neglected. Saint Valentine be my speed!'

So saying, he instantly changed his loitering pace to one with which few people could have kept up, and in an instant was in Couvrefew Street. He had not made three steps towards Simon Glover's, which stood in the midst of the narrow street, when two men started from under the houses on different sides, and advanced, as it were by concert, to intercept his passage. The imperfect light only permitted him to discern that they wore the Highland mantle.

'Clear the way, catheran,' said the armourer, in the deep, stern voice which corresponded with the breadth of his chest.

They did not answer, at least intelligibly; but he could see that they drew their swords, with the purpose of withstanding him by violence. Conjecturing some evil, but of what kind he could not anticipate, Henry instantly determined to make his way through whatever odds, and defend his mistress, or at least die at her feet. He cast his cloak over his left arm as a buckler, and advanced rapidly and steadily to the two men. The nearest made a thrust at him; but Henry Smith, parrying the blow with his cloak, dashed his arm in the man's face, and, tripping him at the same time, gave him a severe fall on the causeway; while almost at the same instant he struck a blow with his whinger at the fellow who was upon his right hand, so severely applied, that he also lay prostrate by his associate. Meanwhile, the armourer pushed forward in alarm,

* Note F. High Street.
† Note G. Curfew Street.

for which the circumstance of the street being guarded or defended by strangers, who conducted themselves with such violence, afforded sufficient reason. He heard a suppressed whisper and a bustle under the Glover's windows—those very windows from which he had expected to be hailed by Catharine as her Valentine. He kept to the opposite side of the street, that he might reconnoitre their number and purpose. But one of the party who were beneath the window, observing or hearing him, crossed the street also, and, taking him doubtless for one of the sentinels, asked in a whisper, 'What noise was yonder, Kenneth? why gave you not the signal?'

'Villain!' said Henry, 'you are discovered, and you shall die the death!'

As he spoke thus, he dealt the stranger a blow with his weapon, which would probably have made his words good, had not the man, raising his arm, received on his hand the blow meant for his head. The wound must have been a severe one, for he staggered and fell with a deep groan. Without noticing him further, Henry Smith sprung forward upon a party of men who seemed engaged in placing a ladder against the lattice window in the gable. Henry did not stop, either to count their numbers or to ascertain their purpose. But crying the alarm-word of the town, and giving the signal at which the burghers were wont to collect, he rushed on the night-walkers, one of whom was in the act of ascending the ladder. The Smith seized it by the rounds, threw it down on the pavement, and, placing his foot on the body of the man who had been mounting, prevented him from regaining his feet. His accomplices struck fiercely at Henry, to extricate their companion. But his mail-coat stood him in good stead, and he repaid their blows with interest, shouting aloud, 'Help, help, for bonnie Saint Johnston!—Bows and blades, brave citizens! bows and blades!—they break into our houses under cloud of night.'

These words, which resounded far through the streets, were accompanied by as many fierce blows, dealt with good effect among those whom the armourer assailed. In the meantime, the inhabitants of the district began to awaken and appear on the street in their shirts, with swords and targets, and some of them with torches. The assailants now endeavoured to make their escape, which all of them effected excepting the man who had been thrown down along with the ladder. Him the intrepid armourer had caught by the throat in the scuffle, and held as fast as the greyhound holds the hare. The other wounded men were borne off by their comrades.

'Here are a sort of knaves breaking peace within burgh,' said Henry to the neighbours who began to assemble; 'make after the rogues. They cannot all get off, for I have maimed some of them; the blood will guide you to them.'

'Some Highland catherans,' said the citizens,—'up, and chase, neighbours!'

'Ay, chase—chase,—leave me to manage this fellow,' continued the armourer.

The assistants dispersed in different directions, their lights flashing, and their cries resounding through the whole adjacent district.

In the meantime the armourer's captive entreated for freedom, using both promises and threats to obtain it. 'As thou art a gentleman,' he said, 'let me go, and what is past shall be forgiven.'

'I am no gentleman,' said Henry—'I am Hal of the Wynd, a burgess of Perth; and I have done nothing to need forgiveness.'

'Villain, thou hast done thou knowest not what! But let me go, and I will fill thy bonnet with gold pieces.'

'I shall fill thy bonnet with a cloven head presently,' said the armourer, 'unless thou stand still as a true prisoner.'

'What is the matter, my son Harry?' said Simon, who now appeared at the window.—'I hear thy voice in another tone than I expected.—What is all this noise? and why are the neighbours gathering to the affray?'

'There have been a proper set of limmers about to scale your windows, father Simon; but I am like to prove godfather to one of them, whom I hold here, as fast as ever vice held iron.'

'Hear me, Simon Glover,' said the prisoner; 'let me but speak one word with you in private, and rescue me from the gripe of this iron-fisted and leaden-pated clown, and I will show thee that no harm was designed to thee or thine; and, moreover, tell thee what will much advantage thee.'

'I should know that voice,' said Simon Glover, who now came to the door with a dark-lantern in his hand. 'Son Smith, let this young man speak with me. There is no danger in him, I promise you. Stay but an instant where you are, and let no one enter the house, either to attack or defend. I will be answerable that this galliard meant but some Saint Valentine's jest.'

So saying, the old man pulled in the prisoner and shut the door, leaving Henry a little surprised at the unexpected light in which his father-in-law had viewed the affray. 'A jest!' he said; 'it might have been a strange jest if they had got into the maiden's sleeping room!—And they would have done so, had it not been for the honest friendly voice from betwixt the buttresses, which, if it were not that of the blessed saint (though what am I that the holy person should speak to me?), could not sound in that place without her permission and assent, and for which I will promise her a wax candle at her shrine as long as my whinger,—and I would I had had my two-handed broadsword instead, both for the sake of Saint Johnston and of the rogues, for of a certain those whingers are pretty toys, but more fit for a boy's hand than a man's. O, my old two-handed Trojan, hadst thou been in my hands, as thou hang'st presently at the tester of my bed, the legs of those rogues had not carried their bodies so clean off the field. But there come lighted torches and drawn swords.—So ho—stand!—Are you for Saint Johnston?—If friends to the bonnie burgh, you are well come.'

'We have been but bootless hunters,' said the townsmen. 'We followed by the tracks of the blood into the Dominican burial-ground, and we started two fellows from amongst the tombs, supporting betwixt them a third, who had probably got some of your marks about him, Harry. They got to the postern-gate before we could overtake them, and rang the sanctuary

bell—the gate opened and in went they. So they are safe in girth and sanctuary, and we may go to our cold beds and warm us.'

'Ay,' said one of the party, 'the good Dominicans have always some devout brother of their convent sitting up to open the gate of the sanctuary to any poor soul that is in trouble, and desires shelter in the church.'

'Yes, if the poor hunted soul can pay for it,' said another; 'but truly, if he be poor in purse as well as in spirit, he may stand on the outside till the hounds come up with him.'

A third, who had been poring for a few minutes upon the ground by advantage of his torch, now looked upwards and spoke. He was a brisk, forward, rather corpulent little man, called Oliver Proudfute, reasonably wealthy, and a leading man in his craft, which was that of bonnet-makers; he therefore spoke as one in authority.—'Canst tell us, jolly Smith,'—for they recognised each other by the lights which were brought into the streets,—'what manner of fellows they were who raised up this fray within burgh?'

'The two that I first saw,' answered the armourer, 'seemed to me, as well as I could observe them, to have Highland plaids about them.'

'Like enough—like enough,' answered another citizen, shaking his head. 'It's a shame the breaches in our walls are not repaired, and that these land-louping Highland scoundrels are left at liberty to take honest men and women out of their beds any night that is dark enough.'

'But look here, neighbours,' said Oliver Proudfute, showing a bloody hand, which he had picked up from the ground; 'when did such a hand as this tie a Highlandman's brogues? It is large, indeed, and bony, but as fine as a lady's, with a ring that sparkles like a gleaming candle. Simon Glover has made gloves for this hand before now, if I am not much mistaken, for he works for all the courtiers.' The spectators here began to gaze on the bloody token with various comments.

'If that is the case,' said one, 'Harry Smith had best show a clean pair of heels for it, since the justiciar will scarce think the protecting a burgess's house an excuse for cutting off a gentleman's hand. There be hard laws against mutilation.'

'Fie upon you, that you will say so, Michael Wabster,' answered the bonnet-maker; 'are we not representatives and successors of the stout old Romans, who built Perth as like to their own city as they could? And have we not charters from all our noble kings and progenitors, as being their loving liegemen? And would you have us now yield up our rights, privileges, and immunities, our outfang and infang, our hand-habend, our back-bearand, and our blood-suits and amerciaments, escheats, and commodities, and suffer an honest burgess's house to be assaulted without seeking for redress? No—brave citizens, craftsmen and burgesses, the Tay shall flow back to Dunkeld before we submit to such injustice!'

'And how can we help it?' said a grave old man, who stood leaning on a two-handed sword—'What would you have us do?'

'Marry, Bailie Craigdallie, I wonder that you, of all men, ask the question. I would have you pass like true men from this very place to the King's Grace's presence, raise him from his royal rest, and, presenting to him the piteous case of our being called forth from our beds at this season, with little better covering than these shirts, I would show him this bloody token, and know from his Grace's own royal lips whether it is just and honest that his loving lieges should be thus treated by the knights and nobles of his deboshed court. And this I call pushing our case warmly.'

'Warmly, sayest thou?' replied the old burgess; 'why, so warmly, that we shall all die of cold, man, before the porter turn a key to let us into the royal presence.—Come, friends, the night is bitter—we have kept our watch and ward like men, and our jolly Smith hath given a warning to those that would wrong us, which shall be worth twenty proclamations of the King.—To-morrow is a new day; we will consult on this matter on this self-same spot, and consider what measures should be taken for discovery and pursuit of the villains. And therefore let us dismiss before the heart's blood freeze in our veins.'

'Bravo, bravo, neighbour Craigdallie — Saint Johnston for ever!'

Oliver Proudfute would still have spoken; for he was one of those pitiless orators who think that their eloquence can overcome all inconveniences, in time, place, and circumstances. But no one would listen; and the citizens dispersed to their own houses by the light of the dawn, which began now to streak the horizon.

They were scarce gone ere the door of the Glover's house opened, and, seizing the Smith by the hand, the old man pulled him in.

'Where is the prisoner?' demanded the armourer.

'He is gone—escaped—fled—what do I know of him?' said the Glover. 'He got out at the back door, and so through the little garden.—Think not of him, but come and see the Valentine, whose honour and life you have saved this morning.'

'Let me but sheathe my weapon,' said the Smith—'let me but wash my hands.'

'There is not an instant to lose, she is up and almost dressed.—Come on, man. She shall see thee with thy good weapon in thy hand, and with villain's blood on thy fingers, that she may know what is the value of a true man's service. She has stopped my mouth over long with her pruderies and her scruples. I will have her know what a brave man's love is worth, and a bold burgess's to boot.'

CHAPTER V.

Up! lady fair, and braid thy hair,
And rouse thee in the breezy air;
Up! quit thy bower, late wears the hour,
Long have the rooks caw'd round the tower.
JOANNA BAILLIE.

STARTLED from her repose by the noise of the affray, the Fair Maid of Perth had listened in

breathless terror to the sounds of violence and outcry which arose from the street. She had sunk on her knees to pray for assistance, and when she distinguished the voices of neighbours and friends collected for her protection, she remained in the same posture to return thanks. She was still kneeling when her father almost thrust her champion, Henry Smith, into her apartment; the bashful lover hanging back at first, as if afraid to give offence, and, on observing her posture, from respect to her devotion.

'Father,' said the armourer, 'she prays—I dare no more speak to her than to a bishop when he says mass.'

'Now, go thy ways, for a right valiant and courageous blockhead,' said her father; and then, speaking to his daughter, he added,—'Heaven is best thanked, my daughter, by gratitude shown to our fellow-creatures. Here comes the instrument by whom God has rescued thee from death, or perhaps from dishonour worse than death. Receive him, Catharine, as thy true Valentine, and him whom I desire to see my affectionate son.'

'Not thus—father,' replied Catharine. 'I can see—can speak to no one now. I am not ungrateful—perhaps I am too thankful to the instrument of our safety; but let me thank the guardian saint who sent me this timely relief, and give me but a moment to don my kirtle.'

'Nay, God-a-mercy, wench, it were hard to deny thee time to busk thy body-clothes, since the request is the only words like a woman that thou hast uttered for these ten days.—Truly, son Harry, I would my daughter would put off being entirely a saint, till the time comes for her being canonized for Saint Catharine the Second.'

'Nay, jest not, father; for I will swear she has at least one sincere adorer already, who hath devoted himself to her pleasure so far as sinful man may.—Fare-thee-well, then, for the moment, fair maiden,' he concluded, raising his voice, 'and Heaven send thee dreams as peaceful as thy waking thoughts. I go to watch thy slumbers, and woe with him that shall intrude on them!'

'Nay, good and brave Henry, whose warm heart is at such variance with thy reckless hand, thrust thyself into no further quarrels to-night; but take the kindest thanks, and with these try to assume the peaceful thoughts which you assign to me. To-morrow we will meet, that I may assure you of my gratitude.—Farewell!'

'And farewell, lady and light of my heart,' said the armourer; and, descending the stair which led to Catharine's apartment, was about to sally forth into the street, when the Glover caught him by the arm.

'I shall like the ruffle of to-night,' said he, 'better than I ever thought to do the clashing of steel, if it brings my daughter to her senses, Harry, and teaches her what thou art worth. By Saint Magrider!* I even love these roysterers, and am sorry for that poor lover who will never wear right-handed chevron again. Ay! he has lost that which he will miss all the days of his life, especially when he goes to pull on his gloves,—ay, he will pay but half a fee to my craft in future.—Nay, not a step from this house to-night,' he continued. 'Thou dost not leave us, I promise thee, my son.'

'I do not mean it. But I will, with your permission, watch in the street. The attack may be renewed.'

'And if it be,' said Simon, 'thou wilt have better access to drive them back, having the vantage of the house. It is the way of fighting which suits us burghers best—that of resisting from behind stone walls. Our duty of watch and ward teaches us that trick; besides, enough are awake and astir to insure us peace and quiet till morning. So come in this way.'

So saying, he drew Henry, nothing loath, into the same apartment where they had supped, and where the old woman, who was on foot, disturbed as others had been by the nocturnal affray, soon roused up the fire.

'And now, my doughty son,' said the Glover, 'what liquor wilt thou pledge thy father in?'

Henry Smith had suffered himself to sink mechanically upon a seat of old black oak, and now gazed on the fire, that flashed back a ruddy light over his manly features. He muttered to himself half audibly—'*Good* Henry—*brave* Henry—Ah! had she but said *dear* Henry!'

'What liquors be these?' said the old Glover, laughing. 'My cellar holds none such; but if sack, or Rhenish, or wine of Gascony can serve, why, say the word, and the flagon foams—that is all.'

'The *kindest* thanks,' said the armourer, still musing; 'that's more than she ever said to me before—the *kindest* thanks—what may not that stretch to?'

'It shall stretch like kid's leather, man,' said the Glover, 'if thou wilt but be ruled, and say what thou wilt take for thy morning's draught.'

'Whatever thou wilt, father,' answered the armourer carelessly, and relapsed into the analysis of Catharine's speech to him. 'She spoke of my warm heart; but she also spoke of my reckless hand. What earthly thing can I do to get rid of this fighting fancy? Certainly I were best strike my right hand off, and nail it to the door of a church, that it may never do me discredit more.'

'You have chopped off hands enough for one night,' said his friend, setting a flagon of wine on the table. 'Why dost thou vex thyself, man? She would love thee twice as well did she not see how thou doatest upon her. But it becomes serious now. I am not to have the risk of my booth being broken, and my house plundered, by the hell-raking followers of the nobles, because she is called the Fair Maid of Perth, and please ye. No, she shall know I am her father, and will have that obedience to which law and gospel give me right. I will have her thy wife, Henry, my heart of gold—thy wife, my man of mettle, and that before many weeks are over. Come, come, here is to thy merry bridal, jolly Smith.'

The father quaffed a large cup, and filled it to his adopted son, who raised it slowly to his head; then, ere it had reached his lips, replaced it suddenly on the table, and shook his head.

* A place called vulgarly Ecclesmagirdie (Ecclesia Macgirdi), not far from Perth, still preserves the memory of this old Gaelic saint from utter Lethe.

'Nay, if thou wilt not pledge me to such a health, I know no one who will,' said Simon. 'What canst thou mean, thou foolish lad? Here has a chance happened, which in a manner places her in thy power, since from one end of the city to the other, all would cry fie on her if she should say thee nay. Here am I, her father, not only consenting to the cutting out of the match, but willing to see you two as closely united together as ever needle stitched buckskin. And with all this on thy side—fortune, father, and all—thou lookest like a distracted lover in a ballad, more like to pitch thyself into the Tay than to woo a lass that may be had for the asking, if you can but choose the lucky minute.'

'Ay, but that lucky minute, father! I question much if Catharine ever has such a moment to glance on earth and its inhabitants as might lead her to listen to a coarse, ignorant, borrel man like me. I cannot tell how it is, father; elsewhere I can hold up my head like another man, but with your saintly daughter I lose heart and courage, and I cannot help thinking that it would be well-nigh robbing a holy shrine, if I could succeed in surprising her affections. Her thoughts are too much fitted for heaven to be wasted on such a one as I am.'

'E'en as you like, Henry,' answered the Glover. 'My daughter is not courting you any more than I am—a fair offer is no cause of feud; —only if you think that I will give in to her foolish notions of a convent, take it with you that I will never listen to them. I love and honour the Church,' he said, crossing himself. 'I pay her rights duly and cheerfully; tithes and alms, wine and wax, I pay them as justly, I say, as any man in Perth of my means doth; but I cannot afford the Church my only and single ewe-lamb that I have in the world. Her mother was dear to me on earth, and is now an angel in heaven. Catharine is all I have to remind me of her I have lost; and if she goes to the cloister, it shall be when these old eyes are closed for ever, and not sooner.—But as for you, friend Gow, I pray you will act according to your own best liking. I want to force no wife on you, I promise you.'

'Nay, now you beat the iron twice over,' said Henry. 'It is thus we always end, father, by your being testy with me for not doing that thing in the world which would make me happiest, were I to have it in my power. Why, father, I would the keenest dirk I ever forged were sticking in my heart at this moment, if there is one single particle in it that is not more your daughter's property than my own. But what can I do? I cannot think less of her, or more of myself, than we both deserve; and what seems to you so easy and certain, is to me as difficult as it would be to work a steel hauberk out of hards of flax.—But here is to you, father,' he added in a more cheerful tone; 'and here is to my fair saint and Valentine, as I hope your Catharine will be mine for the season. And let me not keep your old head longer from the pillow, but make interest with your feather-bed till daybreak; and then you must be my guide to your daughter's chamber-door, and my apology for entering it, to bid her good-morrow, for the brightest that the sun will awaken in the city or for miles round it!'

'No bad advice, my son,' said the honest Glover. 'But you, what will you do? will you lie down beside me, or take a part of Conachar's bed?'

'Neither,' answered Harry Gow; 'I should but prevent your rest; and for me this easy-chair is worth a down bed, and I will sleep like a sentinel, with my graith about me.'

As he spoke he laid his hand on his sword.

'Nay, Heaven send us no more need of weapons.—Good-night, or rather good-morrow, till day-peep—and the first who wakes calls up the other.'

Thus parted the two burghers. The Glover retired to his bed, and, it is to be supposed, to rest. The lover was not so fortunate. His bodily frame easily bore the fatigue which he had encountered in the course of the night, but his mind was of a different and more delicate mould. In one point of view, he was but the stout burgher of his period, proud alike of his art in making weapons and wielding them when made; his professional jealousy, personal strength, and skill in the use of arms brought him into many quarrels, which had made him generally feared, and in some instances disliked. But with these qualities were united the simple good-nature of a child, and at the same time an imaginative and enthusiastic temper, which seemed little to correspond with his labours at the forge or his combats in the field. Perhaps a little of the harebrained and ardent feelings which he had picked out of old ballads, or from the metrical romances which were his sole source of information or knowledge, may have been the means of pricking him on to some of his achievements, which had often a rude strain of chivalry in them; at least, it was certain that his love to the fair Catharine had in it a delicacy such as might have become the squire of low degree, who was honoured, if song speaks truth, with the smiles of the King of Hungary's daughter. His sentiments towards her were certainly as exalted as if they had been fixed upon an actual angel, which made old Simon, and others who watched his conduct, think that his passion was too high and devotional to be successful with maiden of mortal mould. They were mistaken, however. Catharine, coy and reserved as she was, had a heart which could feel and understand the nature and depth of the armourer's passion; and whether she was able to repay it or not, she had as much secret pride in the attachment of the redoubted Henry Gow as a lady of romance may be supposed to have in the company of a tame lion, who follows to provide for and defend her. It was with sentiments of the most sincere gratitude that she recollected, as she awoke at dawn, the services of Henry during the course of the eventful night; and the first thought which she dwelt upon was the means of making him understand her feelings.

Arising hastily from bed, and half-blushing at her own purpose—'I have been cold to him, and perhaps unjust; I will not be ungrateful,' she said to herself, 'though I cannot yield to his suit; I will not wait till my father compels me to receive him as my Valentine for the year;

I will seek him out, and choose him myself. I have thought other girls bold, when they did something like this; but I shall thus best please my father, and but discharge the rites due to good Saint Valentine, by showing my gratitude to this brave man.'

Hastily slipping on her dress, which, nevertheless, was left a good deal more disordered than usual, she tripped down-stairs and opened the door of the chamber in which, as she had guessed, her lover had passed the hours after the fray. Catharine paused at the door, and became half-afraid of executing her purpose, which not only permitted but enjoined the Valentines of the year to begin their connection with a kiss of affection. It was looked upon as a peculiarly propitious omen, if the one party could find the other asleep, and awaken him or her by performance of this interesting ceremony.

Never was a fairer opportunity offered for commencing this mystic tie than that which now presented itself to Catharine. After many and various thoughts, sleep had at length overcome the stout armourer in the chair in which he had deposited himself. His features in repose had a more firm and manly cast than Catharine had thought, who, having generally seen them fluctuating between shamefacedness and apprehension of her displeasure, had been used to connect with them some idea of imbecility.

'He looks very stern,' she said; 'if he should be angry—and then when he awakes—we are alone—if I should call Dorothy—if I should wake my father—but no!—it is a thing of custom, and done in all maidenly and sisterly love and honour. I will not suppose that Henry can misconstrue it, and I will not let a childish bashfulness put my gratitude to sleep.'

So saying, she tripped along the floor of the apartment with a light, though hesitating step, and a cheek crimsoned at her own purpose; and, gliding to the chair of the sleeper, dropped a kiss upon his lips as light as if a rose-leaf had fallen on them. The slumbers must have been slight which such a touch could dispel, and the dreams of the sleeper must needs have been connected with the cause of the interruption, since Henry, instantly starting up, caught the maiden in his arms, and attempted to return in ecstasy the salute which had broken his repose. But Catharine struggled in his embrace; and as her efforts implied alarmed modesty rather than maidenly coyness, her bashful lover suffered her to escape a grasp from which twenty times her strength could not have extricated her.

'Nay, be not angry, good Henry,' said Catharine, in the kindest tone, to her surprised lover. 'I have paid my vows to Saint Valentine, to show how I value the mate which he has sent me for the year. Let but my father be present, and I will not dare to refuse thee the revenge you may claim for a broken sleep.'

'Let not that be a hindrance,' said the old Glover, rushing in ecstasy into the room—'to her, Smith—to her—strike while the iron is hot, and teach her what it is not to let sleeping dogs lie still.'

Thus encouraged, Henry, though perhaps with less alarming vivacity, again seized the blushing maiden in his arms, who submitted with a tolerable grace to receive repayment of her salute a dozen times repeated, and with an energy very different from that which had provoked such severe retaliation. At length, she again extricated herself from her lover's arms, and, as if frightened and repenting what she had done, threw herself into a seat, and covered her face with her hands.

'Cheer up, thou silly girl,' said her father, 'and be not ashamed that thou hast made the two happiest men in Perth, since thy old father is one of them. Never was kiss so well bestowed, and meet it is that it should be suitably returned. Look up, my darling! look up, and let me see thee give but one smile. By my honest word, the sun that now rises over our Fair City shows no sight that can give me greater pleasure.—What,' he continued in a jocose tone, 'thou thoughtst thou hadst Jamie Keddie's * ring, and couldst walk invisible? but not so, my fairy of the dawning. Just as I was about to rise, I heard thy chamber door open, and watched thee down-stairs—not to protect thee against this sleepy-headed Henry, but to see, with my own delighted eyes, my beloved girl do that which her father most wished.—Come, put down these foolish hands, and though thou blushest a little, it will only the better grace Saint Valentine's morn, when blushes best become a maiden's cheek.'

As Simon Glover spoke, he pulled away, with gentle violence, the hands which hid his daughter's face. She blushed deeply, indeed, but there was more than maiden's shame in her face, and her eyes were fast filling with tears.

'What! weeping, love?' continued her father—'nay, nay, this is more than need—Henry, help me to comfort this little fool.'

Catharine made an effort to collect herself and to smile, but the smile was of a melancholy and serious cast.

'I only meant to say, father,' said the Fair Maid of Perth with continued exertion, 'that in choosing Henry Gow for my Valentine, and rendering to him the rights and greeting of the morning, according to wonted custom, I meant but to show my gratitude to him for his manly and faithful service, and my obedience to you.—But do not lead him to think—and O, dearest father, do not yourself entertain an idea, that I meant more than what the promise to be his faithful and affectionate Valentine through the year requires of me.'

'Ay—ay—ay—ay—we understand it all,' said Simon, in the soothing tone which nurses apply to children. 'We understand what the meaning is; enough for once, enough for once. Thou shalt not be frightened or hurried.—Loving, true, and faithful Valentines are ye, and the rest as Heaven and opportunity shall permit. Come, prithee, have done—wring not thy tiny hands, nor fear further persecution now. Thou hast done bravely, excellently.—And now, away to Dorothy, and call up the old sluggard; we must have a substantial breakfast, after a night of

* There is a tradition that one Keddie, a tailor, found in ancient days a ring, possessing the properties of that of Gyges, in a cavern of the romantic hill of Kinnoul, near Perth.

confusion and a morning of joy; and thy hand will be needed to prepare for us some of those delicate cakes which no one can make but thyself; and well hast thou a right to the secret, seeing who taught it thee.—Ah! health to the soul of thy dearest mother,' he added with a sigh; 'how blithe would she have been to see this happy Saint Valentine's morning!'

Catharine took the opportunity of escape which was thus given her, and glided from the room. To Henry it seemed as if the sun had disappeared from the heaven at midday, and left the world in sudden obscurity. Even the high-swelled hopes with which the late incident had filled him began to quail, as he reflected upon her altered demeanour—the tears in her eyes — the obvious fear which occupied her features—and the pains she had taken to show, as plainly as delicacy would permit, that the advances which she had made to him were limited to the character with which the rites of the day had invested him. Her father looked on his fallen countenance with something like surprise and displeasure.

'In the name of good Saint John, what has befallen you, that makes you look as grave as an owl, when a lad of your spirit, having really such a fancy for this poor girl as you pretend, ought to be as lively as a lark?'

'Alas, father!' replied the crestfallen lover, 'there is that written on her brow which says she loves me well enough to be my Valentine, especially since you wish it, but not well enough to be my wife.'

'Now, a plague on thee for a cold, down-hearted goose-cap,' answered the father. 'I can read a woman's brow as well, and better than thou; and I can see no such matter on hers. What the foul Fiend, man! there thou wast lying like a lord in thy elbow-chair, as sound asleep as a judge, when, hadst thou been a lover of any spirit, thou wouldst have been watching the east for the first ray of the sun. But there thou layest snoring, I warrant, thinking nought about her, or anything else; and the poor girl rises at peep of day, lest any one else should pick up her most precious and vigilant Valentine, and wakes thee with a grace, which—so help me, Saint Macgrider!—would have put life in an anvil; and thou awakest to hone, and pine, and moan, as if she had drawn a hot iron across thy lips! I would to Saint John she had sent old Dorothy on the errand, and bound thee for thy Valentine-service to that bundle of dry bones, with never a tooth in her head. She were fittest Valentine in Perth for so craven a wooer.'

'As to craven, father,' answered the Smith, 'there are twenty good cocks, whose combs I have plucked, can tell thee if I am craven or no. And Heaven knows that I would give my good land, held by burgess' tenure, with smithy, bellows, tongs, anvil, and all, providing it would make your view of the matter the true one. But it is not of her coyness or her blushes that I speak; it is of the paleness which so soon followed the red, and chased it from her cheeks; and it is of the tears which succeeded. It was like the April shower stealing upon and obscuring the fairest dawning that ever beamed over the Tay.'

'Tutti, taitti,' replied the Glover; 'neither Rome nor Perth were built in a day. Thou hast fished salmon a thousand times, and mightst have taken a lesson. When the fish has taken the fly, to pull a hard strain on the line would snap the tackle to pieces, were it made of wire. Ease your hand, man, and let him run; take leisure, and, in half-an-hour, thou layest him on the bank.—There is a beginning, as fair as you could wish, unless you expect the poor wench to come to thy bedside, as she did to thy chair; and that is not the fashion of modest maidens. But observe me; after we have had our breakfast, I will take care thou hast an opportunity to speak thy mind; only beware thou be neither too backward, nor press her too hard. Give her line enough; but do not slack too fast, and my life for yours upon the issue.'

'Do what I can, father,' answered Henry, 'you will always lay the blame on me, either that I give too much head, or that I strain the tackle. I would give the best habergeon I ever wrought, that the difficulty, in truth, rested with me; for there were then the better chance of its being removed. I own, however, I am but an ass in the trick of bringing about such discourse as is to the purpose for the occasion.'

'Come into the booth with me, my son, and I will furnish thee with a fitting theme. Thou knowest the maiden who ventures to kiss a sleeping man wins of him a pair of gloves. Come to my booth; thou shalt have a pair of delicate kid-skin, that will exactly suit her hand and arm.—I was thinking of her poor mother when I shaped them,' added honest Simon, with a sigh; 'and except Catharine, I know not the woman in Scotland whom they would fit, though I have measured most of the high beauties of the court. Come with me, I say, and thou shalt be provided with a theme to wag thy tongue upon, providing thou hast courage and caution to stand by thee in thy wooing.'

CHAPTER VI.

Never to man shall Catharine give her hand.
TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THE breakfast was served, and the thin soft cakes, made of flour and honey according to the family receipt, were not only commended with all the partiality of a father and a lover, but done liberal justice to in the mode which is best proof of cake as well as pudding. They talked, jested, and laughed. Catharine, too, had recovered her equanimity where the dames and damsels of the period were apt to lose theirs—in the kitchen, namely, and in the superintendence of household affairs, in which she was an adept. I question much if the perusal of Seneca * for as long a period would have had equal effect in composing her mind.

Old Dorothy sat down at the board-end, as was the homespun fashion of the period; and so much were the two men amused with their own

* [A Roman philosopher, who preached the doctrines of Stoicism.]

conversation,—and Catharine occupied either in attending to them or with her own reflections,—that the old woman was the first who observed the absence of the boy Conachar.

'It is true,' said the master Glover; 'go call him, the idle Highland loon. He was not seen last night during the fray neither, at least I saw him not. Did any of you observe him?'

The reply was negative; and Henry's observation followed,—

'There are times when Highlanders can couch like their own deer,—ay, and run from danger too as fast. I have seen them do so myself, for the matter of that.'

'—And there are times,' replied Simon, 'when King Arthur and his Round Table could not make stand against them. I wish, Henry, you would speak more reverently of the Highlanders. They are often in Perth, both alone and in numbers; and you ought to keep peace with them, so long as they will keep peace with you.'

An answer of defiance rose to Henry's lips, but he prudently suppressed it.

'Why, thou knowest, father,' he said, smiling, 'that we handicrafts best love the folk we live by; now my craft provides for valiant and noble knights, gentle squires and pages, stout men-at-arms, and others that wear the weapons which we make. It is natural I should like the Ruthvens, the Lindsays, the Ogilvys, the Oliphants, and so many others of our brave and noble neighbours, who are sheathed in steel of my making, like so many Paladins, better than those naked, snatching mountaineers, who are ever doing us wrong, especially since no five of each clan have a rusty shirt of mail as old as their *brattach*,* and that is but the work of the clumsy clan-smith after all, who is no member of our honourable mystery, but simply works at the anvil, where his father wrought before him. I say, such people can have no favour in the eyes of an honest craftsman.'

'Well, well,' answered Simon; 'I prithee let the matter rest even now, for here comes the loitering boy; and though it is a holiday morn, I want no more bloody puddings.'

The youth entered accordingly. His face was pale, his eyes red; and there was an air of discomposure about his whole person. He sat down at the lower end of the table, opposite to Dorothy, and crossed himself, as if preparing for his morning's meal. As he did not help himself to any food, Catharine offered him a platter containing some of the cakes which had met with such general approbation. At first he rejected her offered kindness rather sullenly; but on her repeating the offer with a smile of good-will, he took a cake in his hand, broke it; and was about to eat a morsel, when the effort to swallow seemed almost too much for him; and though he succeeded, he did not repeat it.

'You have a bad appetite for Saint Valentine's morning, Conachar,' said his good-humoured master; 'and yet I think you must have slept soundly the night before, since I conclude you were not disturbed by the noise of the scuffle. Why, I thought a lively Glune-amie would have been at his master's side, dirk in hand, at the first sound of danger which arose within a mile of us.'

'I heard but an indistinct noise,' said the youth, his face glowing suddenly like a heated coal, 'which I took for the shout of some merry revellers; and you are wont to bid me never open door or window, or alarm the house, on the score of such folly.'

'Well, well,' said Simon; 'I thought a Highlander would have known better the difference betwixt the clash of swords and the twanging on harps, the wild war-cry and the merry hunt's up. But let it pass, boy; I am glad thou art losing thy quarrelsome fashions. Eat thy breakfast, any way, as I have that to employ thee which requires haste.'

'I have breakfasted already, and am in haste myself. I am for the hills.—Have you any message to my father?'

'None,' replied the Glover, in some surprise; 'but art thou beside thyself, boy? or what a vengeance takes thee from the city, like the wing of the whirlwind?'

'My warning has been sudden,' said Conachar, speaking with difficulty; but whether arising from the hesitation incidental to the use of a foreign language, or whether from some other cause, could not easily be distinguished. 'There is to be a meeting—a great hunting'—— Here he stopped.

'And when are you to return from this blessed hunting?' said his master; 'that is, if I may make so bold as to ask.'

'I cannot exactly answer,' replied the apprentice. 'Perhaps never—if such be my father's pleasure,' continued Conachar, with assumed indifference.

'I thought,' said Simon Glover rather seriously, 'that all this was to be laid aside, when at earnest intercession I took you under my roof. I thought that when I undertook, being very loath to do so, to teach you an honest trade, we were to hear no more of hunting, or hosting, or clan-gatherings, or any matters of the kind?'

'I was not consulted when I was sent hither,' said the lad haughtily. 'I cannot tell what the terms were.'

'But I can tell you, Sir Conachar,' said the Glover angrily, 'that there is no fashion of honesty in binding yourself to an honest craftsman, and spoiling more hides than your own is worth; and now, when you are of age to be of some service, in taking up the disposal of your time at your pleasure, as if it were your own property, not your master's.'

'Reckon with my father about that,' answered Conachar; 'he will pay you gallantly—a French mutton† for every hide I have spoiled, and a fat cow or bullock for each day I have been absent.'

'Close with him, friend Glover, close with him,' said the armourer dryly. 'Thou wilt be paid gallantly, at least, if not honestly. Methinks I would like to know how many purses have been emptied to fill the goat-skin sporran‡ that is to be so free to you of its gold, and whose

* Standard.

† *Mouton*, a French gold coin, so called from its being impressed with the image of a lamb.

‡ The Highland pouch, generally formed of goat-skin, and worn in front of the garb, is called in Gaelic a *sporran*. A *sporran-moullach* is a shaggy pouch, formed as they usually are of goat-skin, or some such material, with the rough side outermost.

pastures the bullocks have been calved in, that are to be sent down to you from the Grampian passes.'

'You remind me, friend,' said the Highland youth, turning haughtily towards the Smith, 'that I have also a reckoning to hold with you.'

'Keep at arm's-length, then,' said Henry, extending his brawny arm,—'I will have no more close hugs—no more bodkin work, like last night—I care little for a wasp's sting, yet I will not allow the insect to come near me if I have warning.'

Conachar smiled contemptuously. 'I meant thee no harm,' he said. 'My father's son did thee but too much honour to spill such churl's blood. I will pay you for it by the drop, that it may be dried up, and no longer soil my fingers.'

'Peace, thou bragging ape!' said the Smith; 'the blood of a true man cannot be valued in gold. The only expiation would be that thou shouldst come a mile into the Low Country with two of the strongest gallo-glasses of thy clan; and while I dealt with them, I would leave thee to the correction of my apprentice, little Jankin.'

Here Catharine interposed. 'Peace,' she said, 'my trusty Valentine, whom I have a right to command; and peace, you Conachar, who ought to obey me as your master's daughter. It is ill done to awaken again on the morrow the evil which has been laid to sleep at night.'

'Farewell, then, master,' said Conachar, after another look of scorn at the Smith, which he only answered with a laugh. 'Farewell! and I thank you for your kindness, which has been more than I deserved. If I have at times seemed less than thankful, it was the fault of circumstances, and not of my will. Catharine'—— He cast upon the maiden a look of strong emotion, in which various feelings were blended. He hesitated, as if to say something, and at length turned away with the single word *farewell*. Five minutes afterwards, with Highland buskins on his feet, and a small bundle in his hand, he passed through the north gate of Perth, and directed his course to the Highlands.

'There goes enough of beggary and of pride for a whole Highland clan,' said Henry. 'He talks as familiarly of gold pieces as I would of silver pennies; and yet I will be sworn that the thumb of his mother's worsted glove might hold the treasure of the whole clan.'

'Like enough,' said the Glover, laughing at the idea; 'his mother was a large-boned woman, especially in the fingers and wrist.'

'And as for cattle,' continued Henry, 'I reckon his father and brothers steal sheep by one at a time.'

'The less we say of them the better,' said the Glover, becoming again grave. 'Brothers he hath none; his father is a powerful man—hath long hands—reaches as far as he can, and hears farther than it is necessary to talk of him.'

'And yet he hath bound his only son apprentice to a glover in Perth?' said Henry. 'Why, I should have thought the Gentle Craft, as it is called, of Saint Crispin would have suited him best; and that if the son of some great Mac or O was to become an artisan, it could only be in the craft where princes set him the example.'

This remark, though ironical, seemed to awaken our friend Simon's sense of professional dignity, which was a prevailing feeling that marked the manners of the artisans of the time.

'You err, son Henry,' he replied with much gravity; 'the glovers are the more honourable craft of the two, in regard they provide for the accommodation of the hands, whereas the shoemakers and cordwainers do but work for the feet.' *

'Both equally necessary members of the body corporate,' said Henry, whose father had been a cordwainer.

'It may be so, my son,' said the Glover; 'but not both alike honourable. Bethink you that we employ the hands as pledges of friendship and good faith, and the feet have no such privilege. Brave men fight with their hands, cowards employ their feet in flight. A glove is borne aloft, a shoe is trampled in the mire; a man greets a friend with his open hand, he spurns a dog, or one whom he holds as mean as a dog, with his advanced foot. A glove on the point of a spear is a sign and pledge of faith all the wide world over, as a gauntlet flung down is a gage of knightly battle; while I know no other emblem belonging to an old shoe, except that some crones will fling them after a man by way of good luck, in which practice I avow myself to entertain no confidence.'

'Nay,' said the Smith, amused with his friend's eloquent pleading for the dignity of the art he practised, 'I am not the man, I promise you, to disparage the glover's mystery. Bethink you, I am myself a maker of gauntlets. But the dignity of your ancient craft removes not my wonder, that the father of this Conachar suffered his son to learn a trade of any kind from a Lowland craftsman, holding us, as they do, altogether beneath their magnificent degree, and a race of contemptible drudges, unworthy of any other fate than to be ill-used and plundered as often as these bare-breeched dunniewassals see safety and convenience for doing so.'

'Ay,' answered the Glover; 'but there were powerful reasons for — for'—— He withheld something which seemed upon his lips, and went on, 'for Conachar's father acting as he did.—Well, I have played fair with him, and I do not doubt but he will act honourably by me.—But Conachar's sudden leave-taking has put me to some inconvenience. He had things under his charge. I must look through the booth.'

'Can I help you, father?' said Henry Gow, deceived by the earnestness of his manner.

'You?—no,'—said Simon, with a dryness which made Henry so sensible of the simplicity of his proposal, that he blushed to the eyes at his own dulness of comprehension, in a matter where love ought to have induced him to take his cue easily up. 'You, Catharine,' said the Glover, as he left the room, 'entertain your Valentine for five minutes, and see he departs not till my return.—Come hither with me, old Dorothy, and bestir thy limbs in my behalf.'

* Note H. The Glovers.

He left the room, followed by the old woman; and Henry Smith remained with Catharine, almost for the first time in his life, entirely alone. There was embarrassment on the maiden's part, and awkwardness on that of the lover, for about a minute; when Henry, calling up his courage, pulled the gloves out of his pocket with which Simon had supplied him, and asked her to permit one who had been so highly graced that morning, to pay the usual penalty for being asleep at the moment when he would have given the slumbers of a whole twelvemonth to be awake for a single minute.

'Nay, but,' said Catharine, 'the fulfilment of my homage to Saint Valentine infers no such penalty as you desire to pay, and I cannot, therefore, think of accepting them.'

'These gloves,' said Henry, advancing his seat insidiously towards Catharine as he spoke, 'were wrought by the hands that are dearest to you; and see—they are shaped for your own.' He extended them as he spoke, and, taking her arm in his robust hand, spread the gloves beside it to show how well they fitted. 'Look at that taper arm,' he said, 'look at these small fingers; think who sewed these seams of silk and gold, and think whether the glove, and the arm which alone the glove can fit, ought to remain separate because the poor glove has had the misfortune to be for a passing minute in the keeping of a hand so swart and rough as mine.'

'They are welcome as coming from my father,' said Catharine; 'and surely not less so as coming from my *friend*' (and there was an emphasis on the word), 'as well as my Valentine and preserver.'

'Let me aid to do them on,' said the Smith, bringing himself yet closer to her side; 'they may seem a little overtight at first, and you may require some assistance.'

'You are skilful in such service, good Henry Gow,' said the maiden, smiling, but at the same time drawing farther from her lover.

'In good faith, no,' said Henry, shaking his head; 'my experience has been in donning steel gauntlets on mailed knights, more than in fitting embroidered gloves upon maidens.'

'I will trouble you, then, no further, and Dorothy shall aid me, though there needs no assistance: my father's eye and fingers are faithful to his craft; what work he puts through his hands is always true to the measure.'

'Let me be convinced of it,' said the Smith; 'let me see that these slender gloves actually match the hands they were made for.'

'Some other time, good Henry,' answered the maiden; 'I will wear the gloves in honour of Saint Valentine, and the mate he has sent me for the season. I would to Heaven I could pleasure my father as well in weightier matters; at present the perfume of the leather harms the headache I have had since morning.'

'Headache! dearest maiden?' echoed her lover.'

'If you call it heartache you will not misname it,' said Catharine with a sigh, and proceeded to speak in a very serious tone. 'Henry,' she said, 'I am going, perhaps, to be as bold as I gave you reason to think me this morning; for I am about to speak the first upon a subject on which it may well be I ought to wait till I had to answer you. But I cannot, after what has happened this morning, suffer my feelings towards you to remain unexplained, without the possibility of my being greatly misconceived. —Nay, do not answer till you have heard me out.—You are brave, Henry, beyond most men, honest and true as the steel you work upon'——

'Stop — stop, Catharine, for mercy's sake! You never said so much that was good concerning me, save to introduce some bitter censure of which your praises were the harbingers. I am honest, and so forth, you would say, but a hot-brained brawler, and common sworder or stabber.'

'I should injure both myself and you in calling you such. No, Henry, to no common stabber, had he worn a plume in his bonnet and gold spurs on his heels, would Catharine Glover have offered the little grace she has this day voluntarily done to you. If I have at times dwelt severely upon the proneness of your spirit to anger, and of your hand to strife, it is because I would have you, if I could so persuade you, hate in yourself the sins of vanity and wrath, by which you are most easily beset. I have spoken on the topic more to alarm your own conscience than to express my opinion. I know as well as my father, that in these forlorn and desperate days the whole customs of our nation, nay, of every Christian nation, may be quoted in favour of bloody quarrels for trifling causes, of the taking deadly and deep revenge for slight offences, and the slaughter of each other for emulation of honour, or often in mere sport. But I know that for all these things we shall one day be called into judgment; and fain would I convince thee, my brave and generous friend, to listen oftener to the dictates of thy good heart, and take less pride in the strength and dexterity of thy unsparing arm.'

'I am — I am convinced, Catharine,' exclaimed Henry; 'thy words shall henceforward be a law to me. I have done enough, far too much, indeed, for proof of my bodily strength and courage; but it is only from you, Catharine, that I can learn a better way of thinking. Remember, my fair Valentine, that my ambition of distinction in arms, and my love of strife, if it can be called such, do not fight even-handed with my reason and my milder dispositions, but have their patrons and sticklers to egg them on. Is there a quarrel—and suppose that I, thinking on your counsels, am something loath to engage in it—believe you I am left to decide between peace or war at my own choosing? Not so, by Saint Mary! there are a hundred round me to stir me on. "Why, how now, Smith, is thy mainspring rusted?" says one. "Jolly Henry is deaf on the quarrelling ear this morning," says another. "Stand to it for the honour of Perth," says my lord the Provost. "Harry against them for a gold noble," cries your father, perhaps. Now, what can a poor fellow do, Catharine, when all are hallooing him on in the devil's name, and not a soul putting in a word on the other side?'

'Nay, I know the devil has factors enough to utter his wares,' said Catharine; 'but it is our duty to despise such idle arguments, though

they may be pleaded even by those to whom we owe much love and honour.'

'Then there are the minstrels, with their romaunts and ballads, which place all a man's praise in receiving and repaying hard blows. It is sad to tell, Catharine, how many of my sins that Blind Harry the minstrel hath to answer for.* When I hit a downright blow, it is not (so save me, Saint John !) to do any man injury, but only to strike as William Wallace struck.'

The minstrel's namesake spoke this in such a tone of rueful seriousness that Catharine could scarce forbear smiling; but nevertheless she assured him that the danger of his own and other men's lives ought not for a moment to be weighed against such simple toys.

'Ay, but,' replied Henry, emboldened by her smiles, 'methinks now the good cause of peace would thrive all the better for an advocate. Suppose, for example, that when I am pressed and urged to lay hand on my weapon, I could have cause to recollect that there was a gentle and guardian angel at home, whose image would seem to whisper, "Henry, do no violence; it is my hand which you crimson with blood. Henry, rush upon no idle danger; it is my breast which you expose to injury;" such thoughts would do more to restrain my mood than if every monk in Perth should cry, "Hold thy hand, on pain of bell, book, and candle."'

'If such a warning as could be given by the voice of sisterly affection can have weight in the debate,' said Catharine, 'do think that in striking, you empurple this hand; that in receiving wounds, you harm this heart.'

The Smith took courage at the sincerely affectionate tone in which these words were delivered.

'And wherefore not stretch your regard a degree beyond these cold limits? Why, since you are so kind and generous as to own some interest in the poor ignorant sinner before you, should you not at once adopt him as your scholar and your husband? Your father desires it; the town expects it; glovers and smiths are preparing their rejoicings; and you, only you, whose words are so fair and so kind, you will not give your consent!'

'Henry,' said Catharine, in a low and tremulous voice, 'believe me, I should hold it my duty to comply with my father's commands, were there not obstacles invincible to the match which he proposes.'

'Yet think—think but for a moment. I have little to say for myself in comparison of you, who can both read and write. But then I wish to hear reading, and could listen to your sweet voice for ever. You love music, and I have been taught to play and sing as well as some minstrels. You love to be charitable; I have enough to give and enough to keep; as large a daily alms as a deacon gives would never be missed by me. Your father gets old for daily toil; he would live with us, as I should truly hold him for my father also. I would be as chary of mixing in causeless strife as of thrusting my hand into my own furnace; and if there came on us unlawful violence, its wares would be brought to an ill-chosen market.'

'May you experience all the domestic happiness which you can conceive, Henry,—but with some one more happy than I am!'

So spoke, or rather so sobbed, the Fair Maiden of Perth, who seemed choking in the attempt to restrain her tears.

'You hate me, then?' said the lover, after a pause.

'Heaven is my witness, No!'

'Or you love some other better?'

'It is cruel to ask what it cannot avail you to know. But you are entirely mistaken.'

'Yon wild-cat Conachar, perhaps?' said Henry. 'I have marked his looks'——

'You avail yourself of this painful situation to insult me, Henry, though I have little deserved it. Conachar is nothing to me, more than the trying to tame his wild spirit by instruction might lead me to take some interest in a mind abandoned to prejudices and passions; and therein, Henry, not unlike your own.'

'It must then be some of those flaunting silkworm Sirs about the court,' said the armourer, his natural heat of temper kindling from disappointment and vexation; 'some of those who think they carry it off through the height of their plumed bonnets and the jingle of their spurs. I would I knew which it was, that, leaving his natural mates, the painted and perfumed dames of the court, comes to take his prey among the simple maidens of the burgher craft. I would I knew but his name and surname!'

'Henry Smith,' said Catharine, shaking off the weakness which seemed to threaten to overpower her a moment before, 'this is the language of an ungrateful fool, or rather of a frantic madman. I have told you already, there was no one who stood, at the beginning of this conference, more high in my opinion than he who is now losing ground with every word he utters in the tone of unjust suspicion and senseless anger. You had no title to know even what I have told you, which, I pray you to observe, implies no preference to you over others, though it disowns any preference of another to you. It is enough you should be aware that there is as insuperable an objection to what you desire as if an enchanter had a spell over my destiny.'

'Spells may be broken by true men,' said the Smith. 'I would it were come to that. Thorbiorn, the Danish armourer, spoke of a spell he had for making breastplates, by singing a certain song while the iron was heating. I told him that his runic rhymes were no proof against the weapons which fought at Loncarty†—what further came of it it is needless to tell;—but the corselet and the wearer, and the leech who salved his wound, know if Henry Gow can break a spell or no.'

Catharine looked at him as if about to return an answer little approving of the exploit he had

* [The reader need hardly be informed that this is an obvious anachronism, the Blind Minstrel having flourished a century later than the time of this narrative.]

† [According to the old Scottish historian Boece, King Kenneth III. defeated the Danes or Northmen at Loncarty or Luncarty, in Perthshire, some time between 970 and 990. Later authorities discredit this battle altogether.]

vaunted, which the downright Smith had not recollected was of a kind that exposed him to her frequent censure. But ere she had given words to her thoughts, her father thrust his head in at the door.

'Henry,' he said, 'I must interrupt your more pleasing affairs, and request you to come into my working-room in all speed, to consult about certain matters deeply affecting the weal of the burgh.'

Henry, making his obeisance to Catharine, left the apartment upon her father's summons. Indeed, it was probably in favour of their future friendly intercourse that they were parted on this occasion, at the turn which the conversation seemed likely to take. For, as the wooer had begun to hold the refusal of the damsel as somewhat capricious and inexplicable after the degree of encouragement which, in his opinion, she had afforded, Catharine, on the other hand, considered him rather as an encroacher upon the grace which she had shown him, than one whose delicacy rendered him deserving of such favour.

But there was living in their bosoms towards each other a reciprocal kindness, which on the termination of the dispute was sure to revive, inducing the maiden to forget her offended delicacy and the lover his slighted warmth of passion.

CHAPTER VII.

This quarrel may draw blood another day.
HENRY IV. *Part I.*

THE conclave of citizens appointed to meet for investigating the affray of the preceding evening had now assembled. The workroom of Simon Glover was filled to crowding by personages of no little consequence, some of whom wore black velvet cloaks and gold chains around their necks. They were, indeed, the fathers of the city; and there were bailies and deacons in the honoured number. There was an ireful and offended air of importance upon every brow, as they conversed together, rather in whisper than aloud or in detail. Busiest among the busy, the little important assistant of the previous night, Oliver Proudfute by name, and bonnet-maker by profession, was bustling among the crowd, much after the manner of the sea-gull, which flutters, screams, and sputters most at the commencement of a gale of wind, though one can hardly conceive what the bird has better to do than to fly to its nest and remain quiet till the gale is over.

Be that as it may, Master Proudfute was in the midst of the crowd, his fingers upon every one's button and his mouth in every man's ear, embracing such as were near to his own stature, that he might more closely and mysteriously utter his sentiments, and standing on tiptoe and supporting himself by the cloak-collars of tall men, that he might dole out to them also the same share of information. He felt himself one of the heroes of the affair, being conscious of the dignity of superior information on the subject as an eye-witness, and much disposed to push his connection with the scuffle a few points beyond the modesty of truth. It cannot be said that his communications were in especial curious and important, consisting chiefly of such assertions as these:—

'It is all true, by Saint John. I was there and saw it myself—was the first to run to the fray; and if it had not been for me and another stout fellow, who came in about the same time, they had broken into Simon Glover's house, cut his throat, and carried his daughter off to the mountains. It is too evil usage—not to be suffered, neighbour Crookshank—not to be endured, neighbour Glass—not to be borne, neighbours Balneaves, Rollock, and Chrysteson. It was a mercy that I and that stout fellow came in—Was it not, neighbour and worthy Bailie Craigdallie?'

These speeches were dispersed by the busy Bonnet-maker into sundry ears. Bailie Craigdallie, a portly guild-brother, the same who had advised the prorogation of their civic council to the present place and hour, a big, burly, good-looking man, shook the deacon from his cloak with pretty much the grace with which a large horse shrugs off the importunate fly that has beset him for ten minutes, and exclaimed, 'Silence, good citizens; here comes Simon Glover, in whom no man ever saw falsehood. We will hear the outrage from his own mouth.'

Simon, being called upon to tell his tale, did so with obvious embarrassment, which he imputed to a reluctance that the burgh should be put in deadly feud with any one upon his account. It was, he dared to say, a masking or revel on the part of the young gallants about court; and the worst that might come of it would be, that he would put iron stanchions on his daughter's window, in case of such another frolic.

'Why, then, if this was a mere masking or mummery,' said Craigdallie, 'our townsman, Harry of the Wynd, did far wrong to cut off a gentleman's hand for such a harmless pleasantry, and the town may be brought to a heavy fine for it, unless we secure the person of the mutilator.'

'Our Lady forbid!' said the Glover. 'Did you know what I do, you would be as much afraid of handling this matter as if it were glowing iron. But since you will needs put your fingers in the fire, truth must be spoken. And come what will, I must say that the matter might have ended ill for me and mine, but for the opportune assistance of Henry Gow, the armourer, well known to you all.'

'And mine also was not awanting,' said Oliver Proudfute, 'though I do not profess to be utterly so good a swordsman as our neighbour, Henry Gow.—You saw me, neighbour Glover, at the beginning of the fray?'

'I saw you after the end of it, neighbour,' answered the Glover dryly.

'True, true; I had forgot you were in your house while the blows were going, and could not survey who were dealing them.'

'Peace, neighbour Proudfute; I prithee, peace,' said Craigdallie, who was obviously tired of the tuneless screeching of the worthy deacon.

'There is something mysterious here,' said the Bailie; 'but I think I spy the secret. Our friend Simon is, as you all know, a peaceful

man, and one that will rather sit down with wrong than put a friend, or say a neighbourhood, in danger to seek his redress. Thou, Henry, who art never wanting where the burgh needs a defender, tell us what *thou* knowest of this matter.'

Our Smith told his story to the same purpose which we have already related; and the meddling maker of bonnets added as before—'And thou sawest me there, honest Smith, didst thou not?'

'Not I, in good faith, neighbour,' answered Henry; 'but you are a little man, you know, and I might overlook you.'

This reply produced a laugh at Oliver's expense, who laughed for company, but added doggedly, 'I was one of the foremost to the rescue for all that.'

'Why, where wert thou, then, neighbour?' said the Smith; 'for I saw you not, and I would have given the worth of the best suit of armour I ever wrought to have seen as stout a fellow as thou at my elbow.'

'I was no farther off, however, honest Smith; and whilst thou wert laying on blows as if on an anvil, I was parrying those that the rest of the villains aimed at thee behind thy back; and that is the cause thou sawest me not.'

'I have heard of smiths of old time who had but one eye,' said Henry. 'I have two, but they are both set in my forehead, and so I could not see behind my back, neighbour.'

'The truth is, however,' persevered Master Oliver, 'there I was, and I will give Master Bailie my account of the matter; for the Smith and I were first up to the fray.'

'Enough at present,' said the Bailie, waving to Master Proudfute an injunction of silence. 'The precognition of Simon Glover and Henry Gow would bear out a matter less worthy of belief.—And now, my masters, your opinion what should be done? Here are all our burgher rights broken through and insulted, and you may well fancy that it is by some man of power, since no less dared have attempted such an outrage. My masters, it is hard on flesh and blood to submit to this. The laws have framed us of lower rank than the princes and nobles, yet it is against reason to suppose that we will suffer our houses to be broken into, and the honour of our women insulted, without some redress.'

'It is not to be endured!' answered the citizens unanimously.

Here Simon Glover interfered with a very anxious and ominous countenance. 'I hope still that all was not meant so ill as it seemed to us, my worthy neighbours; and I for one would cheerfully forgive the alarm and disturbance to my poor house, providing the Fair City were not brought into jeopardy for me. I beseech you to consider who are to be our judges that are to hear the case, and give or refuse redress. I speak among neighbours and friends, and therefore I speak openly. The King, God bless him! is so broken in mind and body, that he will but turn us over to some great man amongst his counsellors who shall be in favour for the time—Perchance he will refer us to his brother, the Duke of Albany, who will make our petition for righting of our wrongs the pretence for squeezing money out of us.'

'We will none of Albany for our judge!' answered the meeting, with the same unanimity as before.

'Or perhaps,' added Simon, 'he will bid the Duke of Rothsay take charge of it; and the wild young prince will regard the outrage as something for his gay companions to scoff at and his minstrels to turn into song.'

'Away with Rothsay! he is too gay to be our judge,' again exclaimed the citizens.

Simon, emboldened by seeing he was reaching the point he aimed at, yet pronouncing the dreaded name with a half whisper, next added, 'Would you like the Black Douglas better to deal with?'

There was no answer for a minute. They looked on each other with fallen countenances and blanched lips. But Henry Smith spoke out boldly, and in a decided voice, the sentiments which all felt, but none else dared give words to—

'The Black Douglas to judge betwixt a burgher and a gentleman, nay, a nobleman, for all I know or care?—The black devil of hell sooner! You are mad, father Simon, so much as to name so wild a proposal.'

There was again a silence of fear and uncertainty, which was at length broken by Bailie Craigdallie, who, looking very significantly to the speaker, replied, 'You are confident in a stout doublet, neighbour Smith, or you would not talk so boldly.'

'I am confident of a good heart under my doublet, such as it is, Bailie,' answered the undaunted Henry; 'and though I speak but little, my mouth shall never be padlocked by any noble of them all.'

'Wear a thick doublet, good Henry, or do not speak so loud,' reiterated the Bailie in the same significant tone. 'There are Border men in the town who wear the Bloody Heart* on their shoulder.—But all this is no rede. What shall we do?'

'Short rede, good rede,' said the Smith. 'Let us to our Provost, and demand his countenance and assistance.'

A murmur of applause went through the party, and Oliver Proudfute exclaimed, 'That is what I have been saying for this half-hour, and not one of ye would listen to me. Let us go to our Provost, said I. He is a gentleman himself, and ought to come between the burgh and the nobles in all matters.'

'Hush, neighbours, hush; be wary what you say or do,' said a thin, meagre figure of a man, whose diminutive person seemed still more reduced in size, and more assimilated to a shadow, by his efforts to assume an extreme degree of humility, and make himself, to suit his argument, look meaner yet, and yet more insignificant than nature had made him.

'Pardon me,' said he, 'I am but a poor Pottingar. Nevertheless, I have been bred in Paris, and learned my humanities and my *cursus medendi* as well as some that call themselves learned leeches. Methinks I can tent this wound, and treat it with emollients. Here is our friend Simon Glover, who is, as you all know, a man of

* The well-known cognisance of the House of Douglas.

worship. Think you he would not be the most willing of us all to pursue harsh courses here, since his family honour is so nearly concerned? And since he blenches away from the charge against these same revellers, consider if he may not have some good reason more than he cares to utter for letting the matter sleep. It is not for me to put my finger on the sore; but, alack! we all know that young maidens are what I call fugitive essences. Suppose now, an honest maiden—I mean in all innocence—leaves her window unlatched on Saint Valentine's morn, that some gallant cavalier may—in all honesty, I mean—become her Valentine for the season; and suppose the gallant be discovered, may she not scream out as if the visit were unexpected, and—and—bray all this in a mortar, and then consider, will it be a matter to place the town in feud for?'

The Pottingar delivered his opinion in a most insinuating manner; but he seemed to shrink into something less than his natural tenuity, when he saw the blood rise in the old cheeks of Simon Glover, and inflame to the temples the complexion of the redoubted Smith. The last, stepping forward, and turning a stern look on the alarmed Pottingar, broke out as follows:—'Thou walking skeleton! thou asthmatic gallipot! thou poisoner by profession! if I thought that the puff of vile breath thou hast left could blight for the tenth part of a minute the fair fame of Catharine Glover, I would pound thee, quacksalver! in thine own mortar, and beat up thy wretched carrion with flower of brimstone, the only real medicine in thy booth, to make a salve to rub mangy hounds with!'

'Hold, son Henry, hold!' cried the Glover, in a tone of authority,—'no man has title to speak of this matter but me.—Worshipful Bailie Craigdallie, since such is the construction that is put upon my patience, I am willing to pursue this riot to the uttermost; and though the issue may prove that we had better have been patient, you will all see that my Catharine hath not by any lightness or folly of hers afforded grounds for this great scandal.'

The Bailie also interposed. 'Neighbour Henry,' said he, 'we came here to consult, and not to quarrel. As one of the fathers of the Fair City, I command thee to forego all evil will and maltalent you may have against Master Pottingar Dwining.'

'He is too poor a creature, Bailie,' said Henry Gow, 'for me to harbour feud with—I that could destroy him and his booth with one blow of my fore-hammer.'

'Peace, then, and hear me,' said the official. 'We all are as much believers in the honour of the Fair Maiden of Perth as in that of our Blessed Lady.' Here he crossed himself devoutly. 'But touching our appeal to our Provost, are you agreed, neighbours, to put matter like this into our Provost's hand, being against a powerful noble, as is to be feared?'

'The Provost being himself a nobleman'—squeaked the Pottingar, in some measure released from his terror by the intervention of the Bailie. 'God knows, I speak not to the disparagement of an honourable gentleman, whose forbears have held the office he now holds for many years'——

'By free choice of the citizens of Perth,' said the Smith, interrupting the speaker with the tones of his deep and decisive voice.

'Ay, surely,' said the disconcerted orator, 'by the voice of the citizens. How else?—I pray you, friend Smith, interrupt me not. I speak to our worthy and eldest Bailie, Craigdallie, according to my poor mind. I say that, come amongst us how he will, still this Sir Patrick Charteris is a nobleman, and hawks will not pick hawks' eyes out. He may well bear us out in a feud with the Highlandmen, and do the part of our Provost and leader against them; but whether he that himself wears silk will take our part against broidered cloak and cloth of gold, though he may do so against tartan and Irish frieze, is something to be questioned. Take a fool's advice. We have saved our Maiden, of whom I never meant to speak harm, as truly I knew none. They have lost one man's hand, at least, thanks to Harry Smith'——

'And to me,' added the little important Bonnet-maker.

'And to Oliver Proudfute, as he tells us,' continued the Pottingar, who contested no man's claim to glory, provided he was not himself compelled to tread the perilous paths which lead to it. 'I say, neighbours, since they have left a hand as a pledge they will never come in Couvrefew Street again, why, in my simple mind, we were best to thank our stout townsman, and, the town having the honour and these rakehells the loss, that we should hush the matter up and say no more about it.'

These pacific counsels had their effect with some of the citizens, who began to nod and look exceedingly wise upon the advocate of acquiescence, with whom, notwithstanding the offence so lately given, Simon Glover seemed also to agree in opinion. But not so Henry Smith, who, seeing the consultation at a stand, took up the speech in his usual downright manner.

'I am neither the oldest nor the richest among you, neighbours, and I am not sorry for it. Years will come, if one lives to see them; and I can win and spend my penny like another, by the blaze of the furnace and the wind of the bellows. But no man ever saw me sit down with wrong done in word or deed to our Fair Town, if man's tongue and man's hand could right it. Neither will I sit down with this outrage, if I can help it. I will go to the Provost myself, if no one will go with me; he is a knight, it is true, and a gentleman of free and true-born blood, as we all know, since Wallace's time, who settled his great-grandsire amongst us. But if he were the proudest nobleman in the land, he is the Provost of Perth, and for his own honour must see the freedoms and immunities of the burgh preserved—ay, and I know he will—I have made a steel doublet for him, and have a good guess at the kind of heart that it was meant to cover.'

'Surely,' said Bailie Craigdallie, 'it would be to no purpose to stir at court without Sir Patrick Charteris's countenance; the ready answer would be, Go to your Provost, you borrel loons. So, neighbours and townsmen, if you will stand by my side, I and our Pottingar Dwining will repair presently to Kinfauns,

with Sim Glover, the jolly Smith, and gallant Oliver Proudfute, for witnesses to the onslaught, and speak with Sir Patrick Charteris, in name of the Fair Town.'

'Nay,' said the peaceful man of medicine, 'leave me behind, I pray you; I lack audacity to speak before a belted knight.'

'Never regard that, neighbour, you must go,' said Bailie Craigdallie. 'The town hold me a hot-headed carle for a man of threescore—Sim Glover is the offended party—we all know that Harry Gow spoils more harness with his sword than he makes with his hammer — and our neighbour Proudfute, who, take his own word, is at the beginning and end of every fray in Perth, is of course a man of action. We must have at least one advocate amongst us for peace and quietness; and thou, Pottingar, must be the man. Away with you, sirs, get your boots and your beasts—horse and hattock,* I say—and let us meet at the East Port; that is, if it is your pleasure, neighbours, to trust us with the matter.'

'There can be no better rede, and we will all avouch it,' said the citizens. 'If the Provost take our part, as the Fair Town hath a right to expect, we may bell-the-cat with the best of them.'

'It is well, then, neighbours,' answered the Bailie; 'so said, so shall be done. Meanwhile, I have called the whole town-council together about this hour, and I have little doubt,' looking around the company, 'that as so many of them who are in this place have resolved to consult with our Provost, the rest will be compliant to the same resolution. And therefore, neighbours, and good burghers of the Fair City of Perth—horse and hattock, as I said before, and meet me at the East Port.'

A general acclamation concluded the sitting of this species of privy council, or Lords of the Articles;† and they dispersed, the deputation to prepare for the journey, and the rest to tell their impatient wives and daughters of the measures they had taken to render their chambers safe in future against the intrusion of gallants at unseasonable hours.

While nags are saddling and the town-council debating, or rather putting in form what the leading members of their body had already adopted, it may be necessary, for the information of some readers, to state in distinct terms what is more circuitously intimated in the course of the former discussion.

It was the custom at this period, when the strength of the feudal aristocracy controlled the rights, and frequently insulted the privileges, of the royal burghs of Scotland, that the latter, where it was practicable, often chose their provost or chief magistrate, not out of the order of the merchants, shopkeepers, and citizens who inhabited the town itself, and filled up the roll of the ordinary magistracy, but elected to that pre-eminent state some powerful nobleman or baron in the neighbourhood of the burgh, who was expected to stand their friend at court in such matters as concerned their common weal, and to lead their civil militia to fight, whether in general battle or in private feud, reinforcing them with his own feudal retainers. This protection was not always gratuitous. The provosts sometimes availed themselves of their situation to an unjustifiable degree, and obtained grants of lands and tenements belonging to the common good or public property of the burgh, and thus made the citizens pay dear for the countenance which they afforded. Others were satisfied to receive the powerful aid of the townsmen in their own feudal quarrels, with such other marks of respect and benevolence as the burgh over which they presided were willing to gratify them with, in order to secure their active services in case of necessity. The baron who was the regular protector of a royal burgh accepted such free-will offerings without scruple, and repaid them by defending the rights of the town by arguments in the council and by bold deeds in the field.

The citizens of the town, or, as they loved better to call it, the Fair City of Perth, had for several generations found a protector and provost of this kind in the knightly family of Charteris, Lords of Kinfauns, in the neighbourhood of the burgh. It was scarce a century (in the time of Robert III.) since the first of this distinguished family had settled in the strong castle which now belonged to them, with the picturesque and fertile scenes adjoining to it. But the history of the first settler, chivalrous and romantic in itself, was calculated to facilitate the settlement of an alien in the land in which his lot was cast. We relate it as it is given by an ancient and uniform tradition, which carries in it great indications of truth, and is warrant enough, perhaps, for its insertion in graver histories than the present.

During the brief career of the celebrated patriot, Sir William Wallace, and when his arms had for a time expelled the English invaders from his native country, he is said to have undertaken a voyage to France, with a small band of trusty friends, to try what his presence (for he was respected through all countries for his prowess) might do to induce the French monarch to send to Scotland a body of auxiliary forces, or other assistance, to aid the Scots in regaining their independence.

The Scottish Champion was on board a small vessel and steering for the port of Dieppe, when a sail appeared in the distance, which the mariners regarded, first with doubt and apprehension, and at last with confusion and dismay. Wallace demanded to know what was the cause of their alarm. The captain of the ship informed him that the tall vessel which was bearing down, with the purpose of boarding that which he commanded, was the ship of a celebrated rover, equally famed for his courage, strength of body, and successful piracies. It was commanded by a gentleman named Thomas de Longueville, a Frenchman

* *Horse and hattock*, the well-known cry of the fairies at mounting for a moonlight expedition, came to be familiarly adopted on any occasion of mounting.

† [A permanent committee of the Scottish Parliament, who prepared and drafted the proposed legislative measures of the session before they were laid before Parliament to be voted upon. This institution lasted from the end of the fourteenth century to the year 1690.]

by birth, but by practice one of those pirates who called themselves friends to the sea, and enemies to all who sailed upon that element. He attacked and plundered vessels of all nations, like one of the ancient Norse sea-kings, as they were termed, whose dominion was upon the mountain waves. The master added, that no vessel could escape the rover by flight, so speedy was the bark he commanded; and that no crew, however hardy, could hope to resist him, when, as was his usual mode of combat, he threw himself on board at the head of his followers.

Wallace smiled sternly, while the master of the ship, with alarm in his countenance and tears in his eyes, described to him the certainty of their being captured by the Red Rover, a name given to De Longueville, because he usually displayed the blood-red flag, which he had now hoisted.

'I will clear the narrow seas of this rover,' said Wallace.

Then calling together some ten or twelve of his own followers, Boyd, Kerlie, Seaton, and others, to whom the dust of the most desperate battle was like the breath of life, he commanded them to arm themselves, and lie flat upon the deck, so as to be out of sight. He ordered the mariners below, excepting such as were absolutely necessary to manage the vessel; and he gave the master instructions, upon pain of death, so to steer as that, while the vessel had the appearance of attempting to fly, he should in fact permit the Red Rover to come up with them and do his worst. Wallace himself then lay down on the deck, that nothing might be seen which could intimate any purpose of resistance. In a quarter of an hour De Longueville's vessel ran on board that of the Champion, and the Red Rover, casting out grappling-irons to make sure of his prize, jumped on the deck in complete armour, followed by his men, who gave a terrible shout, as if victory had been already secured. But the armed Scots started up at once, and the rover found himself unexpectedly engaged with men accustomed to consider victory as secure, when they were only opposed as one to two or three. Wallace himself rushed on the pirate captain, and a dreadful strife began betwixt them, with such fury that the others suspended their own battle to look on, and seemed by common consent to refer the issue of the strife to the fate of the combat between the two chiefs. The pirate fought as well as man could do; but Wallace's strength was beyond that of ordinary mortals. He dashed the sword from the rover's hand, and placed him in such peril, that, to avoid being cut down, he was fain to close with the Scottish Champion, in hopes of overpowering him in the grapple. In this also he was foiled. They fell on the deck, locked in each other's arms, but the Frenchman fell undermost, and Wallace, fixing his grasp upon his gorget, compressed it so closely, notwithstanding it was made of the finest steel, that the blood gushed from his eyes, nose, and mouth, and he was only able to ask for quarter by signs. His men threw down their weapons and begged for mercy, when they saw their leader thus severely handled. The victor granted them all their lives, but took possession of their vessel, and detained them prisoners.

When he came in sight of the French harbour, Wallace alarmed the place by displaying the rover's colours, as if De Longueville was coming to pillage the town. The bells were rung backward; horns were blown, and the citizens were hurrying to arms, when the scene changed. The Scottish Lion on his shield of gold was raised above the piratical flag, and announced that the Champion of Scotland was approaching, like a falcon with his prey in his clutch. He landed with his prisoner, and carried him to the court of France, where, at Wallace's request, the robberies which the pirate had committed were forgiven, and the king even conferred the honour of knighthood on Sir Thomas de Longueville, and offered to take him into his service. But the rover had contracted such a friendship for his generous victor, that he insisted on uniting his fortunes with those of Wallace, with whom he returned to Scotland, and fought by his side in many a bloody battle, where the prowess of Sir Thomas de Longueville was remarked as inferior to that of none, save of his heroic conqueror. His fate also was more fortunate than that of his patron. Being distinguished by the beauty as well as strength of his person, he rendered himself so acceptable to a young lady, heiress of the ancient family of Charteris, that she chose him for her husband, bestowing on him with her hand the fair baronial Castle of Kinfauns and the domains annexed to it. Their descendants took the name Charteris, as connecting themselves with their maternal ancestors, the ancient proprietors of the property, though the name of Thomas de Longueville was equally honoured amongst them; and the large two-handed sword with which he mowed the ranks of war was, and is still, preserved among the family muniments. Another account is, that the family name of De Longueville himself was Charteris. The estate afterwards passed to a family of Blairs, and is now the property of Lord Gray.

These Barons of Kinfauns,* from father to son, held, for several generations, the office of Provost of Perth, the vicinity of the castle and town rendering it a very convenient arrangement for mutual support. The Sir Patrick of this history had more than once led out the men of Perth to battles and skirmishes with the restless Highland depredators, and with other enemies, foreign and domestic. True it is, he used sometimes to be weary of the slight and frivolous complaints unnecessarily brought before him, and in which he was requested to interest himself. Hence he had sometimes incurred the charge of being too proud as a nobleman, or too indolent as a man of wealth, and one who was too much addicted to the pleasures of the field, and the exercise of feudal hospitality, to bestir

* It is generally believed that the ancient Barons of Kinfauns are now represented in the male line by a once powerful branch of the name, the Charterises of Amisfield, in Dumfriesshire. The remains of the castle, close to which is their modern residence, attest the former extent of their resources. The name of Sir Thomas Longueville, Bart. of Prostatin, stood on the Nova Scotia list within these twenty years, and he and his family claimed to be the true progeny of the Red Rover.

himself upon all and every occasion when the Fair Town would have desired his active interference. But notwithstanding that this occasioned some slight murmuring, the citizens, upon any serious cause of alarm, were wont to rally around their Provost, and were warmly supported by him both in council and action.

CHAPTER VIII.

Within the bounds of Annandale
The gentle Johnstones ride;
They have been there a thousand years,
A thousand more they'll bide.
OLD BALLAD.

THE character and quality of Sir Patrick Charteris, the Provost of Perth, being such as we have sketched in the last chapter, let us now return to the deputation which was in the act of rendezvousing at the East Port,* in order to wait upon that dignitary with their complaints, at Kinfauns.

And first appeared Simon Glover, on a pacing palfrey, which had sometimes enjoyed the honour of bearing the fairer person as well as the lighter weight of his beautiful daughter. His cloak was muffled round the lower part of his face, as a sign to his friends not to interrupt him by any questions while he passed through the streets, and partly, perhaps, on account of the coldness of the weather. The deepest anxiety was seated on his brow, as if the more he meditated on the matter he was engaged in the more difficult and perilous it appeared. He only greeted by silent gestures his friends as they came to the rendezvous.

A strong black horse, of the old Galloway breed, of an under size, and not exceeding fourteen hands, but high-shouldered, strong-limbed, well-coupled, and round-barrelled, bore to the East Port the gallant Smith. A judge of the animal might see in his eye a spark of that vicious temper which is frequently the accompaniment of the form that is most vigorous and enduring; but the weight, the hand, and the seat of the rider, added to the late regular exercise of a long journey, had subdued his stubbornness for the present. He was accompanied by the honest Bonnet-maker, who, being, as the reader is aware, a little round man, and what is vulgarly called duck-legged, had planted himself like a red pincushion (for he was wrapped in a scarlet cloak, over which he had slung a hawking-pouch) on the top of a great saddle, which he might be said rather to be perched upon than to bestride. The saddle and the man were girthed on the ridge-bone of a great trampling Flemish mare, with a nose turned up in the air like a camel, a huge fleece of hair at each foot, and every hoof full as large in circumference as a frying-pan. The contrast between the beast and the rider was so extremely extraordinary, that whilst chance passengers contented themselves with wondering how he got up, his friends were anticipating with sorrow the perils which must attend his coming down again; for the high-seated horseman's feet did not by any means come beneath the laps of the saddle. He had associated himself to the Smith, whose motions he had watched for the purpose of joining him; for it was Oliver Proudfute's opinion that men of action showed to most advantage when beside each other; and he was delighted when some wag of the lower class had gravity enough to cry out, without laughing outright, 'There goes the pride of Perth—there go the slashing craftsmen, the jolly Smith of the Wynd and the bold Bonnet-maker!'

It is true, the fellow who gave this all-hail thrust his tongue in his cheek to some scapegraces like himself; but as the Bonnet-maker did not see this by-play, he generously threw him a silver penny to encourage his respect for martialists. This munificence occasioned their being followed by a crowd of boys, laughing and hallooing, until Henry Smith, turning back, threatened to switch the foremost of them, a resolution which they did not wait to see put in execution.

'Here are we the witnesses,' said the little man on the large horse, as they joined Simon Glover at the East Port; 'but where are they that should back us? Ah, brother Henry! authority is a load for an ass rather than a spirited horse; it would but clog the motions of such young fellows as you and me.'

'I could well wish to see you bear ever so little of that same weight, worthy Master Proudfute,' replied Henry Gow, 'were it but to keep you firm in the saddle; for you bounce about as if you were dancing a jig on your seat, without any help from your legs.'

'Ay, ay; I raise myself in my stirrups to avoid the jolting. She is cruelly hard set this mare of mine; but she has carried me in field and forest, and through some passages that were something perilous; so Jezabel and I part not—I call her Jezabel, after the Princess of Castile.'

'Isabel, I suppose you mean?' answered the Smith.

'Ay—Isabel or Jezabel,—all the same, you know. But here comes Bailie Craigdallie at last, with that poor, creeping, cowardly creature the Pottingar. They have brought two town-officers with their partisans, to guard their fair persons, I suppose.—If there is one thing I hate more than another, it is such a sneaking varlet as that Dwining!'

'Have a care he does not hear you say so,' said the Smith. 'I tell thee, Bonnet-maker, that there is more danger in yonder slight, wasted anatomy than in twenty stout fellows like yourself.'

'Pshaw! Bully Smith, you are but jesting with me,' said Oliver, softening his voice, however, and looking towards the Pottingar, as if to discover in what limb or lineament of his wasted face and form lay any appearance of the menaced danger; and his examination reassuring him, he answered boldly, 'Blades and bucklers, man! I would stand the feud of a dozen such as Dwining. What could he do to any man with blood in his veins?'

'He could give him a dose of physic,' answered the Smith dryly.

They had no time for further colloquy, for

* Note I. East Port.

Bailie Craigdallie called to them to take the road to Kinfauns, and himself showed the example. As they advanced at a leisurely pace, the discourse turned on the reception which they were to expect from their provost, and the interest which he was likely to take in the aggression which they complained of. The Glover seemed particularly desponding, and talked more than once in a manner which implied a wish that they would yet consent to let the matter rest. He did not speak out very plainly, however, fearful, perhaps, of the malignant interpretation which might be derived from any appearance of his flinching from the assertion of his daughter's reputation. Dwining seemed to agree with him in opinion, but spoke more cautiously than in the morning.

'After all,' said the Bailie, 'when I think of all the propines and good gifts which have passed from the good town to my Lord Provost's, I cannot think he will be backward to show himself. More than one lusty boat, laden with Bordeaux wine, has left the South Shore to discharge its burden under the Castle of Kinfauns. I have some right to speak of that, who was the merchant importer.'

'And,' said Dwining, with his squeaking voice, 'I could speak of delicate confections, curious comfits, loaves of wastel bread, and even cakes of that rare and delicious condiment which men call sugar, that have gone thither to help out a bridal banquet, or a kirstening feast, or such like. But alack, Bailie Craigdallie, wine is drunk, comfits are eaten, and the gift is forgotten when the flavour is passed away. Alas, neighbour! the banquet of last Christmas is gone like the last year's snow.'

'But there have been gloves full of gold pieces,' said the magistrate.

'I should know that who wrought them,' said Simon, whose professional recollections still mingled with whatever else might occupy his mind. 'One was a hawking glove for my lady. I made it something wide. Her ladyship found no fault, in consideration of the intended lining.'

'Well, go to,' said Bailie Craigdallie, 'the less I lie; and if these are not to the fore, it is the Provost's fault, and not the town's; they could neither be eat nor drunk in the shape in which he got them.'

'I could speak of a brave armour, too,' said the Smith; 'but, *cogan na schie!** as John Highlandman says—I think the Knight of Kinfauns will do his devoir by the burgh in peace or war; and it is needless to be reckoning the town's good deeds till we see him thankless for them.'

'So say I,' cried our friend Proudfute from the top of his mare. 'We roystering blades never bear so base a mind as to count for wine and walnuts with a friend like Sir Patrick Charteris. Nay, trust me, a good woodsman like Sir Patrick will prize the right of hunting and sporting over the lands of the burgh as a high privilege, and one which, his Majesty the King's Grace excepted, is neither granted to lord nor loon save to our Provost alone.'

As the Bonnet-maker spoke, there was heard on the left hand the cry of '*So so—waw waw—haw*,' being the shout of a falconer to his hawk.

'Methinks yonder is a fellow using the privilege you mention, who, from his appearance, is neither king nor provost,' said the Smith.

'Ay, marry, I see him,' said the Bonnet-maker, who imagined the occasion presented a prime opportunity to win honour. 'Thou and I, jolly Smith, will prick towards him and put him to the question.'

'Have with you, then,' cried the Smith; and his companion spurred his mare and went off, never doubting that Gow was at his heels.

But Craigdallie caught Henry's horse by the reins. 'Stand fast by the standard,' he said; 'let us see the luck of our light horseman. If he procures himself a broken pate, he will be quieter for the rest of the day.'

'From what I already see,' said the Smith, 'he may easily come by such a boon. Yonder fellow, who stops so impudently to look at us, as if he were engaged in the most lawful sport in the world—I guess him, by his trotting hobbler, his rusty headpiece with the cock's feather, and long two-handed sword, to be the follower of some of the southland lords—men who live so near the Southron that the black jack is never off their backs, and who are as free of their blows as they are light in their fingers.'

Whilst they were thus speculating on the issue of the rencontre, the valiant Bonnet-maker began to pull up Jezabel, in order that the Smith, who he still concluded was close behind, might overtake him, and either advance first, or at least abreast of himself. But when he saw him at a hundred yards' distance standing composedly with the rest of the group, the flesh of the champion, like that of the old Spanish general, began to tremble, in anticipation of the dangers into which his own venturous spirit was about to involve it. Yet the consciousness of being countenanced by the neighbourhood of so many friends, the hopes that the appearance of such odds must intimidate the single intruder, and the shame of abandoning an enterprise in which he had volunteered, and when so many persons must witness his disgrace, surmounted the strong inclination which prompted him to wheel Jezabel to the right about, and return to the friends whose protection he had quitted as fast as her legs could carry them. He accordingly continued his direction towards the stranger, who increased his alarm considerably, by putting his little nag in motion, and riding to meet him at a brisk trot. On observing this apparently offensive movement, our hero looked over his left shoulder more than once, as if reconnoitring the ground for a retreat, and in the meanwhile came to a decided halt. But the Philistine was upon him ere the Bonnet-maker could decide whether to fight or fly, and a very ominous-looking Philistine he was. His figure was gaunt and lathy, his visage marked by two or three ill-favoured scars, and the whole man had much the air of one accustomed to say, 'Stand and deliver,' to a true man.

This individual began the discourse, by exclaiming in tones as sinister as his looks,—'The

* 'Peace or war, I care not.'

devil catch you for a cuckoo, why do you ride across the moor to spoil my sport?'

'Worthy stranger,' said our friend, in a tone of pacific remonstrance, 'I am Oliver Proudfute, a burgess of Perth, and a man of substance; and yonder is the worshipful Adam Craigdallie, the oldest Bailie of the burgh, with the fighting Smith of the Wynd, and three or four armed men more, who desire to know your name, and how you come to take your pleasure over these lands belonging to the burgh of Perth—although, natheless, I will answer for them, it is not their wish to quarrel with a gentleman, or stranger, for any accidental trespass; only it is their use and wont not to grant such leave, unless it is duly asked; and—and—therefore I desire to know your name, worthy sir.'

The grim and loathly aspect with which the falconer had regarded Oliver Proudfute during his harangue had greatly disconcerted him, and altogether altered the character of the inquiry which, with Henry Gow to back him, he would probably have thought most fitting for the occasion.

The stranger replied to it, modified as it was, with a most inauspicious grin, which the scars of his visage made appear still more repulsive. 'You want to know my name?—My name is the Devil's Dick of Hellgarth, well known in Annandale for a gentle Johnstone. I follow the stout Laird of Wamphray, who rides with his kinsman, the redoubted Lord of Johnstone, who is banded with the doughty Earl of Douglas; and the Earl and the Lord, and the Laird and I the Esquire, fly our hawks where we find our game, and ask no man whose ground we ride over.'*

'I will do your message, sir,' replied Oliver Proudfute, meekly enough; for he began to be very desirous to get free of the embassy which he had so rashly undertaken, and was in the act of turning his horse's head, when the Annandale man added,—

'And take you this to boot, to keep you in mind that you met the Devil's Dick, and to teach you another time to beware how you spoil the sport of any one who wears the flying spur on his shoulder.'

With these words he applied two or three smart blows of his riding-rod upon the luckless Bonnet-maker's head and person. Some of them lighted upon Jezabel, who, turning sharply round, laid her rider upon the moor, and galloped back towards the party of citizens.

Proudfute, thus overthrown, began to cry for assistance in no very manly voice, and almost in the same breath to whimper for mercy; for his antagonist, dismounting almost as soon as he fell, offered a whinger, or large wood-knife, to his throat, while he rifled the pockets of the unlucky citizen, and even examined his hawking-bag, swearing two or three grisly oaths, that he would have what it contained, since the wearer had interrupted his sport. He pulled the belt rudely off, terrifying the prostrate Bonnet-maker still more by the regardless violence which he used, as, instead of taking the pains to unbuckle the strap, he drew till the fastening gave way. But apparently it contained nothing to his mind. He threw it carelessly from him, and at the same time suffered the dismounted cavalier to rise, while he himself remounted his hobbler, and looked towards the rest of Oliver's party, who were now advancing.

When they had seen their delegate overthrown, there was some laughter; so much had the vaunting humour of the Bonnet-maker prepared his friends to rejoice, when, as Henry Smith termed it, they saw their Oliver meet with a Rowland. But when the Bonnet-maker's adversary was seen to bestride him, and handle him in the manner described, the armourer could hold out no longer. 'Please you, good Master Bailie, I cannot endure to see our townsman beaten and rifled, and like to be murdered before us all. It reflects upon the Fair Town; and if it is neighbour Proudfute's misfortune, it is our shame. I must to his rescue.'

'We will all go to his rescue,' answered Bailie Craigdallie; 'but let no man strike without order from me. We have more feuds on our hands, it is to be feared, than we have strength to bring to good end. And therefore I charge you all, more especially you, Henry of the Wynd, in the name of the Fair City, that you make no stroke but in self-defence.' They all advanced, therefore, in a body; and the appearance of such a number drove the plunderer from his booty. He stood at gaze, however, at some distance, like the wolf, which, though it retreats before the dogs, cannot be brought to absolute flight.

Henry, seeing this state of things, spurred his horse and advanced far before the rest of the party, up towards the scene of Oliver Proudfute's misfortune. His first task was to catch Jezabel by the flowing rein, and his next to lead her to meet her discomfited master, who was crippling towards him, his clothes much soiled with his fall, his eyes streaming with tears, from pain as well as mortification, and altogether exhibiting an aspect so unlike the spruce and dapper importance of his ordinary appearance, that the honest Smith felt compassion for the little man, and some remorse at having left him exposed to such disgrace. All men, I believe, enjoy an ill-natured joke. The difference is, that an ill-natured person can drink out to very dregs the amusement which it affords, while the better moulded mind soon loses the sense of the ridiculous in sympathy for the pain of the sufferer.

'Let me pitch you up to your saddle again, neighbour,' said the Smith, dismounting at the same time, and assisting Oliver to scramble into his war-saddle, as a monkey might have done.

'May God forgive you, neighbour Smith, for not backing of me! I would not have believed in it, though fifty credible witnesses had sworn it of you.'

Such were the first words, spoken in sorrow more than anger, by which the dismayed Oliver vented his feelings.

* Every Scotchman must regret that the name of Johnstone should have disappeared from the peerage, and hope that ere long some one of the many claimants for the minor honours at least of the house of Annandale may make out a case to the satisfaction of the House of Lords. The great estates of the family are still nearly entire, and in worthy hands; they have passed to a younger branch of the noble house of Hopetoun, one of the claimants of the elder titles.

'The Bailie kept hold of my horse by the bridle; and besides,' Henry continued, with a smile, which even his compassion could not suppress, 'I thought you would have accused me of diminishing your honour, if I brought you aid against a single man. But cheer up! the villain took foul odds of you, your horse not being well at command.'

'That is true—that is true,' said Oliver, eagerly catching at the apology.

'And yonder stands the faitour, rejoicing at the mischief he has done, and triumphing in your overthrow, like the king in the romance, who played upon the fiddle whilst a city was burning. Come thou with me, and thou shalt see how we will handle him—Nay, fear not that I will desert thee this time.'

So saying, he caught Jezabel by the rein, and, galloping alongside of her, without giving Oliver time to express a negative, he rushed towards the Devil's Dick, who had halted on the top of a rising ground at some distance. The gentle Johnstone, however, either that he thought the contest unequal, or that he had fought enough for the day, snapping his fingers, and throwing his hand out with an air of defiance, spurred his horse into a neighbouring bog, through which he seemed to flutter like a wild-duck, swinging his lure round his head, and whistling to his hawk all the while, though any other horse and rider must have been instantly bogged up to the saddle-girths.

'There goes a thorough-bred moss-trooper,' said the Smith. 'That fellow will fight or flee as suits his humour, and there is no use to pursue him, any more than to hunt a wild-goose. He has got your purse, I doubt me, for they seldom leave off till they are full-handed.'

'Ye—ye—yes,' said Proudfute, in a melancholy tone; 'he has got my purse—but there is less matter, since he hath left the hawking-bag.'

'Nay, the hawking-bag had been an emblem of personal victory, to be sure—a trophy, as the minstrels call it.'

'There is more in it than that, friend,' said Oliver significantly.

'Why, that is well, neighbour; I love to hear you speak in your own scholarly tone again. Cheer up, you have seen the villain's back, and regained the trophies you had lost when taken at advantage.'

'Ah, Henry Gow—Henry Gow!' said the Bonnet-maker, and stopped short with a deep sigh, nearly amounting to a groan.

'What is the matter?' asked his friend; 'what is it you vex yourself about now?'

'I have some suspicion, my dearest friend, Henry Smith, that the villain fled for fear of you, not of me!'

'Do not think so,' replied the armourer; 'he saw two men and fled, and who can tell whether he fled for one or the other? Besides, he knows by experience your strength and activity; we all saw how you kicked and struggled when you were on the ground.'

'Did I?' said poor Proudfute; 'I do not remember it—but I know it is my best point—I am a strong dog in the loins. But did they all see it?'

'All as much as I,' said the Smith, smothering an inclination to laughter.

'But thou wilt remind them of it?'

'Be assured I will,' answered Henry, 'and of thy desperate rally even now. Mark what I say to Bailie Craigdallie, and make the best of it.'

'It is not that I require any evidence in my favour, for I am as brave by nature as most men in Perth—but only'——Here the man of valour paused.

'But only what?' inquired the stout armourer.

'But only I am afraid of being killed. To leave my pretty wife and my young family, you know, would be a sad change, Smith. You will know this when it is your own case, and will feel abated in courage.'

'It is like that I may,' said the armourer, musing.

'Then I am so accustomed to the use of arms, and so well breathed, that few men can match me. It's all here,' said the little man, expanding his breast like a trussed fowl, and patting himself with his hands; 'here is room for all the wind machinery.'

'I daresay you are long-breathed—long-winded—at least your speech bewrays'——

'My speech?—You are a wag—but I have got the stern-post of a dromond brought up the river from Dundee.'

'The stern-post of a Drummond!' exclaimed the armourer; 'conscience, man, it will put you in feud with the whole clan—not the least wrathful in the country, as I take it.'

'Saint Andrew, man, you put me out!—I mean a dromond, that is, a large ship. I have fixed this post in my yard, and had it painted and carved something like a Soldan or Saracen, and with him I breathe myself, and will wield my two-handed sword against him, thrust or point, for an hour together.'

'That must make you familiar with the use of your weapon,' said the Smith.

'Ay, marry does it—and sometimes I will place you a bonnet (an old one most likely) on my Soldan's head, and cleave it with such a downright blow, that, in troth, the infidel has but little of his skull remaining to hit at.'

'That is unlucky, for you will lose your practice,' said Henry.—'But how say you, Bonnet-maker? I will put on my headpiece and corselet one day, and you shall hew at me, allowing me my broadsword to parry and pay back! Eh, what say you?'

'By no manner of means, my dear friend. I should do you too much evil;—besides, to tell you the truth, I strike far more freely at a helmet or bonnet when it is set on my wooden Soldan—then I am sure to fetch it down. But when there is a plume of feathers in it that nod, and two eyes gleaming fiercely from under the shadow of the visor, and when the whole is dancing about here and there, I acknowledge it puts out my hand of fence.'

'So, if men would but stand stock-still like your Soldan, you would play the tyrant with them, Master Proudfute?'

'In time, and with practice, I conclude I might,' answered Oliver.—'But here we come up with the rest of them; Bailie Craigdallie

looks angry—but it is not his kind of anger that frightens me.'

You are to recollect, gentle reader, that as soon as the Bailie, and those who attended him, saw that the Smith had come up to the forlorn Bonnet-maker, and that the stranger had retreated, they gave themselves no trouble about advancing farther to his assistance, which they regarded as quite insured by the presence of the redoubted Henry Gow. They had resumed their straight road to Kinfauns, desirous that nothing should delay the execution of their mission. As some time had elapsed ere the Bonnet-maker and the Smith rejoined the party, Bailie Craigdallie asked them, and Henry Smith in particular, what they meant by dallying away precious time by riding up hill after the falconer.

'By the mass, it was not my fault, Master Bailie,' replied the Smith. 'If ye will couple up an ordinary Low-country greyhound with a Highland wolf-dog, you must not blame the first of them for taking the direction in which it pleases the last to drag him on. It was so, and not otherwise, with my neighbour Oliver Proudfute. He no sooner got up from the ground, but he mounted his mare like a flash of lightning, and, enraged at the unknightly advantage which yonder rascal had taken of his stumbling horse, he flew after him like a dromedary. I could not but follow, both to prevent a second stumble, and secure our over-bold friend and champion from the chance of some ambush at the top of the hill. But the villain, who is a follower of some Lord of the Marches, and wears a winged spur for his cognisance, fled from our neighbour like fire from flint.'

The Senior Bailie of Perth listened with surprise to the legend which it had pleased Gow to circulate; for, though not much caring for the matter, he had always doubted the Bonnet-maker's romancing account of his own exploits, which hereafter he must hold as in some degree orthodox. The shrewd old Glover looked closer into the matter.

'You will drive the poor Bonnet-maker mad,' he whispered to Henry, 'and set him a-ringing his clapper, as if he were a town-bell on a rejoicing day, when for order and decency it were better he were silent.'

'O, by Our Lady, father,' replied the Smith, 'I love the poor little braggadocio, and could not think of his sitting rueful and silent in the Provost's hall, while all the rest of them, and in especial that venomous Pottingar, were telling their mind.'

'Thou art even too good-natured a fellow, Henry,' answered Simon. 'But mark the difference betwixt these two men. The harmless little Bonnet-maker assumes the airs of a dragon, to disguise his natural cowardice; while the Pottingar wilfully desires to show himself timid, poor-spirited, and humble, to conceal the danger of his temper. The adder is not the less deadly that he creeps under a stone. I tell thee, son Henry, that for all his sneaking looks and timorous talking, this wretched anatomy loves mischief more than he fears danger.—But here we stand in front of the Provost's castle; and a lordly place is Kinfauns, and a credit to the city it is, to have the owner of such a gallant castle for its chief magistrate.'

'A goodly fortalice, indeed,' said the Smith, looking at the broad, winding Tay, as it swept under the bank on which the castle stood, like its modern successor, and seemed the queen of the valley, although, on the opposite side of the river, the strong walls of Elcho appeared to dispute the pre-eminence. Elcho, however, was in that age a peaceful nunnery, and the walls with which it was surrounded were the barriers of secluded vestals, not the bulwarks of an armed garrison. ''Tis a brave castle,' said the armourer, again looking at the towers of Kinfauns, 'and the breastplate and target of the bonnie course of the Tay. It were worth lipping* a good blade, before wrong were offered to it.'

The porter of Kinfauns, who knew from a distance the persons and characters of the party, had already opened the court-yard gate for their entrance, and sent notice to Sir Patrick Charteris, that the Eldest Bailie of Perth, with some other good citizens, was approaching the castle. The good knight, who was getting ready for a hawking party, heard the intimation with pretty much the same feelings that the modern representative of a burgh hears of the menaced visitation of a party of his worthy electors at a time rather unseasonable for their reception. That is, he internally devoted the intruders to Mahound and Termagant,† and outwardly gave orders to receive them with all decorum and civility; commanded the sewers to bring hot venison steaks and cold baked meats into the knightly hall with all despatch, and the butler to broach his casks and do his duty; for if the Fair City of Perth sometimes filled his cellar, her citizens were always equally ready to assist at emptying his flagons.

The good burghers were reverently marshalled into the hall, where the knight, who was in a riding habit and booted up to the middle of his thighs, received them with a mixture of courtesy and patronizing condescension, wishing them all the while at the bottom of the Tay, on account of the interruption their arrival gave to his proposed amusement of the morning. He met them in the midst of the hall, with bare head and bonnet in hand, and some such salutation as the following:—'Ha! My Master Eldest Bailie, and you, worthy Simon Glover, fathers of the Fair City;—and you, my learned Pottingar;—and you, stout Smith;—and my slashing Bonnet-maker too, who cracks more skulls than he covers, how come I to have the pleasure of seeing so many friends so early? I was thinking to see my hawks fly, and your company will make the sport more pleasant—(*Aside*—I trust in Our Lady they may break their necks!)—that is, always, unless the city have any commands to lay on me. — Butler Gilbert, despatch, thou knave.—But I hope you have no more grave errand than to try if the *Malvoisie* holds its flavour?'

The city delegates answered to their Provost's civilities by inclinations and congees, more or

* *Lipping*, *i.e.* making notches in a sword or knife.

† [Mohammedan or heathen devils in the eyes of mediæval Christians.]

less characteristic, of which the Pottingar's bow was the lowest and the Smith's the least cere monious. Probably he knew his own value as a fighting man upon occasion. To the general compliment the Elder Bailie replied.

'Sir Patrick Charteris, and our noble Lord Provost,' said Craigdallie gravely, 'had our errand been to enjoy the hospitality with which we have been often regaled here, our manners would have taught us to tarry till your lordship had invited us, as on other occasions. And as to hawking, we have had enough on't for one morning; since a wild fellow, who was flying a falcon hard by on the moor, unhorsed and cudgelled our worthy friend Oliver Bonnet-maker, or Proudfute, as some men call him, merely because he questioned him, in your honour's name and the town of Perth's, who or what he was that took so much upon him.'

'And what account gave he of himself?' said the Provost. 'By Saint John! I will teach him to forestall my sport!'

'So please your lordship,' said the Bonnet-maker, 'he did take me at disadvantage. But I got on horseback again afterwards, and pricked after him gallantly. He calls himself Richard the Devil.'

'How, man? he that the rhymes and romances are made on?' said the Provost. 'I thought that smaik's name had been Robert.'

'I trow they be different, my lord; I only graced this fellow with the full title, for indeed he called himself the Devil's Dick, and said he was a Johnstone, and a follower of the lord of that name. But I put him back into the bog, and recovered my hawking-bag, which he had taken when I was at disadvantage.'

Sir Patrick paused for an instant.—'We have heard,' said he, 'of the Lord of Johnstone and of his followers. Little is to be had by meddling with them.—Smith, tell me, did you endure this?'

'Ay, faith did I, Sir Patrick; having command from my betters not to help.'

'Well, if thou sat'st down with it,' said the Provost, 'I see not why we should rise up, especially as Master Oliver Proudfute, though taken at advantage at first, has, as he has told us, recovered his reputation and that of the burgh. But here comes the wine at length. Fill round to my good friends and guests till the wine leap over the cup. Prosperity to Saint Johnston, and a merry welcome to you all, my honest friends! And now sit you to eat a morsel, for the sun is high up, and it must be long since you thrifty men have broken your fast.'

'Before we eat, my Lord Provost,' said the Bailie, 'let us tell you the pressing cause of our coming, which as yet we have not touched upon.'

'Nay, prithee, Bailie,' said the Provost, 'put it off till thou hast eaten. Some complaint against the rascally jackmen and retainers of the nobles, for playing at football on the streets of the burgh, or some such goodly matter.'

'No, my lord,' said Craigdallie stoutly and firmly. 'It is the jackmen's masters of whom we complain, for playing at football with the honour of our families, and using as little ceremony with our daughters' sleeping chambers as if they were in a bordel at Paris. A party of reiving night-walkers—courtiers and men of rank, as there is but too much reason to believe—attempted to scale the windows of Simon Glover's house last night; they stood in their defence with drawn weapons when they were interrupted by Henry Smith, and fought till they were driven off by the rising of the citizens.'

'How?' said Sir Patrick, setting down the cup which he was about to raise to his head. 'Cocksbody, make that manifest to me, and by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, I will see you righted with my best power, were it to cost me life and land. Who attests this?—Simon Glover, you are held an honest and a cautious man—do you take the truth of this charge upon your conscience?'

'My lord,' said Simon, 'understand I am no willing complainer in this weighty matter. No damage has arisen, save to the breakers of the peace themselves. I fear only great power could have encouraged such lawless audacity; and I were unwilling to put feud between my native town and some powerful nobleman on my account. But it has been said, that if I hang back in prosecuting this complaint, it will be as much as admitting that my daughter expected such a visit, which is a direct falsehood. Therefore, my lord, I will tell your lordship what happened, so far as I know, and leave further proceeding to your wisdom.' He then told, from point to point, all that he had seen of the attack.

Sir Patrick Charteris, listening with much attention, seemed particularly struck with the escape of the man who had been made prisoner. 'Strange,' he said, 'that you did not secure him when you had him. Did you not look at him so as to know him again?'

'I had but the light of a lantern, my Lord Provost; and as to suffering him to escape, I was alone,' said the Glover, 'and old. But yet I might have kept him, had I not heard my daughter shriek in the upper room; and ere I had returned from her chamber, the man had escaped through the garden.'

'Now, armourer, as a true man and a good soldier,' said Sir Patrick, 'tell me what you know of this matter.'

Henry Gow, in his own decided style, gave a brief but clear narrative of the whole affair.

Honest Proudfute, being next called upon, began his statement with an air of more importance. 'Touching this awful and astounding tumult within the burgh, I cannot altogether, it is true, say, with Henry Gow, that I saw the very beginning. But it will not be denied that I beheld a great part of the latter end, and especially that I procured the evidence most effectual to convict the knaves.'

'And what is it, man?' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'Never lose time fumbling and prating about it. What is it?'

'I have brought your lordship, in this pouch, what one of the rogues left behind him,' said the little man. 'It is a trophy which, in good faith and honest truth, I do confess I won not by the blade, but I claim the credit of securing it with that presence of mind which few men

possess amidst flashing torches and clashing weapons. I secured it, my lord, and here it is.'

So saying, he produced from the hawking-pouch already mentioned the stiffened hand which had been found on the scene of the skirmish.

'Nay, Bonnet-maker,' said the Provost, 'I'll warrant thee man enough to secure a rogue's hand after it is cut from the body.—What do you look so busily for in your bag?'

'There should have been—there was—a ring, my lord, which was on the knave's finger. I fear I have been forgetful, and left it at home, for I took it off to show to my wife, as she cared not to look upon the dead hand, as women love not such sights. But yet I thought I had put it on the finger again. Nevertheless it must, I bethink me, be at home. I will ride back for it, and Henry Smith will trot along with me.'

'We will all trot with thee,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'since I am for Perth myself. Look you, honest burghers and good neighbours of Perth. You may have thought me unapt to be moved by light complaints and trivial breaches of your privileges, such as small trespasses on your game, the barons' followers playing football on the street, and such-like. But, by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, you shall not find Patrick Charteris slothful in a matter of this importance.—This hand,' he continued, holding up the severed joint, 'belongs to one who hath worked no drudgery. We will put it in a way to be known and claimed of the owner, if his comrades of the revel have but one spark of honour in them.—Hark you, Gerard,—get me some half-score of good men instantly to horse, and let them take jack and spear. Meanwhile, neighbours, if feud arise out of this, as is most likely, we must come to each other's support. If my poor house be attacked, how many men will you bring to my support?'

The burghers looked at Henry Gow, to whom they instinctively turned when such matters were discussed. 'I will answer,' said he, 'for fifty good fellows to be assembled ere the common bell has rung ten minutes; for a thousand, in the space of an hour.'

'It is well,' answered the gallant Provost; 'and in the case of need, I will come to aid the Fair City with such men as I can make. And now, good friends, let us to horse.'

CHAPTER IX.

> If I know how to manage these affairs,
> Thus thrust disorderly upon my hands—
> Never believe me——
>
> RICHARD II.

It was early in the afternoon of Saint Valentine's day, that the Prior of the Dominicans was engaged in discharge of his duties as confessor to a penitent of no small importance. This was an elderly man, of a goodly presence, a florid and healthful cheek, the under part of which was shaded by a venerable white beard, which descended over his bosom. The large and clear blue eyes, with the broad expanse of brow, expressed dignity; but it was of a character which seemed more accustomed to receive honours voluntarily paid than to enforce them when they were refused. The good-nature of the expression was so great as to approach to defenceless simplicity or weakness of character, unfit, it might be inferred, to repel intrusion or subdue resistance. Amongst the grey locks of this personage was placed a small circlet or coronet of gold, upon a blue fillet. His beads, which were large and conspicuous, were of native gold, rudely enough wrought, but ornamented with Scottish pearls of rare size and beauty. These were his only ornaments; and a long crimson robe of silk, tied by a sash of the same colour, formed his attire. His shrift being finished, he arose heavily from the embroidered cushion upon which he kneeled during his confession, and, by the assistance of a crutch-headed staff of ebony, moved, lame and ungracefully, and with apparent pain, to a chair of state, which, surmounted by a canopy, was placed for his accommodation by the chimney of the lofty and large apartment.

This was Robert, third of that name, and the second of the ill-fated family of Stuart who filled the throne of Scotland. He had many virtues, and was not without talent; but it was his great misfortune, that, like others of his devoted line, his merits were not of a kind suited to the part which he was called upon to perform in life. The king of so fierce a people as the Scots then were ought to have been warlike, prompt, and active, liberal in rewarding services, strict in punishing crimes, one whose conduct should make him feared as well as beloved. The qualities of Robert the Third were the reverse of all these. In youth he had, indeed, seen battles; but, without incurring disgrace, he had never manifested the chivalrous love of war and peril, or the eager desire to distinguish himself by dangerous achievements, which that age expected from all who were of noble birth, and had claims to authority.

Besides, his military career was very short. Amidst the tumult of a tournament, the young Earl of Carrick, such was then his title, received a kick from the horse of Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith; in consequence of which he was lame for the rest of his life, and absolutely disabled from taking share either in warfare or in the military sports and tournaments which were its image. As Robert had never testified much predilection for violent exertion, he did not probably much regret the incapacities which exempted him from these active scenes. But his misfortune, or rather its consequences, lowered him in the eyes of a fierce nobility and warlike people. He was obliged to repose the principal charge of his affairs now in one member, now in another, of his family, sometimes with the actual rank, and always with the power, of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. His paternal affection would have induced him to use the assistance of his eldest son, a young man of spirit and talent, whom in fondness he had created Duke of Rothsay, in order to give him the present possession of a dignity next to that of the throne.* But the

* This creation, and that of the Dukedom of Albany in favour of the king's brother, were the first instances of ducal rank in Scotland. Buchanan mentions the innovation in terms which may be considered as showing that even he partook in the general prejudice with which that

young prince's head was too giddy, and his hand too feeble, to wield with dignity the delegated sceptre. However fond of power, pleasure was the prince's favourite pursuit; and the court was disturbed and the country scandalized by the number of fugitive amours and extravagant revels practised by him who should have set an example of order and regularity to the youth of the kingdom.

The licence and impropriety of the Duke of Rothsay's conduct was the more reprehensible in the public view, that he was a married person; although some, over whom his youth, gaiety, grace, and good temper had obtained influence, were of opinion that an excuse for his libertinism might be found in the circumstances of the marriage itself. They reminded each other that his nuptials were entirely conducted by his uncle, the Duke of Albany, by whose counsels the infirm and timid king was much governed at the time, and who had the character of managing the temper of his brother and sovereign, so as might be most injurious to the interests and prospects of the young heir. By Albany's machinations, the hand of the heir-apparent was in a manner put up to sale, as it was understood publicly that the nobleman in Scotland who should give the largest dower to his daughter might aspire to raise her to the bed of the Duke of Rothsay.

In the contest for preference which ensued, George, Earl of Dunbar and March, who possessed, by himself or his vassals, a great part of the eastern frontier, was preferred to other competitors; and his daughter was, with the mutual good-will of the young couple, actually contracted to the Duke of Rothsay.

But there remained a third party to be consulted, and that was no other than the tremendous Archibald, Earl of Douglas, terrible alike from the extent of his lands, from the numerous offices and jurisdictions with which he was invested, and from his personal qualities of wisdom and valour, mingled with indomitable pride, and more than the feudal love of vengeance. The earl was also nearly related to the throne, having married the eldest daughter of the reigning monarch.

After the espousals of the Duke of Rothsay with the Earl of March's daughter, Douglas, as if he had postponed his share in the negotiation to show that it could not be concluded with any one but himself, entered the lists to break off the contract. He tendered a larger dower with his daughter Marjory than the Earl of March had proffered; and, secured by his own cupidity and fear of the Douglas, Albany exerted his influence with the timid monarch till he was prevailed upon to break the contract with the Earl of March, and wed his son to Marjory Douglas, a woman whom Rothsay could not love. No apology was offered to the Earl of March, excepting that the espousals betwixt the prince and Elizabeth of Dunbar had not been approved by the States of Parliament, and that till such ratification the contract was liable to be broken off. The earl deeply resented the wrong done to himself and his daughter, and was generally understood to study revenge, which his great influence on the English frontier was likely to place within his power.

In the meantime, the Duke of Rothsay, incensed at the sacrifice of his hand and his inclinations to this State intrigue, took his own mode of venting his displeasure, by neglecting his wife, contemning his formidable and dangerous father-in-law, and showing little respect to the authority of the king himself, and none whatever to the remonstrances of Albany, his uncle, whom he looked upon as his confirmed enemy.

Amid these internal dissensions of his family, which extended themselves through his councils and administration, introducing everywhere the baneful effects of uncertainty and disunion, the feeble monarch had for some time been supported by the counsels of his queen, Annabella, a daughter of the noble house of Drummond, gifted with a depth of sagacity and firmness of mind which exercised some restraint over the levities of a son who respected her, and sustained on many occasions the wavering resolution of her royal husband.—But after her death the imbecile sovereign resembled nothing so much as a vessel drifted from her anchors, and tossed about amidst contending currents. Abstractedly considered, Robert might be said to doat upon his son,—to entertain respect and awe for the character of his brother Albany, so much more decisive than his own,—to fear the Douglas with a terror which was almost instinctive,—and to suspect the constancy of the bold but fickle Earl of March. But his feelings towards these various characters were so mixed and complicated, that from time to time they showed entirely different from what they really were; and according to the interest which had been last exerted over his flexible mind, the king would change from an indulgent to a strict and even cruel father—from a confiding to a jealous brother—or from a benignant and bountiful, to a grasping and encroaching sovereign. Like the cameleon, his feeble mind reflected the colour of that firmer character upon which at the time he reposed for counsel and assistance. And when he disused the advice of one of his family, and employed the counsel of another, it was no unwonted thing to see a total change of measures, equally disreputable to the character of the king, and dangerous to the safety of the State.

It followed, as a matter of course, that the clergy of the Catholic Church acquired influence over a man whose intentions were so excellent, but whose resolutions were so infirm. Robert was haunted, not only with a due sense of the errors he had really committed, but with the tormenting apprehensions of those peccadilloes which beset a superstitious and timid mind. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to add, that the churchmen of various descriptions had no small influence over this easy-tempered prince, though, indeed, theirs was, at that period, an influence from which few or none escaped, however resolute and firm of purpose in affairs of a temporal character.

title was viewed in Scotland down to a much later period. It had, indeed, been in almost every case united with heavy misfortunes, not rarely with tragic crimes.

We now return from this long digression, without which what we have to relate could not perhaps have been well understood.

The king had moved with ungraceful difficulty to the cushioned chair, which, under a state or canopy, stood prepared for his accommodation, and upon which he sank down with enjoyment, like an indolent man, who had been for some time confined to a constrained position. When seated, the gentle and venerable looks of the good old man showed benevolence. The prior, who now remained standing opposite to the royal seat, with an air of deep deference which cloaked the natural haughtiness of his carriage, was a man betwixt forty and fifty years of age, but every one of whose hairs still retained their natural black colour. Acute features and a penetrating look attested the talents by which the venerable father had acquired his high station in the community over which he presided, and, we may add, in the councils of the kingdom in whose service they were often exercised. The chief objects which his education and habits taught him to keep in view were, the extension of the dominion and the wealth of the Church, and the suppression of heresy, both of which he endeavoured to accomplish by all the means which his situation afforded him. But he honoured his religion by the sincerity of his own belief, and by the morality which guided his conduct in all ordinary situations. The faults of the Prior Anselm, though they led him into grievous error, and even cruelty, were perhaps rather those of his age and profession; his virtues were his own.

'These things done,' said the king, 'and the lands I have mentioned secured by my gift to this monastery, you are of opinion, father, that I stand as much in the good graces of our Holy Mother Church as to term myself her dutiful son?'

'Surely, my liege,' said the prior; 'would to God that all her children brought to the efficacious sacrament of confession as deep a sense of their errors, and as much will to make amends for them. But I speak these comforting words, my liege, not to Robert King of Scotland, but only to my humble and devout penitent, Robert Stuart of Carrick.'

'You surprise me, father,' answered the king; 'I have little check on my conscience for aught that I have done in my kingly office, seeing that I use therein less mine own opinion than the advice of the most wise counsellors.'

'Even therein lieth the danger, my liege,' replied the prior. 'The Holy Father recognises in your Grace, in every thought, word, and action, an obedient vassal of the Holy Church. But there are perverse counsellors, who obey the instinct of their wicked hearts, while they abuse the good-nature and ductility of their monarch, and, under colour of serving his temporal interests, take steps which are prejudicial to those that last to eternity.'

King Robert raised himself upright in his chair, and assumed an air of authority, which, though it well became him, he did not usually display.

'Prior Anselm,' he said, 'if you have discovered anything in my conduct, whether as a king or a private individual, which may call down such censures as your words intimate, it is your duty to speak plainly, and I command you to do so.'

'My liege, you shall be obeyed,' answered the prior, with an inclination of the body. Then raising himself up, and assuming the dignity of his rank in the Church, he said, 'Hear from me the words of our Holy Father the Pope, the successor of Saint Peter, to whom have descended the keys, both to bind and to unloose. "Wherefore, O Robert of Scotland, hast thou not received into the see of Saint Andrews, Henry of Wardlaw, whom the Pontiff hath recommended to fill that see? Why dost thou make profession with thy lips of dutiful service to the Church, when thy actions proclaim the depravity and disobedience of thy inward soul? Obedience is better than sacrifice."'

'Sir Prior,' said the monarch, bearing himself in a manner not unbecoming his lofty rank, 'we may well dispense with answering you upon this subject, being a matter which concerns us and the Estates of our kingdom, but does not affect our private conscience.'

'Alas,' said the prior, 'and whose conscience will it concern at the last day? Which of your belted lords or wealthy burgesses will then step between their King and the penalty which he has incurred, by following of their secular policy in matters ecclesiastical? Know, mighty King, that were all the chivalry of thy realm drawn up to shield thee from the red levin-bolt, they would be consumed like scorched parchment before the blaze of a furnace.'

'Good Father Prior,' said the king, on whose timorous conscience this kind of language seldom failed to make an impression, 'you surely argue over rigidly in this matter. It was during my last indisposition, while the Earl of Douglas held, as Lieutenant-General, the regal authority in Scotland, that the obstruction to the reception of the Primate unhappily arose. Do not, therefore, tax me with what happened when I was unable to conduct the affairs of the kingdom, and compelled to delegate my power to another.'

'To your subject, sire, you have said enough,' replied the prior. 'But if the impediment arose during the lieutenancy of the Earl of Douglas, the legate of his Holiness will demand wherefore it has not been instantly removed, when the King resumed in his royal hands the reins of authority? The Black Douglas can do much; more perhaps than a subject should have power to do in the kingdom of his sovereign; but he cannot stand betwixt your Grace and your own conscience, or release you from the duties to the Holy Church, which your situation as a King imposes upon you.'

'Father,' said Robert, somewhat impatiently, 'you are over peremptory in this matter, and ought at least to wait a reasonable season, until we have time to consider of some remedy. Such disputes have happened repeatedly in the reigns of our predecessors; and our royal and blessed ancestor Saint David did not resign his privileges as a monarch without making a stand in their defence, even though he was involved in arguments with the Holy Father himself.'

'And therein was that great and good King

neither holy nor saintly,' said the prior; 'and therefore was he given to be a rout and a spoil to his enemies, when he raised his sword against the banners of Saint Peter, and Saint Paul, and Saint John of Beverley, in the war, as it is still called, of the Standard. Well was it for him, that, like his namesake, the son of Jesse, his sin was punished upon earth, and not entered against him at the long and dire day of accounting.'

'Well, good Prior—well—enough of this for the present. The Holy See shall, God willing, have no reason to complain of me. I take Our Lady to witness, I would not, for the crown I wear, take the burden of wronging our Mother Church. We have ever feared that the Earl of Douglas kept his eyes too much fixed on the fame and the temporalities of this frail and passing life, to feel altogether as he ought the claims that refer to a future world.'

'It is but lately,' said the prior, 'that he hath taken up forcible quarters in the Monastery of Aberbrothock, with his retinue of a thousand followers; and the Abbot is compelled to furnish him with all he needs for horse and man, which the Earl calls exercising the hospitality which he hath a right to expect from the foundation to which his ancestors were contributors. Certain it were better to return to the Douglas his lands than to submit to such exaction, which more resembles the masterful licence of Highland thiggers and sorners * than the demeanour of a Christian baron.'

'The Black Douglases,' said the king with a sigh, 'are a race which will not be said nay. But, Father Prior, I am myself, it may be, an intruder of this kind; for my sojourning hath been long among you, and my retinue, though far fewer than the Douglas's, are nevertheless enough to cumber you for their daily maintenance; and though our order is to send out purveyors to lessen your charge as much as may be, yet if there be inconvenience, it were fitting we should remove in time.'

'Now, Our Lady forbid!' said the prior, who, if desirous of power, had nothing meanly covetous in his temper, but was even magnificent in his generous kindness; 'certainly the Dominican convent can afford to her sovereign the hospitality which the house offers to every wanderer of whatever condition, who will receive it at the hands of the poor servants of our patron. No, my royal liege; come with ten times your present train, they shall neither want a grain of oats, a pile of straw, a morsel of bread, nor an ounce of food, which our convent can supply them. It is one thing to employ the revenues of the Church, which are so much larger than monks ought to need or wish for, in the suitable and dutiful reception of your royal Majesty, and another to have it wrenched from us by the hands of rude and violent men, whose love of rapine is only limited by the extent of their power.'

'It is well, good Prior,' said the king; 'and now to turn our thoughts for an instant from State affairs, can thy reverence inform us how the good citizens of Perth have begun their Valentine's Day?—Gallantly, and merrily, and peacefully, I hope.'

'For gallantly, my liege, I know little of such qualities. For peacefully, there were three or four men, two cruelly wounded, came this morning before daylight to ask the privilege of girth and sanctuary, pursued by a hue and cry of citizens in their shirts, with clubs, bills, Lochaber-axes, and two-handed swords, crying kill and slay, each louder than another. Nay, they were not satisfied when our porter and watch told them that those they pursued had taken refuge in the Galilee of the Church,† but continued for some minutes clamouring and striking upon the postern-door, demanding that the men who had offended should be delivered up to them. I was afraid their rude noise might have broken your Majesty's rest, and raised some surprise.'

'My rest might have been broken,' said the monarch; 'but that sounds of violence should have occasioned surprise—Alas! reverend father, there is in Scotland only one place where the shriek of the victim and threats of the oppressor are not heard—and that, father, is—the grave.'

The prior stood in respectful silence, sympathizing with the feelings of a monarch whose tenderness of heart suited so ill with the condition and manners of his people.

'And what became of the fugitives?' asked Robert, after a minute's pause.

'Surely, sire,' said the prior, 'they were dismissed, as they desired to be, before daylight; and after we had sent out to be assured that no ambush of their enemies watched them in the vicinity, they went their way in peace.'

'You know nothing,' inquired the king, 'who the men were, or the cause of their taking refuge with you?'

'The cause,' said the prior, 'was a riot with the townsmen; but how arising is not known to us. The custom of our house is to afford twenty-four hours of uninterrupted refuge in the sanctuary of Saint Dominic, without asking any question at the poor unfortunates who have sought relief there. If they desire to remain for a longer space, the cause of their resorting to sanctuary must be put upon the register of the convent; and, praised be our holy saint, many persons escape the weight of the law by this temporary protection, whom, did we know the character of their crimes, we might have found ourselves obliged to render up to their pursuers and persecutors.'

As the prior spoke, a dim idea occurred to the monarch, that the privilege of sanctuary thus peremptorily executed must prove a severe interruption to the course of justice through his realm. But he repelled the feeling, as if it had been a suggestion of Satan, and took care that not a single word should escape to betray to the churchman that such a profane thought had ever

* *Thiggers* and *sorners*, *i.e.* sturdy beggars, the former, however, being, as the word implies, more civil than the latter.

† The *Galilee* of a Catholic cathedral is a small side chapel to which excommunicated persons have access, though they must not enter the body of the church. Mr. Surtees suggests that the name of the place thus appropriated to the consolation of miserable penitents, was derived from the text:—'Ite, nunciate fratribus meis ut eant in Galileam; ibi me videbunt' (Matt. xxviii. 10).—See *History of Durham*, vol. i. p. 56. Criminals claiming sanctuary were, for obvious reasons, accustomed to place themselves in this part of the edifice.

occupied his bosom ; on the contrary, he hastened to change the subject.

'The sun,' he said, 'moves slowly on the index.* After the painful information you have given me, I expected the Lords of my Council ere now, to take order with the ravelled affairs of this unhappy riot. Evil was the fortune which gave me rule over a people, among whom it seems to me I am in my own person the only man who desires rest and tranquillity!'

'The Church always desires peace and tranquillity,' added the prior, not suffering even so general a proposition to escape the poor king's oppressed mind, without insisting on a saving clause for the Church's honour.

'We meant nothing else,' said Robert. 'But, Father Prior, you will allow that the Church, in quelling strife, as is doubtless her purpose, resembles the busy housewife, who puts in motion the dust which she means to sweep away.'

To this remark the prior would have made some reply, but the door of the apartment was opened, and a gentleman-usher announced the Duke of Albany.

CHAPTER X.

Gentle friend!
Chide not her mirth, who was sad yesterday,
And may be so to-morrow.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE Duke of Albany was, like his royal brother, named Robert. The Christian name of the latter had been John, until he was called to the throne ; when the superstition of the times observed that the name had been connected with misfortune in the lives and reigns of John of England, John of France, and John Baliol of Scotland. It was therefore agreed that, to elude the bad omen, the new king should assume the name of Robert, rendered dear to Scotland by the recollections of Robert Bruce. We mention this, to account for the existence of two brothers of the same Christian name in one family, which was not certainly a usual occurrence, more than at the present day.

Albany, also an aged man, was not supposed to be much more disposed for warlike enterprise than the king himself. But if he had not courage, he had wisdom to conceal and cloak over his want of that quality, which, once suspected, would have ruined all the plans which his ambition had formed. He had also pride enough to supply, in extremity, the want of real valour, and command enough over his nerves to conceal their agitation. In other respects, he was experienced in the ways of courts, calm, cool, and crafty, fixing upon the points which he desired to attain, while they were yet far removed, and never losing sight of them, though the winding paths in which he trod might occasionally seem to point to a different direction. In his person he resembled the king, for he was noble and majestic both in stature and countenance. But he had the advantage of his elder brother, in being unencumbered with any infirmity, and in every respect lighter and more active. His dress was rich and grave, as became his age and rank, and, like his royal brother, he wore no arms of any kind, a case of small knives supplying at his girdle the place usually occupied by a dagger in absence of a sword.

At the duke's entrance, the prior, after making an obeisance, respectfully withdrew to a recess in the apartment, at some distance from the royal seat, in order to leave the conversation of the brothers uncontrolled by the presence of a third person. It is necessary to mention that the recess was formed by a window placed in the inner front of the monastic buildings, called the palace, from its being the frequent residence of the kings of Scotland, but which was, unless on such occasions, the residence of the prior or abbot. The window was placed over the principal entrance to the royal apartments, and commanded a view of the internal quadrangle of the convent, formed on the right hand by the length of the magnificent church, on the left by a building containing the range of cellars, with the refectory, chapter-house, and other conventual apartments rising above them, for such existed altogether independent of the space occupied by King Robert and his attendants ; while a fourth row of buildings, showing a noble outward front to the rising sun, consisted of a large *hospitium*, for the reception of strangers and pilgrims, and many subordinate offices, warehouses, and places of accommodation, for the ample stores which supplied the magnificent hospitality of the Dominican fathers. A lofty vaulted entrance led through this eastern front into the quadrangle, and was precisely opposite to the window at which Prior Anselm stood, so that he could see underneath the dark arch, and observe the light which gleamed below it from the eastern and open portal ; but, owing to the height to which he was raised, and the depth of the vaulted archway, his eye could but indistinctly reach the opposite and extended portal. It is necessary to notice these localities. We return to the conversation between the princely relatives.

'My dear brother,' said the king, raising the Duke of Albany, as he stooped to kiss his hand ; 'my dear, dear brother, wherefore this ceremonial? Are we not both sons of the same Stuart of Scotland and of the same Elizabeth More?'

'I have not forgot that it is so,' said Albany, arising ; 'but I must not omit, in the familiarity of the brother, the respect that is due to the King.'

'O, true, most true, Robin,' answered the king. 'The throne is like a lofty and barren rock, upon which flower or shrub can never take root. All kindly feelings, all tender affections, are denied to a monarch. A king must not fold a brother to his heart—he dare not give way to fondness for a son.'

'Such, in some respects, is the doom of greatness, sire,' answered Albany ; 'but Heaven, who removed to some distance from your Majesty's sphere the members of your own family, has given you a whole people to be your children.'

* [The index of the sun-dial.]

'Alas, Robert,' answered the monarch, 'your heart is better framed for the duties of a sovereign than mine. I see from the height at which fate has placed me that multitude whom you call my children—I love them, I wish them well—but they are many, and they are distant from me. Alas! even the meanest of them has some beloved being whom he can clasp to his heart, and upon whom he can lavish the fondness of a father! But all that a king can give to a people is a smile, such as the sun bestows on the snowy peaks of the Grampian mountains, as distant and as ineffectual. Alas, Robin! our father used to caress us, and if he chid us it was with a tone of kindness; yet he was a monarch as well as I, and wherefore should not I be permitted, like him, to reclaim my poor prodigal by affection as well as severity?'

'Had affection never been tried, my liege,' replied Albany, in the tone of one who delivers sentiments which he grieves to utter, 'means of gentleness ought assuredly to be first made use of. Your Grace is best judge whether they have been long enough persevered in, and whether those of discouragement and restraint may not prove a more effectual corrective. It is exclusively in your royal power to take what measures with the Duke of Rothsay you think will be most available to his ultimate benefit, and that of the kingdom.'

'This is unkind, brother,' said the king; 'you indicate the painful path which you would have me pursue, yet you offer me not your support in treading it.'

'My support your Grace may ever command,' replied Albany; 'but would it become me, of all men on earth, to prompt to your Grace severe measures against your son and heir? Me, on whom, in case of failure—which Heaven forfend!—of your Grace's family, this fatal crown might descend? Would it not be thought and said by the fiery March and the haughty Douglas, that Albany had sown dissension between his royal brother and the heir to the Scottish throne, perhaps to clear the way for the succession of his own family? No, my liege; I can sacrifice my life to your service, but I must not place my honour in danger.'

'You say true, Robin—you say very true,' replied the king, hastening to put his own interpretation upon his brother's words. 'We must not suffer these powerful and dangerous lords to perceive that there is aught like discord in the royal family. That must be avoided of all things; and therefore we will still try indulgent measures, in hopes of correcting the follies of Rothsay. I behold sparks of hope in him, Robin, from time to time, that are well worth cherishing. He is young—very young—a prince, and in the hey-day of his blood. We will have patience with him, like a good rider with a hot-tempered horse. Let him exhaust this idle humour, and no one will be better pleased with him than yourself. You have censured me in your kindness for being too gentle, too retired—Rothsay has no such defects.'

'I will pawn my life he has not,' replied Albany dryly.

'And he wants not reflection as well as spirit,' continued the poor king, pleading the cause of his son to his brother. 'I have sent for him to attend council to-day, and we shall see how he acquits himself of his devoir. You yourself allow, Robin, that the prince wants neither shrewdness nor capacity for affairs, when he is in the humour to consider them.'

'Doubtless he wants neither, my liege,' replied Albany, 'when he *is* in the humour to consider them.'

'I say so,' answered the king; 'and am heartily glad that you agree with me, Robin, in giving this poor hapless young man another trial. He has no mother now to plead his cause with an incensed father. That must be remembered, Albany.'

'I trust,' said Albany, 'the course which is most agreeable to your Grace's feelings will also prove the wisest and the best.'

The duke well saw the simple stratagem by which the king was endeavouring to escape from the conclusions of his reasoning, and to adopt, under pretence of his sanction, a course of proceeding the reverse of what it best suited him to recommend. But though he saw he could not guide his brother to the line of conduct he desired, he would not abandon the reins, but resolved to watch for a fitter opportunity of obtaining the sinister advantages to which new quarrels betwixt the king and prince were soon, he thought, likely to give rise.

In the meantime, King Robert, afraid lest his brother should resume the painful subject from which he had just escaped, called aloud to the Prior of the Dominicans, 'I hear the trampling of horse. Your station commands the court yard, reverend father. Look from the window, and tell us who alights—Rothsay, is it not?'

'The noble Earl of March, with his followers,' said the prior.

'Is he strongly accompanied?' said the king. 'Do his people enter the inner gate?'

At the same moment, Albany whispered the king, 'Fear nothing; the Brandanes * of your household are under arms.'

The king nodded thanks, while the prior from the window answered the question he had put. 'The Earl is attended by two pages, two gentlemen, and four grooms. One page follows him up the main staircase, bearing his lordship's sword. The others halt in the court, and—Benedicite, how is this?—Here is a strolling glee-woman, with her viol, preparing to sing beneath the royal windows, and in the cloister of the Dominicans, as she might in the yard of an hostelrie! I will have her presently thrust forth.'

'Not so, father,' said the king. 'Let me implore grace for the poor wanderer. The Joyous Science, as they call it, which they profess, mingles sadly with the distresses to which want and calamity condemn a strolling race; and in that they resemble a king, to whom all men cry,

* The men of the Isle of Bute were called Brandanes; from what derivation is not quite certain, though the strong probability lies with Doctor Leyden, who deduces the name from the patron saint of the islands in the Firth of Clyde, viz. Saint Brandin. The territory of Bute was the king's own patrimony, and its natives his personal followers. The noble family of Bute, to whom the island now belongs, are an ancient illegitimate branch of the royal house.

"All hail!" while he lacks the homage and obedient affection which the poorest yeoman receives from his family. Let the wanderer remain undisturbed, father; and let her sing if she will to the yeomen and troopers in the court; it will keep them from quarrelling with each other, belonging, as they do, to such unruly and hostile masters.'

So spoke the well-meaning and feeble-minded prince, and the prior bowed in acquiescence. As he spoke, the Earl of March entered the hall of audience, dressed in the ordinary riding garb of the time, and wearing his poniard. He had left in the anteroom the page of honour who carried his sword. The earl was a well-built, handsome man, fair-complexioned, with a considerable profusion of light-coloured hair, and bright blue eyes, which gleamed like those of a falcon. He exhibited in his countenance, otherwise pleasing, the marks of a hasty and irritable temper, which his situation as a high and powerful feudal lord had given him but too many opportunities of indulging.

'I am glad to see you, my Lord of March,' said the king, with a gracious inclination of his person. 'You have been long absent from our councils.'

'My liege,' answered March, with a deep reverence to the king, and a haughty and formal inclination to the Duke of Albany, 'if I have been absent from your Grace's councils, it is because my place has been supplied by more acceptable, and, I doubt not, abler counsellors. And now I come but to say to your Highness, that the news from the English frontier make it necessary that I should return without delay to my own estates. Your Grace has your wise and politic brother, my Lord of Albany, with whom to consult, and the mighty and warlike Earl of Douglas to carry your counsels into effect. I am of no use save in my own country; and thither, with your Highness's permission, I am purposed instantly to return, to attend my charge, as Warden of the Eastern Marches.'

'You will not deal so unkindly with us, cousin,' replied the gentle monarch. 'Here are evil tidings on the wind. These unhappy Highland clans are again breaking into general commotion, and the tranquillity even of our own court requires the wisest of our council to advise, and the bravest of our barons to execute, what may be resolved upon. The descendant of Thomas Randolph will not surely abandon the grandson of Robert Bruce at such a period as this?'

'I leave with him the descendant of the far-famed James of Douglas,' answered March. 'It is his lordship's boast, that he never puts foot in stirrup but a thousand horse mount with him as his daily lifeguard, and I believe the monks of Aberbrothock * will swear to the fact. Surely, with all the Douglas's chivalry, they are fitter to restrain a disorderly swarm of Highland kerne than I can be to withstand the archery of England and power of Henry Hotspur? And then, here is his Grace of Albany, so jealous in his care of your Highness's person, that he calls your Brandanes to take arms, when a dutiful subject like myself approaches the court with a poor half-score of horse, the retinue of the meanest of the petty barons who own a tower and a thousand acres of barren heath. When such precautions are taken where there is not the slightest chance of peril—since I trust none was to be apprehended from me—your royal person will surely be suitably guarded in real danger.'

'My Lord of March,' said the Duke of Albany, 'the meanest of the barons of whom you speak put their followers in arms, even when they receive their dearest and nearest friends within the iron gate of their castle; and if it please Our Lady, I will not care less for the King's person than they do for their own. The Brandanes are the King's immediate retainers and household servants, and an hundred of them is but a small guard round his Grace, when yourself, my lord, as well as the Earl of Douglas, often ride with ten times the number.'

'My lord Duke,' replied March, 'when the service of the King requires it, I can ride with ten times as many horse as your Grace has named; but I have never done so either traitorously to entrap the King, or boastfully to overawe other nobles.'

'Brother Robert,' said the king, ever anxious to be a peacemaker, 'you do wrong even to intimate a suspicion of my Lord of March. And you, cousin of March, misconstrue my brother's caution.—But hark—to divert this angry parley—I hear no unpleasing touch of minstrelsy. You know the Gay Science, my Lord of March, and love it well. Step to yonder window, beside the holy Prior, at whom we make no question touching secular pleasures, and you will tell us if the music and lay be worth listening to. The notes are of France, I think. My brother of Albany's judgment is not worth a cockle-shell in such matters; so you, cousin, must report your opinion whether the poor glee-maiden deserves recompense. Our son and the Douglas will presently be here, and then, when our Council is assembled, we will treat of graver matters.'

With something like a smile on his proud brow, March withdrew into the recess of the window, and stood there in silence beside the prior, like one who, while he obeyed the king's command, saw through and despised the timid precaution which it implied, as an attempt to prevent the dispute betwixt Albany and himself. The tune, which was played upon a viol, was gay and sprightly in the commencement, with a touch of the wildness of the Troubadour † music. But as it proceeded, the faltering tones of the instrument, and of the female voice which accompanied it, became plaintive and interrupted, as if choked by the painful feelings of the minstrel.

The offended earl, whatever might be his judgment in such matters on which the king had complimented him, paid, it may be sup-

* The complaint of the monks of Arbroath, about the too great honour the Earl of Douglas had paid them in becoming their guest with a train of a thousand men, passed into a proverb, and was never forgotten when the old Scots churchmen railed at the nobility, who, in the sequel, demolished the Church, out of that earnest yearning they had long felt for her goods.

† [The Troubadours were the poet-minstrels of Provence and the south of France.]

posed, little attention to the music of the female minstrel. His proud heart was struggling between the allegiance he owed his sovereign, as well as the love he still found lurking in his bosom for the person of his well-natured king, and a desire of vengeance arising out of his disappointed ambition, and the disgrace done to him by the substitution of Marjory Douglas to be bride of the heir-apparent, instead of his betrothed daughter. March had the vices and virtues of a hasty and uncertain character; and even now, when he came to bid the king adieu, with the purpose of renouncing his allegiance as soon as he reached his own feudal territories, he felt unwilling, and almost unable, to resolve upon a step so criminal and so full of peril. It was with such dangerous cogitations that he was occupied during the beginning of the glee-maiden's lay; but objects which called his attention powerfully as the songstress proceeded affected the current of his thoughts, and riveted them on what was passing in the court-yard of the monastery. The song was in the Provençal dialect, well understood as the language of poetry in all the courts of Europe, and particularly in Scotland. It was more simply turned, however, than was the general cast of the *sirventes*, and rather resembled the *lai* of a Norman minstrel. It may be translated thus:—

The Lay of Poor Louise.*

Ah, poor Louise! The livelong day
She roams from cot to castle gay;
And still her voice and viol say,
Ah, maids, beware the woodland way.
Think on Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The sun was high,
It smirch'd her cheek, it dimm'd her eye,
The woodland walk was cool and nigh,
Where birds with chiming streamlets vie
To cheer Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The savage bear
Made ne'er that lovely grove his lair;
The wolves molest not paths so fair—
But better far had such been there
For poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! In woody wold
She met a huntsman fair and bold;
His baldric was of silk and gold,
And many a witching tale he told
To poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! Small cause to pine
Hadst thou for treasures of the mine;
For peace of mind, that gift divine,
And spotless innocence, were thine,
Ah, poor Louise!

Ah, poor Louise! Thy treasure's reft!
I know not if by force or theft,
Or part by violence, part by gift;
But misery is all that's left
To poor Louise.

Let poor Louise some succour have!
She will not long your bounty crave,
Or tire the gay with warning stave—
For Heaven has grace, and earth a grave,
For poor Louise.

The song was no sooner finished, than, anxious lest the dispute should be revived betwixt his brother and the Earl of March, King Robert called to the latter, 'What think you of the minstrelsy, my lord?—Methinks, as I heard it even at this distance, it was a wild and pleasing lay.'

'My judgment is not deep, my lord; but the singer may dispense with my approbation, since she seems to have received that of his Grace of Rothsay, the first judge in Scotland.'

'How!' said the king in alarm; 'is my son below?'

'He is sitting on horseback by the glee-maiden,' said March, with a malicious smile on his cheek, 'apparently as much interested by her conversation as her music.'

'How is this, Father Prior?' said the king. But the prior drew back from the lattice.

'I have no will to see, my lord, things which it would pain me to repeat.'

'How is all this?' said the king, who coloured deeply, and seemed about to rise from his chair, but changed his mind, as if unwilling, perhaps, to look upon some unbecoming prank of the wild young prince, which he might not have had heart to punish with necessary severity. The Earl of March seemed to have a pleasure in informing him of that of which doubtless he desired to remain ignorant.

'My liege,' he cried, 'this is better and better. The glee-maiden has not only engaged the ear of the Prince of Scotland, as well as of every groom and trooper in the court-yard, but she has riveted the attention of the Black Douglas, whom we have not known as a passionate admirer of the Gay Science. But truly, I do not wonder at his astonishment, for the prince has honoured the fair professor of song and viol with a kiss of approbation.'

'How?' cried the king, 'is David of Rothsay trifling with a glee-maiden, and his wife's father in presence? Go, my good Father Abbot, call the prince here instantly. Go, my dearest brother.' And when they had both left the room, the king continued, 'Go, good cousin of March; there will be mischief, I am assured of it, I pray you go, cousin, and second my lord Prior's prayers with my commands.'

'You forget, my liege,' said March, with the voice of a deeply-offended person; 'the father of Elizabeth of Dunbar were but an unfit intercessor between the Douglas and his royal son-in-law.'

'I crave your pardon, cousin,' said the gentle old man. 'I own you have had some wrong; but my Rothsay will be murdered; I must go myself.'

But as he arose precipitately from his chair, the poor king missed a footstep, stumbled and fell heavily to the ground, in such a manner that, his head striking the corner of the seat from which he had risen, he became for a minute insensible. The sight of the accident at once overcame March's resentment, and melted his heart. He ran to the fallen monarch, and replaced him in his seat, using, in the tenderest and most respectful manner, such means as seemed most fit to recall animation. Robert opened his eyes, and gazed around with uncertainty.

'What has happened? are we alone? who is with us?'

* This lay has been set to beautiful music by a lady, whose composition, to say nothing of her singing, might make any poet proud of his verses, Mrs. Robert Arkwright, born Miss Kemble.

'Your dutiful subject March,' replied the earl.

'Alone with the Earl of March,' repeated the king, his still disturbed intellects receiving some alarm from the name of a powerful chief whom he had reason to believe he had mortally offended.

'Yes, my gracious liege, with poor George of Dunbar, of whom many have wished your Majesty to think ill, though he will be found truer to your royal person at the last than they will.'

'Indeed, cousin, you have had too much wrong; and, believe me, we shall strive to redress'——

'If your Grace thinks so, it may yet be righted,' interrupted the earl, catching at the hopes which his ambition suggested; 'the prince and Marjory Douglas are nearly related; the dispensation from Rome was informally granted; their marriage cannot be lawful; the Pope, who will do much for so godly a prince, can set aside this unchristian union, in respect of the pre-contract. Bethink you well, my liege,' continued the earl, kindling with a new train of ambitious thoughts, to which the unexpected opportunity of pleading his cause personally had given rise,—'bethink you how you choose betwixt the Douglas and me. He is powerful and mighty, I grant. But George of Dunbar wears the keys of Scotland at his belt, and could bring an English army to the gates of Edinburgh, ere Douglas could leave the skirts of Cairntable* to oppose them. Your royal son loves my poor deserted girl, and hates the haughty Marjory of Douglas. Your Grace may judge the small account in which he holds her, by his toying with a common glee-maiden even in the presence of her father.'

The king had hitherto listened to the earl's argument with the bewildered feelings of a timid horseman, borne away by an impetuous steed, whose course he can neither arrest nor direct. But the last words awakened in his recollection the sense of his son's immediate danger.

'O, ay, most true—my son—the Douglas. O, my dear cousin, prevent blood, and all shall be as you will. Hark, there is a tumult; that was the clash of arms!'

'By my coronet—by my knightly faith, it is true!' said the earl, looking from the window upon the inner square of the convent, now filled with armed men and brandished weapons, and resounding with the clash of armour. The deep-vaulted entrance was crowded with warriors at its farthest extremity, and blows seemed to be in the act of being exchanged betwixt some who were endeavouring to shut the gate and others who contended to press in.

'I will go instantly,' said the Earl of March, 'and soon quell this sudden broil. Humbly I pray your Majesty to think on what I have had the boldness to propose.'

'I will, I will, fair cousin,' said the king, scarce knowing to what he pledged himself. 'Do but prevent tumult and bloodshed!'

* [A hill on the borders of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, on the north-eastern slope of which lay Douglas's castle.]

CHAPTER XI.

Fair is the damsel, passing fair,—
Sunny at distance gleams her smile;
Approach—the cloud of woeful care
Hangs trembling in her eye the while.
LUCINDA, A BALLAD.

WE must here trace, a little more correctly, the events which had been indistinctly seen from the window of the royal apartments, and yet more indistinctly reported by those who witnessed them. The glee-maiden, already mentioned, had planted herself where a rise of two large, broad steps, giving access to the main gateway of the royal apartments, gained her an advantage of a foot and a half in height over those in the court, of whom she hoped to form an audience. She wore the dress of her calling, which was more gaudy than rich, and showed the person more than did the garb of other females. She had laid aside an upper mantle, and a small basket which contained her slender stock of necessaries, and a little French spaniel dog sat beside them, as their protector. An azure-blue jacket, embroidered with silver, and sitting close to the person, was open in front, and showed several waistcoats of different coloured silks, calculated to set off the symmetry of the shoulders and bosom, and remaining open at the throat. A small silver chain worn around her neck involved itself amongst these brilliant coloured waistcoats, and was again produced from them to display a medal of the same metal, which intimated, in the name of some court or guild of minstrels, the degree she had taken in the Gay or Joyous Science. A small scrip, suspended over her shoulders by a blue silk riband, hung on her left side.

Her sunny complexion, snow-white teeth, brilliant black eyes, and raven locks, marked her country lying far in the south of France, and the arch smile and dimpled chin bore the same character. Her luxuriant raven locks, twisted around a small gold bodkin, were kept in their position by a net of silk and gold. Short petticoats, deep-laced with silver, to correspond with the jacket, red stockings, which were visible so high as near the calf of the leg, and buskins of Spanish leather, completed her adjustment, which, though far from new, had been saved as an untarnished holiday suit, which much care had kept in good order. She seemed about twenty-five years old; but perhaps fatigue and wandering had anticipated the touch of time, in obliterating the freshness of early youth.

We have said the glee-maiden's manner was lively, and we may add that her smile and repartee were ready. But her gaiety was assumed as a quality essentially necessary to her trade, of which it was one of the miseries, that the professors were obliged frequently to cover an aching heart with a compelled smile. This seemed to be the case with Louise, who, whether she was actually the heroine of her own song, or whatever other cause she might have for sadness, showed at times a strain of deep, melancholy thought, which interfered with and controlled the natural flow of lively spirits

which the practice of the Joyous Science especially required. She lacked also, even in her gayest sallies, the decided boldness and effrontery of her sisterhood, who were seldom at a loss to retort a saucy jest, or turn the laugh against any who interrupted or interfered with them.

It may be here remarked, that it was impossible that this class of women, very numerous in that age, could bear a character generally respectable. They were, however, protected by the manners of the time; and such were the immunities they possessed by the rights of chivalry, that nothing was more rare than to hear of such errant damsels sustaining injury or wrong, and they passed and repassed safely, where armed travellers would probably have encountered a bloody opposition. But though licensed and protected in honour of their tuneful art, the wandering minstrels, male or female, like similar ministers to the public amusement, the itinerant musicians for instance and strolling comedians of our own day, led a life too irregular and precarious to be accounted a creditable part of society. Indeed, among the stricter Catholics the profession was considered as unlawful.

Such was the damsel, who, with viol in hand, and stationed on the slight elevation we have mentioned, stepped forward to the bystanders and announced herself as a mistress of the Gay Science, duly qualified by a brief from a Court of Love and Music held at Aix, in Provence, under the countenance of the flower of chivalry, the gallant Count Aymer, who now prayed that the cavaliers of merry Scotland, who were known over the wide world for bravery and courtesy, would permit a poor stranger to try whether she could afford them any amusement by her art.—The love of song was like the love of fight, a common passion of the age, which all at least affected, whether they were actually possessed by it or no; therefore the acquiescence in Louise's proposal was universal. At the same time, an aged, dark-browed monk, who was among the bystanders, thought it necessary to remind the glee-maiden, that, since she was tolerated within these precincts, which was an unusual grace, he trusted nothing would be sung or said inconsistent with the holy character of the place.

The glee-maiden bent her head low, shook her sable locks, and crossed herself reverentially, as if she disclaimed the possibility of such a transgression, and then began the song of Poor Louise, which we gave at length in the last chapter.

Just as she commenced, she was stopped by a cry of 'Room—room—place for the Duke of Rothsay!'

'Nay, hurry no man on my score,' said a gallant young cavalier, who entered on a noble Arabian horse, which he managed with exquisite grace, though by such slight handling of the reins, such imperceptible pressure of the limbs and sway of the body, that, to any eye save that of an experienced horseman, the animal seemed to be putting forth his paces for his own amusement, and thus gracefully bearing forward a rider who was too indolent to give himself any trouble about the matter.

The prince's apparel, which was very rich, was put on with slovenly carelessness. His form, though his stature was low and his limbs extremely slight, was elegant in the extreme, and his features no less handsome. But there was on his brow a haggard paleness, which seemed the effect of care or of dissipation, or of both these wasting causes combined. His eyes were sunk and dim, as from late indulgence in revelry on the preceding evening, while his cheek was inflamed with unnatural red, as if either the effect of the Bacchanalian orgies had not passed away from the constitution, or a morning draught had been resorted to, in order to remove the effects of the night's debauchery.

Such was the Duke of Rothsay, and the heir of the Scottish crown, a sight at once of interest and compassion. All unbonneted and made way for him, while he kept repeating carelessly, 'No haste—no haste—I shall arrive soon enough at the place I am bound for.—How's this—a damsel of the Joyous Science? Ay, by Saint Giles! and a comely wench to boot. Stand still, my merry-men; never was minstrelsy marred for me.—A good voice, by the mass! Begin me that lay again, sweetheart.'

Louise did not know the person who addressed her; but the general respect paid by all around, and the easy and indifferent manner in which it was received, showed her she was addressed by a man of the highest quality. She recommenced her lay, and sung her best accordingly; while the young duke seemed thoughtful and rather affected towards the close of the ditty. But it was not his habit to cherish such melancholy affections. 'This is a plaintive ditty, my nut-brown maid,' said he, chucking the retreating glee-maiden under the chin, and detaining her by the collar of her dress, which was not difficult, as he sat on horseback so close to the steps on which she stood. 'But I warrant me you have livelier notes at will, *ma bella tenebrosa*, ay, and canst sing in bower as well as wold, and by night as well as day.'

'I am no nightingale, my lord,' said Louise, endeavouring to escape a species of gallantry which ill suited the place and circumstances, a discrepancy to which he who addressed it to her seemed contemptuously indifferent.

'What hast thou there, darling?' he added, removing his hold from her collar to the scrip which she carried.

Glad was Louise to escape his grasp, by slipping the knot of the riband, and leaving the little bag in the prince's hand, as, retiring back beyond his reach, she answered, 'Nuts, my lord, of the last season.'

The prince pulled out a handful of nuts accordingly. 'Nuts, child!—they will break thine ivory teeth—hurt thy pretty voice,' said Rothsay, cracking one with his teeth, like a village schoolboy.

'They are not the walnuts of my own sunny clime, my lord,' said Louise; 'but they hang low, and are within the reach of the poor.'

'You shall have something to afford you better fare, poor wandering ape,' said the duke, in a tone in which feeling predominated more than in the affected and contemptuous gallantry of his first address to the glee-maiden.

At this moment, as he turned to ask an attendant for his purse, the prince encountered the stern and piercing look of a tall black man, seated on a powerful iron-grey horse, who had entered the court with attendants while the Duke of Rothsay was engaged with Louise, and now remained stupefied and almost turned to stone by his surprise and anger at this unseemly spectacle. Even one who had never seen Archibald, Earl of Douglas, called the Grim, must have known him by his swart complexion, his gigantic frame, his buff-coat of bull's-hide, and his air of courage, firmness, and sagacity, mixed with indomitable pride. The loss of an eye in battle, though not perceptible at first sight, as the ball of the injured organ remained similar to the other, gave yet a stern, immoveable glare to the whole aspect.

The meeting of the royal son-in-law with his terrible step-father was in circumstances which arrested the attention of all present; and the bystanders waited the issue with silence and suppressed breath, lest they should lose any part of what was to ensue.

When the Duke of Rothsay saw the expression which occupied the stern features of Douglas, and remarked that the earl did not make the least motion towards respectful or even civil salutation, he seemed determined to show him how little respect he was disposed to pay to his displeased looks. He took his purse from his chamberlain.

'Here, pretty one,' he said, 'I give thee one gold piece for the song thou hast sung me, another for the nuts I have stolen from thee, and a third for the kiss thou art about to give me. For know, my pretty one, that when fair lips (and thine for fault of better may be called so) make sweet music for my pleasure, I am sworn to Saint Valentine to press them to mine.'

'My song is recompensed nobly,' said Louise, shrinking back; 'my nuts are sold to a good market; further traffic, my lord, were neither befitting you nor beseeming me.'

'What! you coy it, my nymph of the highway?' said the prince contemptuously. 'Know, damsel, that one asks you a grace who is unused to denial.'

'It is the Prince of Scotland'—'the Duke of Rothsay,'—said the courtiers around to the terrified Louise, pressing forward the trembling young woman; 'you must not thwart his humour.'

'But I cannot reach your lordship,' she said timidly, 'you sit so high on horseback.'

'If I must alight,' said Rothsay, 'there shall be the heavier penalty. What does the wench tremble for? Place thy foot on the toe of my boot, give me hold of thy hand. Gallantly done!' He kissed her as she stood thus suspended in the air, perched upon his foot and supported by his hand, saying, 'There is thy kiss, and there is my purse to pay it; and to grace thee further, Rothsay will wear thy scrip for the day.' He suffered the frightened girl to spring to the ground, and turned his looks from her to bend them contemptuously on the Earl of Douglas, as if he had said, 'All this I do in despite of you and of your daughter's claims.'

'By Saint Bride of Douglas!' said the earl, pressing towards the prince, 'this is too much, unmannered boy, as void of sense as honour! You know what considerations restrain the hand of Douglas, else had you never dared'——

'Can you play at spang-cockle, my lord?' said the prince, placing a nut on the second joint of his forefinger, and spinning it off by a smart application of the thumb. The nut struck on Douglas's broad breast, who burst out into a dreadful exclamation of wrath, inarticulate, but resembling the growl of a lion in depth and sternness of expression. 'I cry your pardon, most mighty lord,' said the Duke of Rothsay scornfully, while all around trembled; 'I did not conceive my pellet could have wounded you, seeing you wear a buff-coat. Surely, I trust, it did not hit your eye?'

The prior, despatched by the king, as we have seen in the last chapter, had by this time made way through the crowd, and, laying hold on Douglas's rein in a manner that made it impossible for him to advance, reminded him that the prince was the son of his sovereign and the husband of his daughter.

'Fear not, Sir Prior,' said Douglas. 'I despise the childish boy too much to raise a finger against him. But I will return insult for insult.—Here, any of you who love the Douglas,—spurn me this quean from the monastery gates; and let her be so scourged that she may bitterly remember to the last day of her life, how she gave means to an unrespective boy to affront the Douglas!'

Four or five retainers instantly stepped forth to execute commands which were seldom uttered in vain, and heavily would Louise have atoned for an offence of which she was alike the innocent, unconscious, and unwilling instrument, had not the Duke of Rothsay interfered.

'Spurn the poor glee-woman!' he said in high indignation; 'scourge her for obeying my commands! Spurn thine own oppressed vassals, rude Earl; scourge thine own faulty hounds; but beware how you touch so much as a dog that Rothsay hath patted on the head, far less a female whose lips he hath kissed.'

Before Douglas could give an answer, which would certainly have been in defiance, there arose that great tumult at the outward gate of the monastery, already noticed, and men both on horseback and on foot began to rush headlong in, not actually fighting with each other, but certainly in no peaceable manner.

One of the contending parties, seemingly, were partisans of Douglas, known by the cognisance of the Bloody Heart, the other were composed of citizens of the town of Perth. It appeared they had been skirmishing in earnest when without the gates, but, out of respect to the sanctified ground, they lowered their weapons when they entered, and confined their strife to a war of words and mutual abuse.

The tumult had this good effect, that it forced asunder, by the weight and press of numbers, the prince and Douglas, at a moment when the levity of the former and the pride of the latter were urging both to the utmost extremity. But now peacemakers interfered on all sides. The prior and the monks threw themselves

among the multitude, and commanded peace in the name of Heaven, and reverence to their sacred walls, under penalty of excommunication; and their expostulations began to be listened to. Albany, who was despatched by his royal brother at the beginning of the fray, had not arrived till now on the scene of action. He instantly applied himself to Douglas, and in his ear conjured him to temper his passion.

'By Saint Bride of Douglas, I will be avenged,' said the earl. 'No man shall brook life after he has passed an affront on Douglas.'

'Why, so you may be avenged in fitting time,' said Albany; 'but let it not be said, that, like a peevish woman, the great Douglas could choose neither time nor place for his vengeance. Bethink you, all that we have laboured at is like to be upset by an accident. George of Dunbar hath had the advantage of an audience with the old man; and though it lasted but five minutes, I fear it may endanger the dissolution of your family match, which we brought about with so much difficulty. The authority from Rome has not yet been obtained.'

'A toy!' answered Douglas haughtily; 'they dare not dissolve it.'

'Not while Douglas is at large and in possession of his power,' answered Albany. 'But, noble Earl, come with me, and I will show you at what disadvantage you stand.'

Douglas dismounted, and followed his wily accomplice in silence. In a lower hall they saw the ranks of the Brandanes drawn up, well armed, in caps of steel and shirts of mail. Their captain, making an obeisance to Albany, seemed to desire to address him.

'What now, MacLouis?' said the duke.

'We are informed the Duke of Rothsay has been insulted, and I can scarce keep the Brandanes within door.'

'Gallant MacLouis,' said Albany, 'and you, my trusty Brandanes, the Duke of Rothsay, my princely nephew, is as well as a hopeful gentleman can be. Some scuffle there has been, but all is appeased.' He continued to draw the Earl of Douglas forward. 'You see, my lord,' he said in his ear, 'that if the word *arrest* was to be once spoken, it would be soon obeyed, and you are aware your attendants are few for resistance.'

Douglas seemed to acquiesce in the necessity of patience for the time. 'If my teeth,' he said, 'should bite through my lips, I will be silent till it is the hour to speak out.'

George of March, in the meanwhile, had a more easy task of pacifying the prince. 'My Lord of Rothsay,' he said, approaching him with grave ceremony, 'I need not tell you that you owe me something for reparation of honour, though I blame not you personally for the breach of contract which has destroyed the peace of my family. Let me conjure you, by what observance your Highness may owe an injured man, to forego for the present this scandalous dispute.'

'My lord, I owe you much,' replied Rothsay; 'but this haughty and all-controlling lord has wounded mine honour.'

'My lord, I can but add, your royal father is ill — hath swooned with terror for your Highness's safety.'

'Ill!' replied the prince; 'the kind, good old man! swooned, said you, my Lord of March? I am with him in an instant.'

The Duke of Rothsay sprung from his saddle to the ground, and was dashing into the palace like a greyhound, when a feeble grasp was laid on his cloak, and the faint voice of a kneeling female exclaimed, 'Protection, my noble prince! Protection for a helpless stranger!'

'Hands off, stroller!' said the Earl of March, thrusting the suppliant glee-maiden aside.

But the gentler prince paused. 'It is true,' he said, 'I have brought the vengeance of an unforgiving devil upon this helpless creature. O Heaven, what a life is mine, so fatal to all who approach me! What to do in the hurry? She must not go to my apartments. And all my men are such born reprobates. Ha! thou at mine elbow, honest Harry Smith! What dost thou here?'

'There has been something of a fight, my lord,' answered our acquaintance the Smith, 'between the townsmen and the Southland loons who ride with the Douglas; and we have swinged them as far as the Abbey-gate.'

'I am glad of it; I am glad of it. And you beat the knaves fairly?'

'Fairly, does your Highness ask?' said Henry. 'Why, ay! We were stronger in numbers, to be sure; but no men ride better armed than those who follow the Bloody Heart. And so in a sense we beat them fairly; for, as your Highness knows, it is the smith who makes the man-at-arms, and men with good weapons are a match for great odds.'

While they thus talked, the Earl of March, who had spoken with some one near the palace-gate, returned in anxious haste.

'My lord Duke! my lord Duke! Your father is recovered, and if you haste not speedily, my Lord of Albany and the Douglas will have possession of his royal ear.'

'And if my royal father is recovered,' said the thoughtless prince, 'and is holding, or about to hold, council with my gracious uncle and the Earl of Douglas, it befits neither your lordship nor me to intrude till we are summoned. So there is time for me to speak of my little business with mine honest armourer here.'

'Does your Highness take it so?' said the earl, whose sanguine hopes of a change of favour at court had been too hastily excited, and were as speedily checked. 'Then so let it be for George of Dunbar.'

He glided away with a gloomy and displeased aspect; and thus out of the two most powerful noblemen in Scotland, at a time when the aristocracy so closely controlled the throne, the reckless heir-apparent had made two enemies, the one by scornful defiance and the other by careless neglect. He heeded not the Earl of March's departure, however, or rather he felt relieved from his importunity.

The prince went on in indolent conversation with our armourer, whose skill in his art had made him personally known to many of the great lords about the court.

'I had something to say to thee, Smith. Canst thou take up a fallen link in my Milan hauberk?'

'As well, please your Highness, as my mother could take up a stitch in the nets she wove. The Milaner shall not know my work from his own.'

'Well, but that was not what I wished of thee just now,' said the prince, recollecting himself; 'this poor glee-woman, good Smith, she must be placed in safety. Thou art man enough to be any woman's champion, and thou must conduct her to some place of safety.'

Henry Smith was, as we have seen, sufficiently rash and daring when weapons were in question. But he had also the pride of a decent burgher, and was unwilling to place himself in what might be thought equivocal circumstances by the sober part of his fellow-citizens.

'May it please your Highness,' he said, 'I am but a poor craftsman. But though my arm and sword are at the King's service and your Highness's, I am, with reverence, no squire of dames. Your Highness will find, among your own retinue, knights and lords willing enough to play Sir Pandarus of Troy;* it is too knightly a part for poor Hal of the Wynd.'

'Umph—ha!' said the prince. 'My purse, Edgar.'—(His attendant whispered him.) 'True, true, I gave it to the poor wench.—I know enough of your craft, Sir Smith, and of craftsmen in general, to be aware that men lure not hawks with empty hands; but I suppose my word may pass for the price of a good armour, and I will pay it thee, with thanks to boot, for this slight service.'

'Your Highness may know other craftsmen,' said the Smith; 'but, with reverence, you know not Henry Gow. He will obey you in making a weapon, or in wielding one, but he knows nothing of this petticoat service.'

'Hark thee, thou Perthshire mule,' said the prince, yet smiling while he spoke at the sturdy punctilio of the honest burgher; 'the wench is as little to me as she is to thee. But in an idle moment, as you may learn from those about thee, if thou sawest it not thyself, I did her a passing grace, which is likely to cost the poor wretch her life. There is no one here whom I can trust to protect her against the discipline of belt and bowstring, with which the Border brutes who follow Douglas will beat her to death, since such is his pleasure.'

'If such be the case, my liege, she has a right to every honest man's protection; and since she wears a petticoat, though I would it were longer and of a less fanciful fashion, I will answer for her protection as well as a single man may. But where am I to bestow her?'

'Good faith, I cannot tell,' said the prince. 'Take her to Sir John Ramorny's lodging—But, no—no—he is ill at ease, and besides, there are reasons—take her to the devil if thou wilt, but place her in safety, and oblige David of Rothsay.'

'My noble prince,' said the Smith, 'I think—always with reverence—that I would rather give a defenceless woman to the care of the devil than of Sir John Ramorny. But though the devil be a worker in fire like myself, yet I know not his haunts, and with aid of Holy Church hope to keep him on terms of defiance. And, moreover, how I am to convey her out of this crowd, or through the streets, in such a mumming habit, may be well made a question.'

'For the leaving the convent,' said the prince, 'this good monk' (seizing upon the nearest by his cowl), 'Father Nicholas or Boniface'——

'Poor Brother Cyprian, at your Highness's command,' said the father.

'Ay, ay, Brother Cyprian,' continued the prince, 'yes. Brother Cyprian shall let you out at some secret passage which he knows of, and I will see him again to pay a prince's thanks for it.'

The churchman bowed in acquiescence, and poor Louise, who during this debate had looked from the one speaker to the other, hastily said, 'I will not scandalize this good man with my foolish garb; I have a mantle for ordinary wear.'

'Why, there, Smith, thou hast a friar's hood and a woman's mantle to shroud thee under. I would all my frailties were as well shrouded! Farewell, honest fellow, I will thank thee hereafter.'

Then, as if afraid of further objection on the Smith's part, he hastened into the palace.

Henry Gow remained stupefied at what had passed, and at finding himself involved in a charge at once inferring much danger and an equal risk of scandal, both which, joined to a principal share which he had taken, with his usual forwardness, in the fray, might, he saw, do him no small injury in the suit he pursued most anxiously. At the same time, to leave a defenceless creature to the ill usage of the barbarous Galwegians and licentious followers of the Douglas, was a thought which his manly heart could not brook for an instant.

He was roused from his reverie by the voice of the monk, who, sliding out his words with the indifference which the holy fathers entertained, or affected, towards all temporal matters, desired them to follow him. The Smith put himself in motion, with a sigh much resembling a groan, and, without appearing exactly connected with the monk's motions, he followed him into a cloister, and through a postern-door, which, after looking once behind him, the priest left ajar. Behind them followed Louise, who had hastily assumed her small bundle, and, calling her little four-legged companion, had eagerly followed in the path which opened an escape from what had shortly before seemed a great and inevitable danger.

CHAPTER XII.

> Then up and spak the auld gudewife,
> And wow! but she was grim:
> 'Had e'er your father done the like,
> It had been ill for him.
>
> LUCKY TRUMBULL.

THE party were now, by a secret passage, admitted within the church, the outward doors of which, usually left open, had been closed

* [In Homer, Pandarus was chief of the Lycians; but in the mediæval romances of the Troy cycle he is made to figure as a go-between or pander in immorality.]

against every one in consequence of the recent tumult, when the rioters of both parties had endeavoured to rush into it for other purposes than those of devotion. They traversed the gloomy aisles, whose arched roof resounded to the heavy tread of the armourer, but was silent under the sandalled foot of the monk, and the light step of poor Louise, who trembled excessively, as much from fear as cold. She saw that neither her spiritual nor temporal conductor looked kindly upon her. The former was an austere man, whose aspect seemed to hold the luckless wanderer in some degree of horror, as well as contempt; while the latter, though, as we have seen, one of the best-natured men living, was at present grave to the pitch of sternness, and not a little displeased with having the part he was playing forced upon him, without, as he was constrained to feel, a possibility of his declining it.

His dislike at his task extended itself to the innocent object of his protection, and he internally said to himself, as he surveyed her scornfully,—'A proper queen of beggars to walk the streets of Perth with, and I a decent burgher! This tawdry minion must have as ragged a reputation as the rest of her sisterhood, and I am finely sped if my chivalry in her behalf comes to Catharine's ears. I had better have slain a man, were he the best in Perth; and, by hammer and nails, I would have done it on provocation rather than convoy this baggage through the city.'

Perhaps Louise suspected the cause of her conductor's anxiety, for she said timidly and with hesitation, 'Worthy sir, were it not better I should stop one instant in that chapel, and don my mantle?'

'Umph, sweetheart, well proposed,' said the armourer; but the monk interfered, raising at the same time the finger of interdiction.

'The chapel of holy Saint Madox is no tiring-room for jugglers and strollers to shift their trappings in. I will presently show thee a vestiary more suited to thy condition.'

The poor young woman hung down her humbled head, and turned from the chapel door which she had approached with the deep sense of self-abasement. Her little spaniel seemed to gather, from his mistress's looks and manner, that they were unauthorized intruders on the holy ground which they trod, and hung his ears, and swept the pavement with his tail, as he trotted slowly and close to Louise's heels.

The monk moved on without a pause. They descended a broad flight of steps, and proceeded through a labyrinth of subterranean passages, dimly lighted. As they passed a low-arched door, the monk turned and said to Louise, with the same stern voice as before, 'There, daughter of folly, there is a robing room where many before you have deposited their vestments!'

Obeying the least signal with ready and timorous acquiescence, she pushed the door open, but instantly recoiled with terror. It was a charnel-house, half filled with dry skulls and bones.

'I fear to change my dress there, and alone. But if you, father, command it, be it as you will.'

'Why, thou child of vanity, the remains on which thou lookest are but the earthly attire of those who, in their day, led or followed in the pursuit of worldly pleasure. And such shalt thou be, for all thy mincing and ambling, thy piping and thy harping; thou and all such ministers of frivolous and worldly pleasure must become like these poor bones, whom thy idle nicety fears and loathes to look upon.'

'Say not with idle nicety, reverend father,' answered the glee-maiden, 'for, Heaven knows, I covet the repose of these poor bleached relics; and if, by stretching my body upon them, I could, without sin, bring my state to theirs, I would choose that charnel-heap for my place of rest, beyond the fairest and softest couch in Scotland.'

'Be patient, and come on,' said the monk, in a milder tone; 'the reaper must not leave the harvest-work till sunset gives the signal that the day's toil is over.'

They walked forward. Brother Cyprian, at the end of a long gallery, opened the door of a small apartment, or perhaps a chapel, for it was decorated with a crucifix, before which burned four lamps. All bent and crossed themselves; and the priest said to the minstrel maiden, pointing to the crucifix, 'What says that emblem?'

'That He invites the sinner as well as the righteous to approach.'

'Ay, if the sinner put from him his sin,' said the monk, whose tone of voice was evidently milder. 'Prepare thyself here for thy journey.'

Louise remained an instant or two in the chapel, and presently reappeared in a mantle of coarse grey cloth, in which she had closely muffled herself, having put such of her more gaudy habiliments as she had time to take off, in the little basket which had before held her ordinary attire.

The monk presently afterwards unlocked a door which led to the open air. They found themselves in the garden which surrounded the monastery of the Dominicans. 'The southern gate is on the latch, and through it you can pass unnoticed,' said the monk. 'Bless thee, my son; and bless thee too, unhappy child. Remembering where you put off your idle trinkets, may you take care how you again resume them!'

'Alas, father!' said Louise, 'if the poor foreigner could supply the mere wants of life by any more creditable occupation, she has small wish to profess her idle art. But'——

But the monk had vanished, nay, the very door through which she had just passed appeared to have vanished also, so curiously was it concealed beneath a flying buttress and among the profuse ornaments of Gothic architecture. 'Here is a woman let out by this private postern, sure enough,' was Henry's reflection. 'Pray Heaven the good fathers never let any in! The place seems convenient for such games at bo-peep. But, *benedicite*, what is to be done next? I must get rid of this quean as fast as I can; and I must see her safe. For let her be at heart what she may, she looks too modest, now she is in decent dress, to deserve the usage which the wild Scot of Galloway, or the devil's legion from the Liddell, are like to afford her.'

Louise stood as if she waited his pleasure which way to go. Her little dog, relieved by the exchange of the dark subterranean vault for the open air, sprung in wild gambols through the walks, and jumped upon its mistress; and even, though more timidly, circled close round the Smith's feet, to express its satisfaction to him also, and conciliate his favour.

'Down, Charlot, down!' said the glee-maiden. 'You are glad to get into the blessed sunshine; but where shall we rest at night, my poor Charlot?'

'And now, mistress,' said the Smith, not churlishly, for it was not in his nature, but bluntly, as one who is desirous to finish a disagreeable employment, 'which way lies your road?'

Louise looked on the ground, and was silent. On being again urged to say which way she desired to be conducted, she again looked down, and said she could not tell.

'Come, come,' said Henry, 'I understand all that. I have been a *galliard*, a reveller, in my day; but it's best to be plain. As matters are with me now, I am an altered man for these many, many months; and so, my quean, you and I must part sooner than perhaps a light-o'-love such as you expected to part with—a likely young fellow.'

Louise wept silently, with her eyes still cast on the ground, as one who felt an insult which she had not a right to complain of. At length, perceiving that her conductor was grown impatient, she faltered out, 'Noble sir'——

'*Sir* is for a knight,' said the impatient burgher, 'and *noble* is for a baron. I am Harry of the Wynd, an honest mechanic, and free of my guild.'

'Good craftsman, then,' said the minstrel woman, 'you judge me harshly, but not without seeming cause. I would relieve you immediately of my company, which, it may be, brings little credit to good men, did I but know which way to go.'

'To the next wake or fair, to be sure,' said Henry roughly, having no doubt that this distress was affected for the purpose of palming herself upon him, and perhaps dreading to throw himself into the way of temptation; 'and that is the feast of Saint Madox at Auchterarder. I warrant thou wilt find the way thither well enough.'

'Aftr—Auchter—' repeated the glee-maiden, her southern tongue in vain attempting the Celtic accentuation. 'I am told my poor lays will not be understood if I go nearer to yon dreadful range of mountains.'

'Will you abide, then, in Perth?'

'But where to lodge?' said the wanderer.

'Why, where lodged you last night?' replied the Smith. 'You know where you came from, surely, though you seem doubtful where you are going?'

'I slept in the hospital of the convent. But I was only admitted upon great importunity, and I was commanded not to return.'

'Nay, they will never take you in with the ban of the Douglas upon you, that is even too true. But the prince mentioned Sir John Ramorny's. I can take you to his lodgings through by-streets, though it is short of an honest burgher's office, and my time presses.'

'I will go anywhere; I know I am a scandal and encumbrance. There was a time when it was otherwise. But this Ramorny, who is he?'

'A courtly knight, who lives a jolly bachelor's life, and is master of the horse, and *privado*, as they say, to the young prince.'

'What! to the wild, scornful young man who gave occasion to yonder scandal? O, take me not thither, good friend! Is there no Christian woman who would give a poor creature rest in her cow-house or barn for one night? I will be gone with early daybreak. I will repay her richly. I have gold; and I will repay you too, if you will take me where I may be safe from that wild reveller, and from the followers of that dark baron, in whose eye was death.'

'Keep your gold for those who lack it, mistress,' said Henry, 'and do not offer to honest hands the money that is won by violing, and tabouring, and toe-tripping, and perhaps worse pastimes. I tell you plainly, mistress, I am not to be fooled. I am ready to take you to any place of safety you can name, for my promise is as strong as an iron shackle. But you cannot persuade me that you do not know what earth to make for. You are not so young in your trade as not to know there are hostelries in every town, much more in a city like Perth, where such as you may be harboured for your money, if you cannot find some gulls, more or fewer, to pay your lawing.—If you have money, mistress, my care about you need be the less; and truly, I see little but pretence in all that excessive grief and fear of being left alone, in one of your occupation.'

Having thus, as he conceived, signified that he was not to be deceived by the ordinary arts of a glee-maiden, Henry walked a few paces sturdily, endeavouring to think he was doing the wisest and most prudent thing in the world. Yet he could not help looking back to see how Louise bore his departure, and was shocked to observe that she had sunk upon a bank, with her arms resting on her knees and her head on her arms, in a situation expressive of the utmost desolation.

The Smith tried to harden his heart. 'It is all a sham,' he said; 'the *gouge** knows her trade, I'll be sworn, by Saint Ringan.'

At the instant, something pulled the skirts of his cloak; and, looking round, he saw the little spaniel, who immediately, as if to plead his mistress's cause, got on his hind-legs and began to dance, whimpering at the same time and looking back to Louise, as if to solicit compassion for his forsaken owner.

'Poor thing,' said the Smith, 'there may be a trick in this too, for thou dost but as thou art taught.—Yet, as I promised to protect this poor creature, I must not leave her in a swoon, if it be one, were it but for manhood's sake.'

Returning, and approaching his troublesome charge, he was at once assured, from the change of her complexion, either that she was actually in the deepest distress, or had a power of dissimulation beyond the comprehension of man—or woman either.

'Young woman,' he said, with more of kind-

* *Gouge*, in old French, is almost equivalent to wench.

ness than he had hitherto been able even to assume, 'I will tell you frankly how I am placed. This is Saint Valentine's Day, and, by custom, I was to spend it with my fair Valentine. But blows and quarrels have occupied all the morning, save one poor half-hour. Now, you may well understand where my heart and my thoughts are, and where, were it only in mere courtesy, my body ought to be.'

The glee-maiden listened, and appeared to comprehend him.

'If you are a true lover, and have to wait upon a chaste Valentine, God forbid that one like me should make a disturbance between you! Think about me no more. I will ask of that great river to be my guide to where it meets the ocean, where I think they said there was a seaport; I will sail from thence to La Belle France, and will find myself once more in a country in which the roughest peasant would not wrong the poorest female.'

'You cannot go to Dundee to-day,' said the Smith. 'The Douglas people are in motion on both sides of the river, for the alarm of the morning has reached them ere now; and all this day, and the next, and the whole night which is between, they will gather to their leader's standard, like Highlandmen at the fiery cross. —Do you see yonder five or six men, who are riding so wildly on the other side of the river? These are Annandale men; I know them by the length of their lances and by the way they hold them. An Annandale man never slopes his spear backwards, but always keeps the point upright, or pointed forward.'

'And what of them?' said the glee-maiden. 'They are men-at-arms and soldiers. They would respect me for my viol and my helplessness.'

'I will say them no scandal,' answered the Smith. 'If you were in their own glens, they would use you hospitably, and you would have nothing to fear; but they are now on an expedition. All is fish that comes to their net. There are amongst them who would take your life for the value of your gold ear-rings. Their whole soul is settled in their eyes to see prey, and in their hands to grasp it. They have no ears either to hear lays of music or listen to prayers for mercy. Besides, their leader's order is gone forth concerning you, and it is of a kind sure to be obeyed. Ay, great lords are sooner listened to if they say, "Burn a church," than if they say, "Build one."'

'Then,' said the glee-woman, 'I were best sit down and die.'

'Do not say so,' replied the Smith. 'If I could but get you a lodging for the night, I would carry you the next morning to Our Lady's Stairs, from whence the vessels go down the river for Dundee, and would put you on board with some one bound that way, who should see you safely lodged where you would have fair entertainment and kind usage.'

'Good—excellent—generous man!' said the glee-maiden, 'do this, and if the prayers and blessings of a poor unfortunate should ever reach Heaven, they will rise thither in thy behalf. We will meet at yonder postern-door, at whatever time the boats take their departure.'

'That is at six in the morning, when the day is but young.'

'Away with you, then, to your Valentine; and if she loves you, O, deceive her not.'

'Alas, poor damsel! I fear it is deceit hath brought thee to this pass. But I must not leave you thus unprovided. I must know where you are to pass the night.'

'Care not for that,' replied Louise. 'The heavens are clear; there are bushes and boskets enough by the river-side; Charlot and I can well make a sleeping room of a green arbour for one night; and to-morrow will, with your promised aid, see me out of reach of injury and wrong. O, the night soon passes away when there is hope for to-morrow!—Do you still linger, with your Valentine waiting for you? Nay, I shall hold you but a loitering lover, and you know what belongs to a minstrel's reproaches.'

'I cannot leave you, damsel,' answered the armourer, now completely melted. 'It were mere murder to suffer you to pass the night exposed to the keenness of a Scottish blast in February.—No, no—my word would be ill kept in this manner; and if I should incur some risk of blame, it is but just penance for thinking of thee, and using thee, more according to my own prejudices, as I now well believe, than thy merits. Come with me, damsel; thou shalt have a sure and honest lodging for the night, whatsoever may be the consequence. It would be an evil compliment to my Catharine, were I to leave a poor creature to be starved to death, that I might enjoy her company an hour sooner.'

So saying, and hardening himself against all anticipations of the ill consequences or scandal which might arise from such a measure, the manly-hearted Smith resolved to set evil report at defiance and give the wanderer a night's refuge in his own house. It must be added, that he did this with extreme reluctance, and in a sort of enthusiasm of benevolence.

Ere our stout son of Vulcan had fixed his worship on the Fair Maid of Perth, a certain natural wildness of disposition had placed him under the influence of Venus as well as that of Mars; and it was only the effect of a sincere attachment which had withdrawn him entirely from such licentious pleasures. He was, therefore, justly jealous of his newly-acquired reputation for constancy, which his conduct to this poor wanderer must expose to suspicion, a little doubtful, perhaps, of exposing himself too venturously to temptation, and, moreover, in despair to lose so much of Saint Valentine's Day, which custom not only permitted, but enjoined, him to pass beside his mate for the season. The journey to Kinfauns, and the various transactions which followed, had consumed the day, and it was now nearly even-song time.

As if to make up by a speedy pace for the time he was compelled to waste upon a subject so foreign to that which he had most at heart, he strode on through the Dominicans' gardens, entered the town, and, casting his cloak around the lower part of his face, and pulling down his bonnet to conceal the upper, he continued the same celerity of movement through by-streets and lanes, hoping to reach his own house in the Wynd without being observed. But when

he had continued his rate of walking for ten minutes, he began to be sensible it might be too rapid for the young woman to keep up with him. He accordingly looked behind him with a degree of angry impatience, which soon turned into compunction, when he saw that she was almost utterly exhausted by the speed which she had exerted.

'Now, marry, hang me up for a brute,' said Henry to himself. 'Was my own haste ever so great, could it give that poor creature wings? And she loaded with baggage too! I am an ill-nurtured beast, that is certain, wherever women are in question; and always sure to do wrong when I have the best will to act right.—Hark thee, damsel; let me carry these things for thee. We shall make better speed that I do so.'

Poor Louise would have objected, but her breath was too much exhausted to express herself; and she permitted her good-natured guardian to take her little basket, which, when the dog beheld, he came straight before Henry, stood up and shook his forepaws, whining gently, as if he too wanted to be carried.

'Nay, then, I must needs lend thee a lift too,' said the Smith, who saw the creature was tired.

'Fie, Charlot!' said Louise; 'thou knowest I will carry thee myself.'

She endeavoured to take up the little spaniel, but it escaped from her; and, going to the other side of the Smith, renewed its supplication that he would take it up.

'Charlot's right,' said the Smith; 'he knows best who is ablest to bear him. This lets me know, my pretty one, that you have not been always the bearer of your own mail. Charlot can tell tales.'

So deadly a hue came across the poor glee-maiden's countenance as Henry spoke, that he was obliged to support her, lest she should have dropped to the ground. She recovered again, however, in an instant or two, and with a feeble voice requested her guide would go on.

'Nay, nay,' said Henry, as they began to move, 'keep hold of my cloak, or my arm, if it helps you forward better. A fair sight we are; and had I but a rebeck or a guitar at my back, and a jackanapes on my shoulder, we should seem as joyous a brace of strollers as ever touched string at a castle gate.—'Snails!' he ejaculated internally, 'were any neighbour to meet me with this little harlotry's basket at my back, her dog under my arm, and herself hanging on my cloak, what could they think but that I had turned mumper in good earnest? I would not for the best harness I ever had laid hammer on, that any of our long-tongued neighbours met me in this guise; it were a jest would last from Saint Valentine's Day to next Candlemas.'

Stirred by these thoughts, the Smith, although at the risk of making much longer a route which he wished to traverse as quickly as possible, took the most indirect and private course which he could find in order to avoid the main streets, still crowded with people, owing to the late scene of tumult and agitation. But unhappily his policy availed him nothing; for, in turning into an alley, he met a man with his cloak muffled around his face, from a desire like his own to pass unobserved, though the slight insignificant figure, the spindle-shanks, which showed themselves beneath the mantle, and the small dull eye that blinked over its upper folds, announced the Pottingar as distinctly as if he had carried his sign in front of his bonnet. His unexpected and most unwelcome presence overwhelmed the Smith with confusion. Ready evasion was not the property of his bold, blunt temper; and knowing this man to be a curious observer, a malignant tale-bearer, and by no means well disposed to himself in particular, no better hope occurred to him than that the worshipful apothecary would give him some pretext to silence his testimony, and secure his discretion, by twisting his neck round.

But, far from doing or saying anything which could warrant such extremities, the Pottingar, seeing himself so close upon his stalwart townsman that recognition was inevitable, seemed determined it should be as slight as possible; and, without appearing to notice anything particular in the company or circumstances in which they met, he barely slid out these words as he passed him, without even a glance towards his companion after the first instant of their meeting,—'A merry holiday to you once more, stout Smith. What! thou art bringing thy cousin, pretty Mistress Joan Letham, with her mail, from the waterside—fresh from Dundee, I warrant? I heard she was expected at the old cordwainer's.'

As he spoke thus, he looked neither right nor left; and exchanging a 'Save you!' with a salute of the same kind which the Smith rather muttered than uttered distinctly, he glided forward on his way like a shadow.

'The foul Fiend catch me, if I can swallow that pill,' said Henry Smith, 'how well soever it may be gilded. The knave has a shrewd eye for a kirtle, and knows a wild duck from a tame, as well as e'er a man in Perth.—He were the last in the Fair City to take sour plums for pears, or my roundabout cousin Joan for this piece of fantastic vanity. I fancy his bearing was as much as to say, "I will not see what you might wish me blind to"—and he is right to do so, as he might easily purchase himself a broken pate by meddling with my matters; and so he will be silent for his own sake. But whom have we next? By Saint Dunstan! the chattering, bragging, cowardly knave, Oliver Proudfute!'

It was indeed the bold Bonnet-maker whom they next encountered, who, with his cap on one side, and trolling the ditty of

Thou art over long at the pot, Tom, Tom,

gave plain intimation that he had made no dry meal.

'Ha! my jolly Smith,' he said, 'have I caught thee in the manner? What, can the true steel bend? Can Vulcan, as the minstrel says, pay Venus back in her own coin? Faith, thou wilt be a gay Valentine before the year's out, that begins with the holiday so jollily.'

'Hark ye, Oliver,' said the displeased Smith, 'shut your eyes and pass on, crony. And hark ye again, stir not your tongue about what concerns you not, as you value having an entire tooth in your head.'

'I betray counsel? I bear tales, and that against my brother martialist? I scorn it; I

would not tell it even to my timber Soldan! Why, I can be a wild galliard in a corner as well as thou, man. And, now I think on't, I will go with thee somewhere, and we will have a rouse together, and thy Dalilah shall give us a song. Ha! said I not well?'

'Excellently,' said Henry, longing the whole time to knock his brother martialist down, but wisely taking a more peaceful way to rid himself of the encumbrance of his presence. 'Excellently well! I may want thy help, too; for here are five or six of the Douglasses before us; they will not fail to try to take the wench from a poor burgher like myself, so I will be glad of the assistance of a tearer such as thou art.'

'I thank ye; I thank ye,' answered the Bonnet-maker; 'but were I not better run, and cause ring the common bell, and get my great sword?'

'Ay, ay; run home as fast as you can, and say nothing of what you have seen.'

'Who, I? Nay, fear me not. Pah! I scorn a tale-bearer.'

'Away with you, then; I hear the clash of armour.'

This put life and mettle into the heels of the Bonnet-maker, who, turning his back on the supposed danger, set off at a pace which the Smith never doubted would speedily bring him to his own house.

'Here is another chattering jay to deal with,' thought the Smith; 'but I have a hank over him too. The minstrels have a *fabliau* of a daw with borrowed feathers; why, this Oliver is the very bird, and, by Saint Dunstan, if he lets his chattering tongue run on at my expense, I will so pluck him as never hawk plumed a partridge. And this he knows.'

As these reflections thronged on his mind, he had nearly reached the end of his journey; and with the glee-maiden still hanging on his cloak, exhausted partly with fear, partly with fatigue, he at length arrived at the middle of the Wynd, which was honoured with his own habitation, and from which, in the uncertainty that then attended the application of surnames, he derived one of his own appellatives. Here, on ordinary days, his furnace was seen to blaze, and four half-stripped knaves stunned the neighbourhood with the clang of hammer and stithy. But Saint Valentine's holiday was an excuse for these men of steel having shut the shop, and for the present being absent on their own errands of devotion or pleasure. The house which adjoined to the smithy called Henry its owner; and though it was small, and situated in a narrow street, yet, as there was a large garden with fruit-trees behind it, it constituted upon the whole a pleasant dwelling. The Smith, instead of knocking or calling, which would have drawn neighbours to doors and windows, drew out a pass-key of his own fabrication, then a great and envied curiosity, and, opening the door of his house, introduced his companion into his habitation.

The apartment which received Henry and the glee-maiden was the kitchen, which served amongst those of the Smith's station for the family sitting-room, although one or two individuals, like Simon Glover, had an eating-room apart from that in which their victuals were prepared. In the corner of this apartment, which was arranged with an unusual attention to cleanliness, sat an old woman, whose neatness of attire, and the precision with which her scarlet plaid was drawn over her head, so as to descend to her shoulders on each side, might have indicated a higher rank than that of Lucky Shoolbred, the Smith's housekeeper. Yet such and no other was her designation; and not having attended mass in the morning, she was quietly reposing herself by the side of the fire, her beads, half told, hanging over her left arm; her prayers, half said, loitering upon her tongue; her eyes, half closed, resigning themselves to slumber, while she expected the return of her foster-son, without being able to guess at what hour it was likely to happen. She started up at the sound of his entrance, and bent her eye upon his companion, at first with a look of the utmost surprise, which gradually was exchanged for one expressive of great displeasure.

'Now, the saints bless mine eyesight, Henry Smith!' she exclaimed, very devoutly.

'Amen, with all my heart. Get some food ready presently, good nurse, for I fear me this traveller hath dined but lightly.'

'And again I pray that Our Lady would preserve my eyesight from the wicked delusions of Satan!'

'So be it, I tell you, good woman. But what is the use of all this pattering and prayering? Do you not hear me? or will you not do as I bid you?'

'It must be himself, then, whatever is of it! But O! it is more like the foul Fiend in his likeness, to have such a baggage hanging upon his cloak. O, Harry Smith, men called you a wild lad for less things! But who would ever have thought that Harry would have brought a light leman under the roof that sheltered his worthy mother, and where his own nurse has dwelt for thirty years!'

'Hold your peace, old woman, and be reasonable,' said the Smith. 'This glee-woman is no leman of mine, nor of any other person that I know of; but she is going off for Dundee tomorrow by the boats, and we must give her quarters till then.'

'Quarters!' said the old woman. 'You may give quarters to such cattle if you like it yourself, Harry Wynd; but the same house shall not quarter that trumpery quean and me, and of that you may assure yourself.'

'Your mother is angry with me,' said Louise, misconstruing the connection of the parties. 'I will not remain to give her any offence. If there is a stable or a cowhouse, an empty stall will be bed enough for Charlot and me.'

'Ay, ay; I am thinking it is the quarters you are best used to,' said Dame Shoolbred.

'Hark ye, Nurse Shoolbred,' said the Smith. 'You know I love you for your own sake, and for my mother's; but by Saint Dunstan, who was a saint of my own craft, I will have the command of my own house; and if you leave me without any better reason but your own nonsensical suspicions, you must think how you will have the door open to you when you return; for you shall have no help of mine, I promise you.'

'Aweel, my bairn, and that will never make me risk the honest name I have kept for sixty years. It was never your mother's custom, and it shall never be mine, to take up with ranters, and jugglers, and singing women; and I am not so far to seek for a dwelling, that the same roof should cover me and a tramping princess like that.'

With this the refractory *gouvernante* began in great hurry to adjust her tartan mantle for going abroad, by pulling it so far forwards as to conceal the white linen cap, the edges of which bordered her shrivelled but still fresh and healthful countenance. This done, she seized upon a staff, the trusty companion of her journeys, and was fairly trudging towards the door, when the Smith stepped between her and the passage.

'Wait at least, old woman, till we have cleared scores. I owe you for fee and bountith.'

'An' that's e'en a dream of your own fool's head. What fee or bountith am I to take from the son of your mother, that fed, clad, and bielded me as if I had been a sister?'

'And well you repay it, nurse, leaving her only child at his utmost need.'

This seemed to strike the obstinate old woman with compunction. She stopped and looked at her master and the minstrel alternately; then shook her head, and seemed about to resume her motion towards the door.

'I only receive this poor wanderer under my roof,' urged the Smith, 'to save her from the prison and the scourge.'

'And why should you save her?' said the inexorable Dame Shoolbred. 'I daresay she has deserved them both as well as ever thief deserved a hempen collar.'

'For aught I know she may, or she may not. But she cannot deserve to be scourged to death, or imprisoned till she is starved to death; and that is the lot of them that the Black Douglas bears maltalent against.'

'And you are going to thraw the Black Douglas for the sake of a glee-woman? This will be the worst of your feuds yet. O, Henry Gow, there is as much iron in your head as in your anvil!'

'I have sometimes thought this myself, Mistress Shoolbred; but if I do get a cut or two on this new argument, I wonder who is to cure them, if you run away from me like a scared wild-goose? Ay, and moreover, who is to receive my bonnie bride, that I hope to bring up the Wynd one of these days?'

'Ah, Harry, Harry,' said the old woman, shaking her head, 'this is not the way to prepare an honest man's house for a young bride; you should be guided by modesty and discretion, and not by chambering and wantonness.'

'I tell you again, this poor creature is nothing to me. I wish her only to be safely taken care of; and I think the boldest Border-man in Perth will respect the bar of my door as much as the gate of Carlisle Castle. I am going down to Sim Glover's. I may stay there all night, for the Highland cub is run back to the hills, like a wolf-whelp as he is, and so there is a bed to spare, and father Simon will make me welcome to the use of it. You will remain with this poor creature, feed her, and protect her during the night, and I will call on her before day; and thou mayest go with her to the boat thyself an thou wilt, and so thou wilt set the last eyes on her at the same time I shall.'

'There is some reason in that,' said Dame Shoolbred; 'though why you should put your reputation in risk for a creature that would find a lodging for a silver twopence and less matter is a mystery to me.'

'Trust me with that, old woman, and be kind to the girl.'

'Kinder than she deserves, I warrant you; and truly, though I little like the company of such cattle, yet I think I am less like to take harm from her than you—unless she be a witch, indeed, which may well come to be the case, as the devil is very powerful with all his wayfaring clanjamfray.'

'No more a witch than I am a warlock,' said the honest Smith; 'a poor broken-hearted thing, that, if she hath done evil, has dreed a sore weird for it. Be kind to her. And you, my musical damsel, I will call on you to-morrow morning and carry you to the water-side. This old woman will treat you kindly, if you say nothing to her but what becomes honest ears.'

The poor minstrel had listened to this dialogue without understanding more than its general tendency; for though she spoke English well, she had acquired the language in England itself, and the northern dialect was then, as now, of a broader and harsher character. She saw, however, that she was to remain with the old lady, and, meekly folding her arms on her bosom, bent her head with humility. She next looked towards the Smith with a strong expression of thankfulness, then, raising her eyes to heaven, took his passive hand, and seemed about to kiss the sinewy fingers, in token of deep and affectionate gratitude. But Dame Shoolbred did not give licence to the stranger's mode of expressing her feelings. She thrust in between them; and, pushing poor Louise aside, said, 'No, no, I'll have none of that work. Go into the chimney-nook, mistress, and when Harry Smith's gone, if you must have hands to kiss, you shall kiss mine as long as you like. And you, Harry, away down to Sim Glover's, for if pretty Mistress Catharine hears of the company you have brought home, she may chance to like them as little as I do. What's the matter now? Is the man demented? Are you going out without your buckler, and the whole town in misrule?'

'You are right, dame,' said the armourer; and, throwing the buckler over his broad shoulders, he departed from his house without abiding further question.

CHAPTER XIII.

How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years.

BYRON.

WE must now leave the lower parties in our historical drama, to attend to the incidents

which took place among those of a higher rank and greater importance.

We pass from the hut of an armourer to the council-room of a monarch; and resume our story just when, the tumult beneath being settled, the angry chieftains were summoned to the royal presence. They entered, displeased with and lowering upon each other, each so exclusively filled with his own fancied injuries as to be equally unwilling and unable to attend to reason or argument. Albany alone, calm and crafty, seemed prepared to use their dissatisfaction for his own purposes, and turn each incident, as it should occur, to the furtherance of his own indirect ends.

The king's irresolution, although it amounted even to timidity, did not prevent his assuming the exterior bearing becoming his situation. It was only when hard pressed, as in the preceding scene, that he lost his apparent composure. In general, he might be driven from his purpose, but seldom from his dignity of manner. He received Albany, Douglas, March, and the prior (those ill-assorted members of his motley council), with a mixture of courtesy and loftiness, which reminded each haughty peer that he stood in the presence of his sovereign, and compelled him to do the beseeming reverence.

Having received their salutations, the king motioned them to be seated; and they were obeying his commands when Rothsay entered. He walked gracefully up to his father, and, kneeling at his footstool, requested his blessing. Robert, with an aspect in which fondness and sorrow were ill disguised, made an attempt to assume a look of reproof, as he laid his hand on the youth's head, and said, with a sigh, 'God bless thee, my thoughtless boy, and make thee a wiser man in thy future years!'

'Amen, my dearest father!' said Rothsay, in a tone of feeling such as his happier moments often evinced. He then kissed the royal hand with the reverence of a son and a subject; and instead of taking a place at the council board, remained standing behind the king's chair, in such a position that he might, when he chose, whisper into his father's ear.

The king next made a sign to the Prior of Saint Dominic to take his place at the table, on which there were writing materials, which, of all the subjects present, Albany excepted, the churchman was alone able to use.* The king then opened the purpose of their meeting by saying, with much dignity—

'Our business, my lords, respected these unhappy dissensions in the Highlands, which, we learn by our latest messengers, are about to occasion the waste and destruction of the country, even within a few miles of this our own court. But near as this trouble is, our ill fate, and the instigations of wicked men, have raised up one yet nearer, by throwing strife and contention among the citizens of Perth and those attendants who follow your lordships, and others our knights and nobles. I must first, therefore, apply to yourselves, my lords, to know why our court is disturbed by such unseemly contendings, and by what means they ought to be repressed? Brother of Albany, do you tell us first your sentiments on this matter.'

'Sir, our royal sovereign and brother,' said the duke, 'being in attendance on your Grace's person when the fray began, I am not acquainted with its origin.'

'And for me,' said the prince, 'I heard no worse war-cry than a minstrel wench's ballad, and saw no more dangerous bolts flying than hazel-nuts.'

'And I,' said the Earl of March, 'could only perceive that the stout citizens of Perth had in chase some knaves who had assumed the Bloody Heart on their shoulders. They ran too fast to be actually the men of the Earl of Douglas.'

Douglas understood the sneer, but only replied to it by one of those withering looks with which he was accustomed to intimate his mortal resentment. He spoke, however, with haughty composure.

'My liege,' he said, 'must of course know it is Douglas who must answer to this heavy charge; for when was there strife or bloodshed in Scotland, but there were foul tongues to asperse a Douglas or a Douglas's man, as having given cause to them. We have here goodly witnesses. I speak not of my Lord of Albany, who has only said that he was, as well becomes him, by your Grace's side. And I say nothing of my Lord of Rothsay, who, as befits his rank, years, and understanding, was cracking nuts with a strolling musician. He smiles. Here he may say his pleasure. I shall not forget a tie which he seems to have forgotten. But here is my Lord of March, who saw my followers flying before the clowns of Perth! I can tell that Earl, that the followers of the Bloody Heart advance or retreat when their chieftain commands, and the good of Scotland requires.'

'And I can answer,' exclaimed the equally proud Earl of March, his blood rushing into his face, when the king interrupted him—

'Peace, angry lords,' said the king, 'and remember in whose presence you stand! And you, my Lord of Douglas, tell us, if you can, the cause of this mutiny, and why your followers, whose general good services we are most willing to acknowledge, were thus active in private brawl!'

'I obey, my lord,' said Douglas, slightly stooping a head that seldom bent. 'I was passing from my lodgings in the Carthusian convent, through the High Street of Perth, with a few of my ordinary retinue, when I beheld some of the baser sort of citizens crowding around the Cross, against which there was nailed this placard and that which accompanies it.'

He took from a pocket in the bosom of his buff-coat a human hand and a piece of parchment. The king was shocked and agitated.

'Read,' he said, 'good Father Prior, and let that ghastly spectacle be removed.'

The prior read a placard to the following purpose:—

'Inasmuch as the house of a citizen of Perth was assaulted last night, being Saint Valentine's Eve, by a sort of disorderly night-walkers, belong-

* Mr. Chrystal Croftangry had not, it must be confessed, when he indited this sentence, exactly recollected the character of Rothsay, as given by the Prior of Lochleven:—

A seemly person in stature,
Cunnand into letterature.
B. ix. cap 23.

ing to some company of the strangers now resident in the Fair City; And whereas this hand was struck from one of the lawless limmers in the fray that ensued, the Provost and Magistrates have directed that it should be nailed to the Cross, in scorn and contempt of those by whom such brawl was occasioned. And if any one of knightly degree shall say that this our act is wrongfully done, I, Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns, knight, will justify this cartel in knightly weapons, within the barrace; or if any one of meaner birth shall deny what is here said, he shall be met with by a citizen of the Fair City of Perth, according to his degree. And so God and Saint John protect the Fair City!'

'You will not wonder, my lord,' resumed Douglas, 'that when my almoner had read to me the contents of so insolent a scroll, I caused one of my squires to pluck down a trophy so disgraceful to the chivalry and nobility of Scotland. Whereupon, it seems, some of these saucy burghers took licence to hoot and insult the hindmost of my train, who wheeled their horses on them, and would soon have settled the feud, but for my positive command that they should follow me in as much peace as the rascally vulgar would permit. And thus they arrived here in the guise of flying men, when, with my command to repel force by force, they might have set fire to the four corners of this wretched burgh, and stifled the insolent churls, like malicious fox-cubs in a burning brake of furze.'

There was a silence when Douglas had done speaking, until the Duke of Rothsay answered, addressing his father, —

'Since the Earl of Douglas possesses the power of burning the town where your Grace holds your court, so soon as the Provost and he differ about a night riot, or the terms of a cartel, I am sure we ought all to be thankful that he has not the will to do so.'

'The Duke of Rothsay,' said Douglas, who seemed resolved to maintain command of his temper, 'may have reason to thank Heaven in a more serious tone than he now uses, that the Douglas is as true as he is powerful. This is a time when the subjects in all countries rise against the law. We have heard of the insurgents of the Jacquerie* in France; and of Jack Straw, and Hob Miller, and Parson Ball among the Southron,† and we may be sure there is fuel enough to catch such a flame, were it spreading to our frontiers. When I see peasants challenging noblemen, and nailing the hands of the gentry to their city Cross, I will not say I *fear* mutiny, for that would be false; but I foresee, and will stand well prepared for it.'

'And why does my Lord Douglas say,' answered the Earl of March, 'that this cartel has been done by churls? I see Sir Patrick Charteris's name there, and he, I ween, is of no churl's blood. The Douglas himself, since he takes the matter so warmly, might lift Sir Patrick's gauntlet without soiling of his honour.'

'My Lord of March,' replied Douglas, 'should speak but of what he understands. I do no injustice to the descendant of the Red Rover, when I say he is too slight to be weighed with the Douglas. The heir of Thomas Randolph might have a better claim to his answer.'

'And, by my honour, it shall not miss for want of my asking the grace,' said the Earl of March, pulling his glove off.

'Stay, my lord,' said the king. 'Do us not so gross an injury as to bring your feud to mortal defiance here; but rather offer your ungloved hand in kindness to the noble Earl, and embrace in token of your mutual fealty to the crown of Scotland.'

'Not so, my liege,' answered March. 'Your Majesty may command me to return my gauntlet, for that and all the armour it belongs to are at your command, while I continue to hold my earldom of the crown of Scotland; but when I clasp Douglas it must be with a mailed hand. Farewell, my liege. My counsels here avail not, nay, are so unfavourably received that perhaps further stay were unwholesome for my safety. May God keep your Highness from open enemies and treacherous friends! I am for my Castle of Dunbar, from whence I think you will soon hear news. Farewell to you, my Lords of Albany and Douglas; you are playing a high game, look you play it fairly. Farewell, poor thoughtless prince, who are sporting like a fawn within spring of a tiger! Farewell, all. George of Dunbar sees the evil he cannot remedy. Adieu, all.'

The king would have spoken, but the accents died on his tongue, as he received from Albany a look cautioning him to forbear. The Earl of March left the apartment, receiving the mute salutations of the members of the council whom he had severally addressed, excepting from Douglas alone, who returned to his farewell speech a glance of contemptuous defiance.

'The recreant goes to betray us to the Southron,' he said; 'his pride rests on his possessing that sea-worn hold‡ which can admit the English into Lothian. Nay, look not alarmed, my liege, I will hold good what I say; nevertheless, it is yet time. Speak but the word, my liege; say but, "Arrest him," and March shall not yet cross the Earn on his treacherous journey.'

'Nay, gallant Earl,' said Albany, who wished rather that the two powerful lords should counterbalance each other than that one should obtain a decisive superiority, 'that were too hasty counsel. The Earl of March came hither on the King's warrant of safe-conduct, and it may not consist with my royal brother's honour to break it. Yet, if your lordship can bring any detailed proof'——

Here they were interrupted by a flourish of trumpets.

'His Grace of Albany is unwontedly scrupulous to-day,' said Douglas. 'But it skills not wasting words. The time is past; these are March's trumpets, and I warrant me he rides at flight-speed so soon as he passes the South Port. We shall hear of him in time; and if it be as I have conjectured, he shall be met with though all England backed his treachery.'

'Nay, let us hope better of the noble Earl,' said the king, no way displeased that the quarrel betwixt March and Douglas had seemed to

* [A rising of the peasants of central France, against the nobles, who bitterly oppressed them, in 1358.]

† [An allusion to the rising of the English peasantry known as Wat Tyler's Rebellion, in 1381.]

‡ The Castle of Dunbar.

obliterate the traces of the disagreement betwixt Rothsay and his father-in-law; 'he hath a fiery but not a sullen temper. In some things he has been—I will not say wronged—but disappointed; and something is to be allowed to the resentment of high blood armed with great power. But, thank Heaven, all of us who remain are of one sentiment, and, I may say, of one house; so that, at least, our councils cannot now be thwarted with disunion. Father Prior, I pray you take your writing materials, for you must as usual be our clerk of council. And now to business, my lords; and our first object of consideration must be this Highland cumber.'

'Between the Clan Chattan and the Clan Quhele,' said the prior; 'which, as our last advices from our brethren at Dunkeld inform us, is ready to break out into a more formidable warfare than has yet taken place between these sons of Belial, who speak of nothing else than of utterly destroying one another. Their forces are assembling on each side, and not a man, claiming in the tenth degree of kindred, but must repair to the brattach * of his tribe, or stand to the punishment of fire and sword. The fiery cross † hath flitted about like a meteor in every direction, and awakened strange and unknown tribes beyond the distant Murray Firth —may Heaven and Saint Dominic be our protection! But if your lordships cannot find a remedy for the evil, it will spread broad and wide, and the patrimony of the Church must in every direction be exposed to the fury of these Amalekites, with whom there is as little devotion to Heaven as there is pity or love to their neighbours—may Our Lady be our guard! We hear some of them are yet utter heathens, and worship Mahound and Termagaunt.'

'My lords and kinsmen,' said Robert, 'ye have heard the urgency of this case, and may desire to know my sentiments before you deliver what your own wisdom shall suggest. And, in sooth, no better remedy occurs to me than to send two commissioners, with full power from us to settle such debates as be among them; and at the same time to charge them, as they shall be answerable to the law, to lay down their arms and forbear all practices of violence against each other.'

'I approve of your Grace's proposal,' said Rothsay; 'and I trust the good Prior will not refuse the venerable station of envoy upon this peace-making errand. And his reverend brother, the Abbot of the Carthusian convent, must contend for an honour which will certainly add two most eminent recruits to the large army of martyrs, since the Highlanders little regard the distinction betwixt clerk and layman in the ambassadors whom you send to them.'

'My royal Lord of Rothsay,' said the prior, 'if I am destined to the blessed crown of martyrdom, I shall be doubtless directed to the path by which I am to attain it. Meantime, if you speak in jest, may Heaven pardon you, and give you light to perceive that it were better buckle on your arms to guard the possessions of the Church, so perilously endangered, than to employ your wit in taunting her ministers and servants.'

'I taunt no one, Father Prior,' said the youth yawning; 'nor have I much objection to taking arms, excepting that they are a somewhat cumbrous garb, and in February a furred mantle is more suiting to the weather than a steel corselet. And it irks me the more to put on cold harness in this nipping weather, that, would but the Church send a detachment of their saints (and they have some Highland ones well known in this district, and, doubtless, used to the climate), they might fight their own battles, like merry Saint George of England. But I know not how it is, we hear of their miracles when they are propitiated, and of their vengeance if any one trespasses on their patrimonies, and these are urged as reasons for extending their lands by large largesses; and yet if there come down but a band of twenty Highlanders, bell, book, and candle make no speed, and the belted baron must be fain to maintain the Church in possession of the lands which he has given to her, as much as if he himself still enjoyed the fruits of them.'

'Son David,' said the king, 'you give an undue licence to your tongue.'

'Nay, sir, I am mute,' replied the prince. 'I had no purpose to disturb your Highness, or displease the Father Prior, who, with so many miracles at his disposal, will not face, as it seems, a handful of Highland caterans.'

'We know,' said the prior, with suppressed indignation, 'from what source these vile doctrines are derived, which we hear with horror from the tongue that now utters them. When princes converse with heretics, their minds and manners are alike corrupted. They show themselves in the streets as the companions of maskers and harlots, and in the council as the scorners of the Church and of holy things.'

'Peace, good father!' said the king. 'Rothsay shall make amends for what he has idly spoken. Alas! let us take counsel in friendly fashion, rather than resemble a mutinous crew of mariners in a sinking vessel, when each is more intent on quarrelling with his neighbours than in assisting the exertions of the forlorn master for the safety of the ship. My Lord of Douglas, your house has been seldom to lack, when the crown of Scotland desired either wise counsel or manly achievement; I trust you will help us in this strait?'

'I can only wonder that the strait should exist, my lord,' answered the haughty Douglas. 'When I was entrusted with the lieutenancy of the kingdom, there were some of these wild clans came down from the Grampians. I troubled not the Council about the matter, but made the sheriff, Lord Ruthven, get to horse with the forces of the Carse—the Hays, the Lindsays, the Ogilvies, and other gentlemen. By Saint Bride! when it was steel coat to frieze mantle, the thieves knew what lances were good for, and whether swords had edges or no. There were some three hundred of their best bonnets, besides that of their chief, Donald Cormac,‡ left on the

* Standard, literally cloth. The Lowland language still retains the word *brat*, which, however, is only now applicable to a child's pinafore, or a coarse towel. To such mean offices may words descend.

† [See the account in Scott's own poem of The Lady of the Lake.]

‡ Some authorities place this skirmish so late as 1443.

Moor of Thorn and in Rochinroy wood; and as many were gibbeted at Houghman Stairs, which has still the name from the hangman work that was done there. This is the way men deal with thieves in my country; and if gentler methods will succeed better with these Earish knaves, do not blame Douglas for speaking his mind. You smile, my Lord of Rothsay. May I ask how I have a second time become your jest, before I have replied to the first which you passed on me?'

'Nay be not wrathful, my good Lord of Douglas,' answered the prince; 'I did but smile to think how your princely retinue would dwindle, if every thief were dealt with as the poor Highlanders at Houghman Stairs.'

The king again interfered, to prevent the earl from giving an angry reply. 'Your lordship,' said he to Douglas, 'advises wisely, that we should trust to arms when these men come out against our subjects on the fair and level plain; but the difficulty is to put a stop to their disorders while they continue to lurk within their mountains. I need not tell you that the Clan Chattan and the Clan Quhele are great confederacies, consisting each of various tribes, who are banded together each to support their own separate league, and who of late have had dissensions, which have drawn blood wherever they have met, whether individually or in bands. The whole country is torn to pieces by their restless feuds.'

'I cannot see the evil of this,' said the Douglas; 'the ruffians will destroy each other, and the deer of the Highlands will increase as the men diminish. We shall gain as hunters the exercise we lose as warriors.'

'Rather say, that the wolves will increase as the men diminish,' replied the king.

'I am content,' said Douglas; 'better wild wolves than wild caterans. Let there be strong forces maintained along the Earish frontier, to separate the quiet from the disturbed country. Confine the fire of civil war within the Highlands; let it spend its uncontrolled fury, and it will be soon burnt out for want of fuel. The survivors will be humbled, and will be more obedient to a whisper of your Grace's pleasure than their fathers, or the knaves that now exist, have been to your strictest commands.'

'This is wise but ungodly counsel,' said the prior, shaking his head; 'I cannot take it upon my conscience to recommend it. It is wisdom, but it is the wisdom of Achitophel, crafty at once and cruel.'

'My heart tells me so,' said the king, laying his hand on his breast; 'my heart tells me that it will be asked of me at the awful day, "Robert Stuart, where are the subjects I have given thee?" it tells me that I must account for them all, Saxon and Gael, Lowland, Highland, and Border man; that I will not be required to answer for those alone who have wealth and knowledge, but for those also who were robbers because they were poor, and rebels because they were ignorant.'

'Your Highness speaks like a Christian king,' said the prior; 'but you bear the sword as well as the sceptre, and this present evil is of a kind which the sword must cure.'

'Hark ye, my lords,' said the prince, looking up as if a gay thought had suddenly struck him. 'Suppose we teach these savage mountaineers a strain of chivalry? It were no hard matter to bring these two great commanders, the captain of the Clan Chattan and the chief of the no less doughty race of the Clan Quhele, to defy each other to mortal combat. They might fight here in Perth; we would lend them horse and armour; thus their feud would be stanched by the death of one, or probably both, of the villains (for I think both would break their necks in the first charge), my father's godly desire of saving blood would be attained, and we should have the pleasure of seeing such a combat between two salvage knights, for the first time in their lives wearing breeches, and mounted on horses, as has not been heard of since the days of King Arthur.'

'Shame upon you, David!' said the king. 'Do you make the distress of your native country, and the perplexity of our councils, a subject for buffoonery?'

'If you will pardon me, royal brother,' said Albany, 'I think that, though my princely nephew hath started this thought in a jocular manner, there may be something wrought out of it which might greatly remedy this pressing evil.'

'Good brother,' replied the king, 'it is unkind to expose Rothsay's folly by pressing further his ill-timed jest. We know the Highland clans have not our customs of chivalry, nor the habit or mode of doing battle which these require.'

'True, your Grace,' answered Albany; 'yet I speak not in scorn, but in serious earnest. True, the mountaineers have not our forms and mode of doing battle in the lists, but they have those which are as effectual to the destruction of human life; and so that the mortal game is played, and the stake won and lost, what signifies it whether these Gael fight with sword and lance, as becomes belted knights, or with sandbags, like the crestless churls of England, or butcher each other with knives and skeans in their own barbarous fashion? Their habits, like our own, refer all disputed rights and claims to the decision of battle. They are as vain, too, as they are fierce; and the idea that these two clans would be admitted to combat in presence of your Grace and of your court will readily induce them to refer their difference to the fate of battle, even were such rough arbitrament less familiar to their customs, and that in any such numbers as shall be thought most convenient. We must take care that they approach not the court, save in such a fashion and number that they shall not be able to surprise us; and that point being provided against, the more that shall be admitted to combat upon either side, the greater will be the slaughter among their bravest and most stirring men, and the more the chance of the Highlands being quiet for some time to come.'

'This were a bloody policy, brother,' said the king; 'and again I say, that I cannot bring my conscience to countenance the slaughter of these rude men, that are so little better than so many benighted heathens.'

'And are their lives more precious,' asked

Albany, 'than those of nobles and gentlemen who by your Grace's licence are so frequently admitted to fight in barrace, either for the satisfying of disputes at law or simply to acquire honour?'

The king, thus hard pressed, had little to say against a custom so engrafted upon the laws of the realm and the usages of chivalry as the trial by combat; and he only replied, 'God knows, I have never granted such licence as you urge me with, unless with the greatest repugnance; and that I never saw men have strife together to the effusion of blood, but I could have wished to appease it with the shedding of my own.'

'But, my gracious lord,' said the prior, 'it seems that, if we follow not some such policy as this of my Lord of Albany, we must have recourse to that of the Douglas; and, at the risk of the dubious event of battle, and with the certainty of losing many excellent subjects, do, by means of the Lowland swords, that which these wild mountaineers will otherwise perform with their own hand. What says my Lord of Douglas to the policy of his Grace of Albany?'

'Douglas,' said the haughty lord, 'never counselled that to be done by policy which might be attained by open force. He remains by his opinion, and is willing to march at the head of his own followers, with those of the barons of Perthshire and the Carse, and either bring these Highlanders to reason or subjection, or leave the body of a Douglas among their savage wildernesses.'

'It is nobly spoken, my Lord of Douglas,' said Albany; 'and well might the King rely upon thy undaunted heart and the courage of thy resolute followers. But see you not how soon you may be called elsewhere, where your presence and services are altogether indispensable to Scotland and her monarch? Marked you not the gloomy tone in which the fiery March limited his allegiance and faith to our sovereign here present to that space for which he was to remain King Robert's vassal? And did not you yourself suspect that he was plotting a transference of his allegiance to England? Other chiefs, of subordinate power and inferior fame, may do battle with the Highlanders; but if Dunbar admit the Percys and their Englishmen into our frontiers, who will drive them back if the Douglas be elsewhere?'

'My sword,' answered Douglas, 'is equally at the service of his Majesty on the frontier or in the deepest recesses of the Highlands. I have seen the backs of the proud Percy and George of Dunbar ere now, and I may see them again. And if it is the King's pleasure I should take measures against this probable conjunction of stranger and traitor, I admit that, rather than trust to an inferior or feebler hand the important task of settling the Highlands, I would be disposed to give my opinion in favour of the policy of my Lord of Albany, and suffer those savages to carve each other's limbs, without giving barons and knights the trouble of hunting them down.'

'My Lord of Douglas,' said the prince, who seemed determined to omit no opportunity to gall his haughty father-in-law, 'does not choose to leave to us Lowlanders even the poor crumbs of honour which might be gathered at the expense of the Highland kerne, while he, with his Border chivalry, reaps the full harvest of victory over the English. But Percy hath seen men's backs as well as Douglas; and I have known as great wonders as that he who goes forth to seek such wool should come back shorn.'

'A phrase,' said Douglas, 'well becoming a prince, who speaks of honour with a wandering harlot's scrip in his bonnet by way of favour.'

'Excuse it, my lord,' said Rothsay; 'men who have matched unfittingly become careless in the choice of those whom they love *par amours*. The chained dog must snatch at the nearest bone.'

'Rothsay, my unhappy son!' exclaimed the king, 'art thou mad? or wouldst thou draw down on thee the full storm of a king and father's displeasure?'

'I am dumb,' returned the prince, 'at your Grace's command.'

'Well, then, my Lord of Albany,' said the king, 'since such is your advice, and since Scottish blood must flow, how, I pray you, are we to prevail on these fierce men to refer their quarrel to such a combat as you propose?'

'That, my liege,' said Albany, 'must be the result of more mature deliberation. But the task will not be difficult. Gold will be needful to bribe some of the bards and principal counsellors and spokesmen. The chiefs, moreover, of both these leagues must be made to understand that, unless they agree to this amicable settlement'——

'*Amicable*, brother!' said the king, with emphasis.

'Ay, amicable, my liege,' replied his brother, 'since it is better the country were placed in peace, at the expense of losing a score or two of Highland kernes, than remain at war till as many thousands are destroyed by sword, fire, famine, and all the extremities of mountain battle. To return to the purpose: I think that the first party to whom the accommodation is proposed will snatch at it eagerly; that the other will be ashamed to reject an offer to rest the cause on the swords of their bravest men; that the national vanity, and factious hate to each other, will prevent them from seeing our purpose in adopting such a rule of decision; and that they will be more eager to cut each other to pieces than we can be to halloo them on.—And now, as our councils are finished, so far as I can aid, I will withdraw.'

'Stay yet a moment,' said the prior, 'for I also have a grief to disclose, of a nature so black and horrible that your Grace's pious heart will hardly credit its existence; and I state it mournfully, because, as certain as that I am an unworthy servant of Saint Dominic, it is the cause of the displeasure of Heaven against this poor country, by which our victories are turned into defeat, our gladness into mourning, our councils distracted with disunion, and our country devoured by civil war.'

'Speak, reverend Prior,' said the king; 'assuredly if the cause of such evils be in me, or in my house, I will take instant care to their removal.'

He uttered these words with a faltering voice,

and eagerly waited for the prior's reply, in the dread, no doubt, that it might implicate Rothsay in some new charge of folly or vice. His apprehensions perhaps deceived him, when he thought he saw the churchman's eye rest for a moment on the prince, before he said, in a solemn tone, 'Heresy, my noble and gracious liege, heresy is among us. She snatches soul after soul from the congregation, as wolves steal lambs from the sheepfold.'

'There are enough of shepherds to watch the fold,' answered the Duke of Rothsay. 'Here are four convents of regular monks alone around this poor hamlet of Perth, and all the secular clergy besides. Methinks a town so well garrisoned should be fit to keep out an enemy.'

'One traitor in a garrison, my lord,' answered the prior, 'can do much to destroy the security of a city which is guarded by legions; and if that one traitor is, either from levity, or love of novelty, or whatever other motive, protected and fostered by those who should be most eager to expel him from the fortress, his opportunities of working mischief will be incalculably increased.'

'Your words seem to aim at some one in this presence, Father Prior,' said the Douglas; 'if at me, they do me foul wrong. I am well aware that the Abbot of Aberbrothock hath made some ill-advised complaints, that I suffered not his beeves to become too many for his pastures, or his stock of grain to burst the girnels of the monastery, while my followers lacked beef, and their horses corn. But bethink you, the pastures and cornfields which produced that plenty were bestowed by my ancestors on the house of Aberbrothock, surely not with the purpose that their descendant should starve in the midst of it; and neither will he, by Saint Bride! But for heresy and false doctrine,' he added, striking his large hand heavily on the council-table, 'who is it that dare tax the Douglas? I would not have poor men burned for silly thoughts; but my hand and sword are ever ready to maintain the Christian faith.'

'My lord, I doubt it not,' said the prior; 'so hath it ever been with your most noble house. For the Abbot's complaints, they may pass to a second day. But what we now desire is a commission to some noble lord of State, joined to others of Holy Church, to support by strength of hand, if necessary, the inquiries which the reverend official of the bounds, and other grave prelates, my unworthy self being one, are about to make into the cause of the new doctrines, which are now deluding the simple, and depraving the pure and precious faith approved by the Holy Father and his reverend predecessors.'

'Let the Earl of Douglas have a royal commission to this effect,' said Albany; 'and let there be no exception whatever from his jurisdiction, saving the royal person. For my own part, although conscious that I have neither in act nor thought received or encouraged a doctrine which Holy Church hath not sanctioned, yet I should blush to claim an immunity under the blood-royal of Scotland, lest I should seem to be seeking refuge against a crime so horrible.'

'I will have nought to do with it,' said Douglas; 'to march against the English and the Southron traitor March is task enough for me. Moreover, I am a true Scotsman, and will not give way to aught that may put the Church of Scotland's head farther into the Roman yoke, or make the baron's coronet stoop to the mitre and cowl. Do you, therefore, most noble Duke of Albany, place your own name in the commission; and I pray your Grace so to mitigate the zeal of the men of Holy Church, who may be associated with you, that there be no over zealous dealings; for the smell of a faggot on the Tay would bring back the Douglas from the walls of York.'

The duke hastened to give the earl assurance that the commission should be exercised with lenity and moderation.

'Without a question,' said King Robert, 'the commission must be ample; and, did it consist with the dignity of our crown, we would not ourselves decline its jurisdiction. But we trust that, while the thunders of the Church are directed against the vile authors of these detestable heresies, there shall be measures of mildness and compassion taken with the unfortunate victims of their delusions.'

'Such is ever the course of Holy Church, my lord,' said the Prior of Saint Dominic's.

'Why, then, let the commission be expedited with due care, in name of our brother Albany, and such others as shall be deemed convenient,' said the king. 'And now once again let us break up our council; and, Rothsay, come thou with me, and lend me thine arm; I have matter for thy private ear.'

'Ho, la!' here exclaimed the prince, in the tone in which he would have addressed a managed horse.

'What means this rudeness, boy?' said the king; 'wilt thou never learn reason and courtesy?'

'Let me not be thought to offend, my liege,' said the prince; 'but we are parting without learning what is to be done in the passing strange adventure of the dead hand, which the Douglas hath so gallantly taken up. We shall sit but uncomfortably here at Perth, if we are at variance with the citizens.'

'Leave that to me,' said Albany. 'With some little grant of lands and money, and plenty of fair words, the burghers may be satisfied for this time; but it were well that the barons and their followers, who are in attendance on the court, were warned to respect the peace within burgh.'

'Surely we would have it so,' said the king; 'let strict orders be given accordingly.'

'It is doing the churls but too much grace,' said the Douglas; 'but be it at your Highness's pleasure. I take leave to retire.'

'Not before you taste a flagon of Gascon wine, my lord!' said the king.

'Pardon,' replied the earl, 'I am not athirst; and I drink not for fashion, but either for need or for friendship.' So saying, he departed.

The king, as if relieved by his absence, turned to Albany, and said, 'And now, my lord, we should chide this truant Rothsay of ours; yet he hath served us so well at council, that we must receive his merits as some atonement for his follies.'

'I am happy to hear it,' answered Albany,

with a countenance of pity and incredulity, as if he knew nothing of the supposed services.

'Nay, brother, you are dull,' said the king, 'for I will not think you envious. Did you not note that Rothsay was the first to suggest the mode of settling the Highlands, which your experience brought indeed into better shape, and which was generally approved of; and even now we had broken up, leaving a main matter unconsidered, but that he put us in mind of the affray with the citizens?'

'I nothing doubt, my liege,' said the Duke of Albany, with the acquiescence which he saw was expected, 'that my royal nephew will soon emulate his father's wisdom.'

'Or,' said the Duke of Rothsay, 'I may find it easier to borrow from another member of my family that happy and comfortable cloak of hypocrisy which covers all vices, and then it signifies little whether they exist or not.'

'My lord Prior,' said the duke, addressing the Dominican, 'we will for a moment pray your reverence's absence. The King and I have that to say to the prince which must have no further audience, not even yours.'

The Dominican bowed and withdrew.

When the two royal brothers and the prince were left together, the king seemed in the highest degree embarrassed and distressed; Albany sullen and thoughtful; while Rothsay himself endeavoured to cover some anxiety under his usual appearance of levity. There was a silence of a minute. At length Albany spoke.

'Royal brother,' he said, 'my princely nephew entertains with so much suspicion any admonition coming from my mouth, that I must pray your Grace yourself to take the trouble of telling him what it is most fitting he should know.'

'It must be some unpleasant communication indeed which my Lord of Albany cannot wrap up in honeyed words,' said the prince.

'Peace with thine effrontery, boy,' answered the king passionately. 'You asked but now of the quarrel with the citizens. Who caused that quarrel, David? what men were those who scaled the window of a peaceful citizen and liegeman, alarmed the night with torch and outcry, and subjected our subjects to danger and affright?'

'More fear than danger, I fancy,' answered the prince; 'but how can I of all men tell who made this nocturnal disturbance?'

'There was a follower of thine own there,' continued the king; 'a man of Belial, whom I will have brought to condign punishment.'

'I have no follower, to my knowledge, capable of deserving your Highness's displeasure,' answered the prince.

'I will have no evasions, boy. Where wert thou on Saint Valentine's Eve?'

'It is to be hoped that I was serving the good saint as a man of mould might,' answered the young man carelessly.

'Will my royal nephew tell us how his master of the horse was employed upon that holy eve?' said the Duke of Albany.

'Speak, David; I command thee to speak,' said the king.

'Ramorny was employed in my service. I think that answer may satisfy my uncle.'

'But it will not satisfy *me*,' said the angry father. 'God knows I never coveted man's blood, but that Ramorny's head I will have, if law can give it. He has been the encourager and partaker of all thy numerous vices and follies. I will take care he shall be so no more. Call MacLouis with a guard!'

'Do not injure an innocent man,' interposed the prince, desirous at every sacrifice to preserve his favourite from the menaced danger. 'I pledge my word that Ramorny was employed in business of mine, therefore could not be engaged in this brawl.'

'False equivocator that thou art!' said the king, presenting to the prince a ring; 'behold the signet of Ramorny, lost in the infamous affray! It fell into the hands of a follower of the Douglas, and was given by the Earl to my brother. Speak not for Ramorny, for he dies; and go thou from my presence, and repent the flagitious counsels which could make thee stand before me with a falsehood in thy mouth. O, shame, David, shame! as a son, thou hast lied to thy father; as a knight, to the head of thy order.'

The prince stood mute, conscience-struck, and self-convicted. He then gave way to the honourable feelings which at bottom he really possessed, and threw himself at his father's feet.

'The false knight,' he said, 'deserves degradation, the disloyal subject death; but O, let the son crave from the father pardon for the servant who did not lead him into guilt, but who reluctantly plunged himself into it at his command! Let me bear the weight of my own folly, but spare those who have been my tools rather than my accomplices. Remember, Ramorny was preferred to my service by my sainted mother.'

'Name her not, David, I charge thee!' said the king; 'she is happy that she never saw the child of her love stand before her doubly dishonoured, by guilt and by falsehood.'

'I am indeed unworthy to name her,' said the prince; 'and yet, my dear father, in her name I must petition for Ramorny's life.'

'If I might offer my counsel,' said the Duke of Albany, who saw that a reconciliation would soon take place betwixt the father and son, 'I would advise that Ramorny be dismissed from the prince's household and society, with such further penalty as his imprudence may seem to merit. The public will be contented with his disgrace, and the matter will be easily accommodated or stifled, so that his Highness do not attempt to screen his servant.'

'Wilt thou, for my sake, David,' said the king, with a faltering voice and the tear in his eye, 'dismiss this dangerous man? for my sake, who could not refuse thee the heart out of my bosom?'

'It shall be done, my father—done instantly,' the prince replied; and, seizing the pen, he wrote a hasty dismissal of Ramorny from his service, and put it into Albany's hands. 'I would I could fulfil all your wishes as easily, my royal father,' he added, again throwing himself at the king's feet, who raised him up, and fondly folded him in his arms.

Albany scowled, but was silent; and it was not till after the space of a minute or two that

he said, 'This matter being so happily accommodated, let me ask if your Majesty is pleased to attend the even-song service in the chapel?'

'Surely,' said the king. 'Have I not thanks to pay to God, who has restored union to my family? You will go with us, brother?'

'So please your Grace to give me leave of absence—No,' said the duke. 'I must concert with the Douglas, and others, the manner in which we may bring these Highland vultures to our lure.'

Albany retired to think over his ambitious projects, while the father and son attended divine service, to thank God for their happy reconciliation.

CHAPTER XIV.

Will you go to the Hielands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
Will you go to the Hielands wi' me?
Will you go to the Hielands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
My bride and my darling to be?
OLD BALLAD.

A FORMER chapter opened in the royal confessional; we are now to introduce our readers to a situation somewhat similar, though the scene and persons are very different. Instead of a Gothic and darkened apartment in a monastery, one of the most beautiful prospects in Scotland lay extended beneath the hill of Kinnoul, and at the foot of a rock which commanded the view in every direction sat the Fair Maid of Perth, listening in an attitude of devout attention to the instructions of a Carthusian monk, in his white gown and scapular, who concluded his discourse with prayer, in which his proselyte devoutly joined.

When they had finished their devotions, the priest sat for some time with his eyes fixed on the glorious prospect, of which even the early and chilly season could not conceal the beauties, and it was some time ere he addressed his attentive companion.

'When I behold,' he said at length, 'this rich and varied land, with its castles, churches, convents, stately palaces, and fertile fields, these extensive woods, and that noble river, I know not, my daughter, whether most to admire the bounty of God or the ingratitude of man. He hath given us the beauty and fertility of the earth, and we have made the scene of his bounty a charnel-house and a battlefield. He hath given us power over the elements, and skill to erect houses for comfort and defence, and we have converted them into dens for robbers and ruffians.'

'Yet surely, my father, there is room for comfort,' replied Catharine, 'even in the very prospect we look upon. Yonder four goodly convents, with their churches and their towers, which tell the citizens, with brazen voice, that they should think on their religious duties;—their inhabitants, who have separated themselves from the world, its pursuits and its pleasures, to dedicate themselves to the service of Heaven,—all bear witness, that if Scotland be a bloody and a sinful land, she is yet alive and sensible to the claims which religion demands of the human race.'

'Verily, daughter,' answered the priest, 'what you say seems truth; and yet, nearly viewed, too much of the comfort you describe will be found delusive. It is true there was a period in the Christian world, when good men, maintaining themselves by the work of their hands, assembled together, not that they might live easily or sleep softly, but that they might strengthen each other in the Christian faith, and qualify themselves to be teachers of the word to the people. Doubtless there are still such to be found in the holy edifices on which we now look. But it is to be feared that the love of many has waxed cold. Our churchmen have become wealthy, as well by the gifts of pious persons as by the bribes which wicked men have given in their ignorance, imagining that they can purchase that pardon by endowments to the Church which Heaven has only offered to sincere penitents. And thus, as the Church waxeth rich, her doctrines have unhappily become dim and obscure, as a light is less seen if placed in a lamp of chased gold than beheld through a screen of glass. God knows, if I see these things and mark them, it is from no wish of singularity, or desire to make myself a teacher in Israel; but because the fire burns in my bosom, and will not permit me to be silent. I obey the rules of my order, and withdraw not myself from its austerities. Be they essential to our salvation, or be they mere formalities, adopted to supply the want of real penitence and sincere devotion, I have promised, nay, vowed, to observe them; and they shall be respected by me the more that otherwise I might be charged with regarding my bodily ease, when Heaven is my witness how lightly I value what I may be called on to act or suffer, if the purity of the Church could be restored, or the discipline of the priesthood replaced in its primitive simplicity.'

'But, my father,' said Catharine, 'even for these opinions men term you a Lollard and a Wickliffite, and say it is your desire to destroy churches and cloisters, and restore the religion of Heathenesse.'

'Even so, my daughter, am I driven to seek refuge in hills and rocks, and must be presently contented to take my flight amongst the rude Highlanders, who are thus far in a more gracious state than those I leave behind me, that theirs are crimes of ignorance, not of presumption. I will not omit to take such means of safety and escape from their cruelty as Heaven may open to me; for while such appear, I shall account it a sign that I have still a service to accomplish. But when it is my Master's pleasure, he knows how willingly Clement Blair will lay down a vilified life upon earth, in humble hope of a blessed exchange hereafter. But wherefore dost thou look northward so anxiously, my child? Thy young eyes are quicker than mine; dost thou see any one coming?'

'I look, father, for the Highland youth Conachar, who will be thy guide to the hills, where his father can afford thee a safe, if a rude retreat. This he has often promised, when we spoke of you and of your lessons; I fear he is now in company where he will soon forget them.'

'The youth hath sparkles of grace in him,'

said Father Clement; 'although those of his race are usually too much devoted to their own fierce and savage customs, to endure with patience either the restraints of religion or those of the social law. Thou hast never told me, daughter, how, contrary to all the usages either of the burgh or of the mountains, this youth came to reside in thy father's house?'

'All I know touching that matter,' said Catharine, 'is, that his father is a man of consequence among those hill-men, and that he desired as a favour of my father, who hath had dealings with them in the way of his merchandise, to keep this youth for a certain time; and that it is only two days since they parted, as Conachar was to return home to his own mountains.'

'And why has my daughter,' demanded the priest, 'maintained such a correspondence with this Highland youth, that she should know how to send for him when she desired to use his services in my behalf? Surely this is much influence for a maiden to possess over such a wild colt as this youthful mountaineer.'

Catharine blushed, and answered with hesitation, 'If I have had any influence with Conachar, Heaven be my witness, I have only exerted it to enforce upon his fiery temper compliance with the rules of civil life. It is true, I have long expected that you, my father, would be obliged to take to flight, and I, therefore, had agreed with him that he should meet me at this place, as soon as he should receive a message from me, with a token which I yesterday despatched. The messenger was a light-footed boy of his own clan, whom he used sometimes to send on errands into the Highlands.'

'And am I then to understand, daughter, that this youth, so fair to the eye, was nothing more dear to you than as you desired to enlighten his mind and reform his manners?'

'It is so, my father, and no otherwise,' answered Catharine; 'and perhaps I did not do well to hold intimacy with him, even for his instruction and improvement. But my discourse never led farther.'

'Then have I been mistaken, my daughter; for I thought I had seen in thee of late some change of purpose, and some wishful regards looking back to this world, of which you were at one time resolved to take leave.'

Catharine hung down her head, and blushed more deeply than ever, as she said, 'Yourself, father, were used to remonstrate against my taking the veil.'

'Nor do I now approve of it, my child,' said the priest. 'Marriage is an honourable state appointed by Heaven as the regular means of continuing the race of man; and I read not in the Scriptures, what human inventions have since affirmed, concerning the superior excellence of a state of celibacy. But I am jealous of thee, my child, as a father is of his only daughter, lest thou shouldst throw thyself away upon some one unworthy of thee. Thy parent, I know, less nice in thy behalf than I am, countenances the addresses of that fierce and riotous reveller whom they call Henry of the Wynd. He is rich, it may be; but a haunter of idle and debauched company — a common prize-fighter, who has shed human blood like water. Can such a one be a fit mate for Catharine Glover? And yet report says they are soon to be united.'

The Fair Maid of Perth's complexion changed from red to pale, and from pale to red, as she hastily replied, 'I think not of him; though it is true some courtesies have passed betwixt us of late, both as he is my father's friend, and as being, according to the custom of the time, my Valentine.'

'Your Valentine, my child?' said Father Clement. 'And can your modesty and prudence have trifled so much with the delicacy of your sex as to place yourself in such a relation to such a man as this artificer? Think you that this Valentine, a godly saint and Christian bishop, as he is said to have been, ever countenanced a silly and unseemly custom, more likely to have originated in the heathen worship of Flora or Venus, when mortals gave the names of deities to their passions, and studied to excite instead of restraining them?'

'Father,' said Catharine, in a tone of more displeasure than she had ever before assumed to the Carthusian, 'I know not upon what ground you tax me thus severely for complying with a general practice, authorized by universal custom and sanctioned by my father's authority. I cannot feel it kind that you put such misconstruction upon me.'

'Forgive me, daughter,' answered the priest mildly, 'if I have given you offence. But this Henry Gow, or Smith, is a forward, licentious man, to whom you cannot allow any uncommon degree of intimacy and encouragement, without exposing yourself to worse misconstruction,— unless, indeed, it be your purpose to wed him, and that very shortly.'

'Say no more of it, my father,' said Catharine. 'You give me more pain than you would desire to do; and I may be provoked to answer otherwise than as becomes me. Perhaps I have already had cause enough to make me repent my compliance with an idle custom. At any rate, believe that Henry Smith is nothing to me; and that even the idle intercourse arising from Saint Valentine's Day is utterly broken off.'

'I am rejoiced to hear it, my daughter,' replied the Carthusian; 'and must now prove you on another subject, which renders me most anxious on your behalf. You cannot yourself be ignorant of it, although I could wish it were not necessary to speak of a thing so dangerous, even before these surrounding rocks, cliffs, and stones. But it must be said. Catharine, you have a lover in the highest rank of Scotland's sons of honour?'

'I know it, father,' answered Catharine composedly. 'I would it were not so.'

'So would I also,' said the priest, 'did I see in my daughter only the child of folly, which most young women are at her age, especially if possessed of the fatal gift of beauty. But as thy charms, to speak the language of an idle world, have attached to thee a lover of such high rank, so I know that thy virtue and wisdom will maintain the influence over the prince's mind which thy beauty hath acquired.'

'Father,' replied Catharine, 'the prince is a licentious gallant, whose notice of me tends only to my disgrace and ruin. Can you, who seemed but now afraid that I acted imprudently in entering into an ordinary exchange of courtesies with one of my own rank, speak with patience of the sort of correspondence which the heir of Scotland dares to fix upon me? Know that it is but two nights since he, with a party of his debauched followers, would have carried me by force from my father's house, had I not been rescued by that same rash-spirited Henry Smith, who, if he be too hasty in venturing on danger on slight occasion, is always ready to venture his life on behalf of innocence, or in resistance of oppression. It is well my part to do him that justice.'

'I should know something of that matter,' said the monk, 'since it was my voice that sent him to your assistance. I had seen the party as I passed your door, and was hastening to the civil power in order to raise assistance, when I perceived a man's figure coming slowly towards me. Apprehensive it might be one of the ambuscade, I stepped behind the buttresses of the chapel of Saint John, and seeing, from a nearer view, that it was Henry Smith, I guessed which way he was bound, and raised my voice in an exhortation, which made him double his speed.'

'I am beholden to you, father,' said Catharine; 'but all this, and the Duke of Rothsay's own language to me, only show that the prince is a profligate young man, who will scruple no extremities which may promise to gratify an idle passion, at whatever expense to its object. His emissary Ramorny has even had the insolence to tell me that my father shall suffer for it, if I dare to prefer being the wife of an honest man, to becoming the loose paramour of a married prince. So I see no other remedy than to take the veil, or run the risk of my own ruin and my poor father's. Were there no other reason, the terror of these threats, from a man so notoriously capable of keeping his word, ought as much to prevent my becoming the bride of any worthy man as it should prohibit me from unlatching his door to admit murderers. O, good father! what a lot is mine! and how fatal am I likely to prove to my affectionate parent, and to any one with whom I might ally my unhappy fortunes!'

'Be yet of good cheer, my daughter,' said the monk; 'there is comfort for thee even in this extremity of apparent distress. Ramorny is a villain, and abuses the ear of his patron. The prince is unhappily a dissipated and idle youth; but unless my grey hairs have been strangely imposed on, his character is beginning to alter. He hath been awakened to Ramorny's baseness, and deeply regrets having followed his evil advice. I believe, nay, I am well convinced, that his passion for you has assumed a nobler and purer character, and that the lessons he has heard from me on the corruptions of the Church and of the times will, if enforced from your lips, sink deeply into his heart, and perhaps produce fruits for the world to wonder as well as rejoice at. Old prophecies have said that Rome shall fall by the speech of a woman.'

'These are dreams, father,' said Catharine; 'the visions of one whose thoughts are too much on better things, to admit his thinking justly upon the ordinary affairs of earth. When we have looked long at the sun, everything else can only be seen indistinctly.'

'Thou art over hasty, my daughter,' said Clement, 'and thou shalt be convinced of it. The prospects which I am to open to thee were unfit to be exposed to one of a less firm sense of virtue, or a more ambitious temper. Perhaps it is not fit that, even to you, I should display them; but my confidence is strong in thy wisdom and thy principles. Know, then, that there is much chance that the Church of Rome will dissolve the union which she has herself formed, and release the Duke of Rothsay from his marriage with Marjory Douglas.'

Here he paused.

'And if the Church hath power and will to do this,' replied the maiden, 'what influence can the divorce of the Duke from his wife produce on the fortunes of Catharine Glover?'

She looked at the priest anxiously as she spoke, and he had some apparent difficulty in framing his reply, for he looked on the ground while he answered her.

'What did beauty do for Margaret Logie? Unless our fathers have told us falsely, it raised her to share the throne of David Bruce.'

'Did she live happy, or die regretted, good father?' asked Catharine, in the same calm and steady tone.

'She formed her alliance from temporal and perhaps criminal ambition,' replied Father Clement; 'and she found her reward in vanity and vexation of spirit. But had she wedded with the purpose that the believing wife should convert the unbelieving, or confirm the doubting, husband, what then had been her reward? Love and honour upon earth, and an inheritance in heaven with Queen Margaret, and those heroines who have been the nursing-mothers of the Church.'

Hitherto Catharine had sat upon a stone beside the priest's feet, and looked up to him as she spoke or listened; but now, as if animated by calm yet settled feelings of disapprobation, she rose up, and, extending her hand towards the monk as she spoke, addressed him with a countenance and voice which might have become a cherub, pitying, and even as much as possible sparing, the feelings of the mortal whose errors he is commissioned to rebuke.

'And is it even so?' she said; 'and can so much of the wishes, hopes, and prejudices of this vile world affect him who may be called to-morrow to lay down his life for opposing the corruptions of a wicked age and backsliding priesthood? Can it be the severely virtuous Father Clement, who advises his child to aim at, or even to think of, the possession of a throne and a bed, which cannot become vacant but by an act of crying injustice to the present possessor? Can it be the wise reformer of the Church who wishes to rest a scheme, in itself so unjust, upon a foundation so precarious? Since when is it, good father, that the principal libertine has altered his morals so much, to be likely to court in honourable fashion the daughter of a Perth

artisan? Two days must have wrought this change; for only that space has passed since he was breaking into my father's house at midnight, with worse mischief in his mind than that of a common robber. And think you that, if Rothsay's heart could dictate so mean a match, he could achieve such a purpose without endangering both his succession and his life, assailed by the Douglas and March at the same time, for what they must receive as an act of injury and insult to both their houses? O, Father Clement, where was your principle, where your prudence, when they suffered you to be bewildered by so strange a dream, and placed the meanest of your disciples in the right thus to reproach you?'

The old man's eyes filled with tears, as Catharine, visibly and painfully affected by what she had said, became at length silent.

'By the mouths of babes and sucklings,' he said, 'hath He rebuked those who would seem wise in their generation. I thank Heaven, that hath taught me better thoughts than my own vanity suggested, through the medium of so kind a monitress. Yes, Catharine, I must not hereafter wonder or exclaim, when I see those whom I have hitherto judged too harshly, struggling for temporal power, and holding all the while the language of religious zeal. I thank thee, daughter, for thy salutary admonition, and I thank Heaven that sent it by thy lips rather than those of a sterner reprover.'

Catharine had raised her head to reply, and bid the old man, whose humiliation gave her pain, be comforted, when her eyes were arrested by an object close at hand. Among the crags and cliffs which surrounded this place of seclusion, there were two which stood in such close contiguity, that they seemed to have been portions of the same rock, which, rended by lightning or by an earthquake, now exhibited a chasm of about four feet in breadth betwixt the masses of stone. Into this chasm an oak-tree had thrust itself, in one of the fantastic frolics which vegetation often exhibits in such situations. The tree, stunted and ill-fed, had sent its roots along the face of the rock in all directions to seek for supplies, and they lay like military lines of communication, contorted, twisted, and knotted, like the immense snakes of the Indian archipelago. As Catharine's look fell upon the curious complication of knotty branches and twisted roots, she was suddenly sensible that two large eyes were visible among them, fixed and glaring at her, like those of a wild animal in ambush. She started, and without speaking pointed out the object to her companion, and, looking herself with more strict attention, could at length trace out the bushy red hair and shaggy beard, which had hitherto been concealed by the drooping branches and twisted roots of the tree.

When he saw himself discovered, the Highlander, for such he proved, stepped forth from his lurking-place, and, stalking forward, displayed a colossal person, clothed in a purple, red, and green-checked plaid, under which he wore a jacket of bull's hide. His bow and arrows were at his back, his head was bare, and a large quantity of tangled locks, like the glibbs of the Irish, served to cover the head, and supplied all the purposes of a bonnet. His belt bore a sword and dagger, and he had in his hand a Danish pole-axe, more recently called a Lochaber-axe. Through the same rude portal advanced, one by one, four men more, of similar size, and dressed and armed in the same manner.

Catharine was too much accustomed to the appearance of the inhabitants of the mountains, so near to Perth, to permit herself to be alarmed, as another Lowland maiden might have been on the same occasion. She saw with tolerable composure these gigantic forms arrange themselves in a semicircle around and in front of the monk and herself, all bending upon them in silence their large fixed eyes, expressing, as far as she could judge, a wild admiration of her beauty. She inclined her head to them, and uttered imperfectly the usual words of a Highland salutation. The elder and leader of the party returned the greeting, and then again remained silent and motionless. The monk told his beads; and even Catharine began to have strange fears for her personal safety, and anxiety to know whether they were to consider themselves at personal freedom. She resolved to make the experiment, and moved forward as if to descend the hill; but when she attempted to pass the line of Highlanders, they extended their pole-axes betwixt each other, so as effectually to occupy each opening through which she could have passed.

Somewhat disconcerted, yet not dismayed, for she could not conceive that any evil was intended, she sat down upon one of the scattered fragments of rock, and bade the monk, standing by her side, be of good courage.

'If I fear,' said Father Clement, 'it is not for myself; for whether I be brained with the axes of these wild men, like an ox when, worn out by labour, he is condemned to the slaughter, or whether I am bound with their bow-strings, and delivered over to those who will take my life with more cruel ceremony, it can but little concern me, if they suffer thee, dearest daughter, to escape uninjured.'

'We have neither of us,' replied the Maiden of Perth, 'any cause for apprehending evil; and here comes Conachar, to assure us of it.'

Yet as she spoke she almost doubted her own eyes; so altered were the manner and attire of the handsome, stately, and almost splendidly dressed youth, who, springing like a roebuck from a cliff of considerable height, lighted just in front of her. His dress was of the same tartan worn by those who had first made their appearance, but closed at the throat and elbows with a necklace and armlets of gold. The hauberk which he wore over his person was of steel, but so clearly burnished that it shone like silver. His arms were profusely ornamented; and his bonnet, besides the eagle's feather marking the quality of chief, was adorned with a chain of gold, wrapped several times around it, and secured by a large clasp, glistening with pearls. His brooch, by which the tartan mantle, or plaid, as it is now called, was secured on the shoulder, was also of gold, large and curiously carved. He bore no weapon in his hand, excepting a small sapling stick, with a hooked head. His whole appearance and gait, which

used formerly to denote a sullen feeling of conscious degradation, was now bold, forward, and haughty; and he stood before Catharine with smiling confidence, as if fully conscious of his improved appearance, and waiting till she should recognise him.

'Conachar,' said Catharine, desirous to break this state of suspense, 'are these your father's men?'

'No, fair Catharine,' answered the young man. 'Conachar is no more, unless in regard to the wrongs he has sustained, and the vengeance which they demand. I am Ian Eachin MacIan, son to the Chief of the Clan Quhele. I have moulted my feathers, as you see, when I changed my name. And for these men, they are not my father's followers, but mine. You see only one-half of them collected: they form a band consisting of my foster-father and eight sons, who are my body-guard, and the children of my belt, who breathe but to do my will. But Conachar,' he added, in a softer tone of voice, 'lives again so soon as Catharine desires to see him; and while he is the young Chief of the Clan Quhele to all others, he is to her as humble and obedient as when he was Simon Glover's apprentice. See, here is the stick I had from you when we nutted together in the sunny braes of Lednoch,* when autumn was young in the year that is gone. I would not exchange it, Catharine, for the truncheon of my tribe.'

While Eachin thus spoke, Catharine began to doubt in her own mind whether she had acted prudently in requesting the assistance of a bold young man, elated, doubtless, by his sudden elevation from a state of servitude to one which she was aware gave him extensive authority over a very lawless body of adherents.

'You do not fear me, fair Catharine?' said the young chief, taking her hand. 'I suffered my people to appear before me for a few minutes, that I might see how you could endure their presence; and methinks you regarded them as if you were born to be a chieftain's wife.'

'I have no reason to fear wrong from Highlanders,' said Catharine firmly; 'especially as I thought Conachar was with them. Conachar has drunk of our cup and eaten of our bread; and my father has often had traffic with Highlanders, and never was there wrong or quarrel betwixt him and them.'

'No?' replied Hector, for such is the Saxon equivalent for Eachin, 'what! never when he took the part of the Gow Chrom' (the bandy-legged Smith) 'against Eachin MacIan?—Say nothing to excuse it, and believe it will be your own fault if I ever again allude to it. But you had some command to lay upon me; speak, and you shall be obeyed.'

Catharine hastened to reply; for there was something in the young chief's manner and language which made her desire to shorten the interview.

'Eachin,' she said, 'since Conachar is no longer your name, you ought to be sensible that in claiming, as I honestly might, a service from my equal, I little thought that I was addressing a person of such superior power and consequence. You, as well as I, have been obliged to the religious instruction of this good man. He is now in great danger; wicked men have accused him with false charges, and he is desirous to remain in safety and concealment till the storm shall pass away.'

'Ha! the good Clerk Clement! Ay, the worthy clerk did much for me, and more than my rugged temper was capable to profit by. I will be glad to see any one in the town of Perth persecute one who hath taken hold of MacIan's mantle!'

'It may not be safe to trust too much to that,' said Catharine. 'I nothing doubt the power of your tribe; but when the Black Douglas takes up a feud, he is not to be scared by the shaking of a Highland plaid.'

The Highlander disguised his displeasure at this speech with a forced laugh.

'The sparrow,' he said, 'that is next the eye, seems larger than the eagle that is perched on Bengoile. You fear the Douglases most, because they sit next to you. But be it as you will. You will not believe how wide our hills, and vales, and forests extend beyond the dusky barrier of yonder mountains, and you think all the world lies on the banks of the Tay. But this good clerk shall see hills that could hide him were all the Douglases on his quest—ay, and he shall see men enough also, to make them glad to get once more southward of the Grampians. And wherefore should you not go with the good man? I will send a party to bring him in safety from Perth, and we will set up the old trade beyond Loch Tay—only no more cutting out of gloves for me. I will find your father in hides, but I will not cut them, save when they are on the creatures' backs.'

'My father will come one day and see your housekeeping, Conachar—I mean, Hector. But times must be quieter, for there is feud between the town's-people and the followers of the noblemen, and there is speech of war about to break out in the Highlands.'

'Yes, by Our Lady, Catharine! and were it not for that same Highland war, you should not thus put off your Highland visit, my pretty mistress. But the race of the hills are no longer to be divided into two nations. They will fight like men for the supremacy, and he who gets it will deal with the King of Scotland as an equal, not as a superior. Pray that the victory may fall to MacIan, my pious Saint Catharine, for thou shalt pray for one who loves thee dearly.'

'I will pray for the right,' said Catharine; 'or rather, I will pray that there be peace on all sides. Farewell, kind and excellent Father Clement; believe I shall never forget thy lessons; remember me in thy prayers. But how wilt thou be able to sustain a journey so toilsome?'

'They shall carry him if need be,' said Hector, 'if we go far without finding a horse for him. But you, Catharine—it is far from hence to Perth. Let me attend you thither as I was wont.'

'If you were as you were wont, I would not refuse your escort. But gold brooches and bracelets are perilous company, when the Liddesdale and Annandale lancers are riding as throng upon the highway as the leaves at Hallowmass; and

* [A river in Perthshire.]

there is no safe meeting between Highland tartans and steel jackets.'

She hazarded this remark, as she somewhat suspected that, in casting his slough, young Eachin had not entirely surmounted the habits which he had acquired in his humbler state, and that, though he might use bold words, he would not be rash enough to brave the odds of numbers, to which a descent into the vicinity of the city would be likely to expose him. It appeared that she judged correctly; for, after a farewell, in which she compounded for the immunity of her lips by permitting him to kiss her hand, she returned towards Perth, and could obtain at times, when she looked back, an occasional glance of the Highlanders, as, winding through the most concealed and impracticable paths, they bent their way towards the north.

She felt in part relieved from her immediate anxiety, as the distance increased betwixt her and these men, whose actions were only directed by the will of their chief, and whose chief was a giddy and impetuous boy. She apprehended no insult on her return to Perth from the soldiery of any party whom she might meet; for the rules of chivalry were in those days a surer protection to a maiden of decent appearance than an escort of armed men, whose cognisance might not be acknowledged as friendly by any other party whom they might chance to encounter. But more remote dangers pressed on her apprehension. The pursuit of the licentious prince was rendered formidable by threats which his unprincipled counsellor Ramorny had not shunned to utter against her father, if she persevered in her coyness. These menaces, in such an age and from such a character, were deep grounds for alarm; nor could she consider the pretensions to her favour which Conachar had scarce repressed during his state of servitude, and seemed now to avow boldly, as less fraught with evil, since there had been repeated incursions of the Highlanders into the very town of Perth, and citizens had, on more occasions than one, been made prisoners and carried off from their own houses, or had fallen by the claymore in the very streets of their city. She feared, too, her father's importunity on behalf of the Smith, of whose conduct on Saint Valentine's Day unworthy reports had reached her; and whose suit, had he stood clear in her good opinion, she dared not listen to while Ramorny's threats of revenge upon her father rung on her ear. She thought on these various dangers with the deepest apprehension, and an earnest desire to escape from them and herself by taking refuge in the cloister; but saw no possibility of obtaining her father's consent to the only course from which she expected peace and protection.

In the course of these reflections we cannot discover that she very distinctly regretted that her perils attended her because she was the *Fair Maid of Perth;* this was one point which marked that she was not yet altogether an angel; and perhaps it was another, that, in despite of Henry Smith's real or supposed delinquencies, a sigh escaped from her bosom when she thought upon Saint Valentine's dawn.

CHAPTER XV.

O for a draught of power to steep
The soul of agony in sleep! BERTHA.

WE have shown the secrets of the confessional; those of the sick chamber are not hidden from us. In a darkened apartment, where salves and medicines showed that the leech had been busy in his craft, a tall thin form lay on a bed, arrayed in a nightgown belted around him, with pain on his brow, and a thousand stormy passions agitating his bosom. Everything in the apartment indicated a man of opulence and of expense. Henbane Dwining, the apothecary, who seemed to have the care of the patient, stole with a crafty and cat-like step from one corner of the room to another, busying himself with mixing medicines and preparing dressings. The sick man groaned once or twice, on which the leech, advancing to his bedside, asked whether these sounds were a token of the pain of his body or of the distress of his mind.

'Of both, thou poisoning varlet,' said Sir John Ramorny; 'and of being encumbered with thy accursed company.'

'If that is all, I can relieve your knighthood of one of these ills, by presently removing myself elsewhere. Thanks to the feuds of this boisterous time, had I twenty hands instead of these two poor servants of my art' (displaying his skinny palms), 'there is enough of employment for them; well-requited employment, too, where thanks and crowns contend which shall best pay my services; while you, Sir John, wreak upon your chirurgeon the anger you ought only to bear against the author of your wound.'

'Villain, it is beneath me to reply to thee,' said the patient; 'but every word of thy malignant tongue is a dirk, inflicting wounds which set all the medicines of Arabia at defiance.'

'Sir John, I understand you not; but if you give way to these tempestuous fits of rage, it is impossible but fever and inflammation must be the result.'

'Why then dost thou speak in a sense to chafe my blood? Why dost thou name the supposition of thy worthless self having more hands than nature gave thee, while I, a knight and gentleman, am mutilated like a cripple?'

'Sir John,' replied the chirurgeon, 'I am no divine, nor a mainly obstinate believer in some things which divines tell us. Yet I may remind you that you have been kindly dealt with; for if the blow which has done you this injury had lighted on your neck, as it was aimed, it would have swept your head from your shoulders, instead of amputating a less considerable member.'

'I wish it had, Dwining — I wish it had lighted as it was addressed. I should not then have seen a policy, which had spun a web so fine as mine, burst through by the brute force of a drunken churl. I should not have been reserved to see horses which I must not mount, lists which I must no longer enter, splendours which I cannot hope to share, or battles which I must not take part in. I should not, with a man's passions for power and for strife, be set

to keep place among the women, despised by them, too, as a miserable, impotent cripple, unable to aim at obtaining the favour of the sex.'

'Supposing all this to be so, I will yet pray of your knighthood to remark,' replied Dwining, still busying himself with arranging the dressings of the wounds, 'that your eyes, which you must have lost with your head, may, being spared to you, present as rich a prospect of pleasure as either ambition or victory in the lists or in the field, or the love of woman itself, could have proposed to you.'

'My sense is too dull to catch thy meaning, leech,' replied Ramorny. 'What is this precious spectacle reserved to me in such a shipwreck?'

'The dearest that mankind knows,' replied Dwining; and then in the accent of a lover who utters the name of his beloved mistress, and expresses his passion for her in the very tone of his voice, he added the word 'REVENGE!'

The patient had raised himself on his couch to listen with some anxiety for the solution of the physician's enigma. He laid himself down again as he heard it explained, and after a short pause asked, 'In what Christian college learned you this morality, good Master Dwining?'

'In no Christian college,' answered his physician; 'for though it is privately received in most, it is openly and manfully adopted in none. But I have studied among the sages of Granada, where the fiery-souled Moor lifts high his deadly dagger as it drops with his enemy's blood, and avows the doctrine which the pallid Christian practises, though, coward-like, he dare not name it.'

'Thou art, then, a more high-souled villain than I deemed thee,' said Ramorny.

'Let that pass,' answered Dwining. 'The waters that are the stillest are also the deepest; and the foe is most to be dreaded who never threatens till he strikes. You knights and men-at-arms go straight to your purpose with sword in hand. We, who are clerks, win our access with a noiseless step and an indirect approach, but attain our object not less surely.'

'And I,' said the knight, 'who have trod to my revenge with a mailed foot, which made all echo around it, must now use such a slipper as thine? Ha!'

'He who lacks strength,' said the wily mediciner, 'must attain his purpose by skill.'

'And tell me sincerely, mediciner, wherefore thou wouldst read me these devil's lessons? Why wouldst thou thrust me faster or farther on to my vengeance than I may seem to thee ready to go of my own accord? I am old in the ways of the world, man; and I know that such as thou do not drop words in vain, or thrust themselves upon the dangerous confidence of men like me, save with the prospect of advancing some purpose of their own. What interest hast thou in the road, whether peaceful or bloody, which I may pursue on these occurrents?'

'In plain dealing, Sir Knight, though it is what I seldom use,' answered the leech, 'my road to revenge is the same with yours.'

'With mine, man!' said Ramorny, with a tone of scornful surprise. 'I thought it had been high beyond thy reach. Thou aim at the same revenge with Ramorny!'

'Ay, truly,' replied Dwining; 'for the smithy churl under whose blow you have suffered has often done me despite and injury. He has thwarted me in counsel, and despised me in action. His brutal and unhesitating bluntness is a living reproach to the subtlety of my natural disposition. I fear him, and I hate him.'

'And you hope to find an active coadjutor in me?' said Ramorny, in the same supercilious tone as before. 'But know, the artisan fellow is too low in degree to be to me either the object of hatred or of fear. Yet he shall not escape. We hate not the reptile that has stung us, though we might shake it off the wound and tread upon it. I know the ruffian of old as a stout man-at-arms, and a pretender, as I have heard, to the favour of the scornful puppet whose beauties, forsooth, spurred us to our wise and hopeful attempt. Fiends, that direct this nether world! by what malice have ye decided that the hand which has couched a lance against the bosom of a prince, should be struck off like a sapling by the blow of a churl, and during the turmoil of a midnight riot? Well, mediciner, thus far our courses hold together, and I bid thee well believe that I will crush for thee this reptile mechanic. But do not thou think to escape me when that part of my revenge is done, which will be most easily and speedily accomplished.'

'Not, it may be, altogether so easily accomplished,' said the apothecary; 'for if your knighthood will credit me, there will be found small ease or security in dealing with him. He is the strongest, boldest, and most skilful swordsman in Perth, and all the country around it.'

'Fear nothing; he shall be met with had he the strength of Samson. But then, mark me! Hope not thou to escape my vengeance, unless thou become my passive agent in the scene which is to follow. Mark me, I say once more. I have studied at no Moorish college, and lack some of thy unbounded appetite for revenge, but yet I will have my share of vengeance. Listen to me, mediciner, while I shall thus far unfold myself; but beware of treachery, for, powerful as thy fiend is, thou hast taken lessons from a meaner devil than mine. Hearken—the master whom I have served through vice and virtue, with too much zeal for my own character, perhaps, but with unshaken fidelity to him—the very man to soothe whose frantic folly I have incurred this irreparable loss, is, at the prayer of his doating father, about to sacrifice me, by turning me out of his favour, and leaving me at the mercy of the hypocritical relative with whom he seeks a precarious reconciliation at my expense. If he perseveres in this most ungrateful purpose, thy fiercest Moors, were their complexion swarthy as the smoke of hell, shall blush to see their revenge outdone! But I will give him one more chance for honour and safety, before my wrath shall descend on him in unrelenting and unmitigated fury. There, then, thus far thou hast my confidence. Close hands on our bargain—close hands, did I say?—where is the hand that should be the pledge and representative of Ramorny's plighted word? is

it nailed on the public pillory, or flung as offal to the houseless dogs, who are even now snarling over it? Lay thy finger on the mutilated stump, then, and swear to be a faithful actor in my revenge, as I shall be in yours. How now, Sir Leech, look you pale—you, who say to Death, stand back or advance, can you tremble to think of him or to hear him named? I have not mentioned your fee, for one who loves revenge for itself requires no deeper bribe; yet if broad lands and large sums of gold can increase thy zeal in a brave cause, believe me, these shall not be lacking.'

'They tell for something in my humble wishes,' said Dwining; 'the poor man in this bustling world is thrust down like a dwarf in a crowd, and so trodden under foot; the rich and powerful rise like giants above the press, and are at ease while all is turmoil around them.'

'Then shalt thou rise above the press, mediciner, as high as gold can raise thee. This purse is weighty, yet it is but an earnest of thy guerdon.'

'And this Smith, my noble benefactor?' said the leech as he pouched the gratuity—'This Henry of the Wynd, or whatever is his name—would not the news that he hath paid the penalty of his action assuage the pain of thy knighthood's wound better than the balm of Mecca with which I have salved it?'

'He is beneath the thoughts of Ramorny; and I have no more resentment against him than I have ill-will at the senseless weapon which he swayed. But it is just thy hate should be vented upon him. Where is he chiefly to be met with?'

'That also I have considered,' said Dwining. 'To make the attempt by day in his own house were too open and dangerous, for he hath five servants who work with him at the stithy, four of them strong knaves, and all loving to their master. By night were scarce less desperate, for he hath his door strongly secured with bolt of oak and bar of iron, and ere the fastenings of his house could be forced, the neighbourhood would rise to his rescue, especially as they are still alarmed by the practice on Saint Valentine's Even.'

'O ay, true, mediciner,' said Ramorny, 'for deceit is thy nature even with me; thou knewest my hand and signet, as thou saidst, when that hand was found cast out on the street, like the disgusting refuse of a shambles. Why, having such knowledge, went'st thou with these jolter-headed citizens to consult that Patrick Charteris, whose spurs should be hacked off from his heels for the communion which he holds with paltry burghers, and whom thou brought'st here with the fools to do dishonour to the lifeless hand, which, had it held its wonted place, he was not worthy to have touched in peace or faced in war?'

'My noble patron, as soon as I had reason to know you had been the sufferer, I urged them with all my powers of persuasion to desist from prosecuting the feud, but the swaggering Smith, and one or two other hot heads, cried out for vengeance. Your knighthood must know this fellow calls himself bachelor to the Fair Maiden of Perth, and stands upon his honour to follow up her father's quarrel; but I have forestalled his market in that quarter, and that is something in earnest of revenge.'

'How mean you by that, Sir Leech?' said the patient.

'Your knighthood shall conceive,' said the mediciner, 'that this Smith doth not live within compass, but is an outlier and a galliard. I met him myself on Saint Valentine's Day, shortly after the affray between the townsfolk and the followers of Douglas. Yes, I met him sneaking through the lanes and by-passages with a common minstrel wench, with her messan and her viol on his one arm and her buxom self hanging upon the other. What thinks your honour? Is not this a trim squire, to cross a prince's love with the fairest girl in Perth, strike off the hand of a knight and baron, and become gentleman-usher to a strolling glee-woman, all in the course of the same four-and-twenty hours?'

'Marry, I think the better of him that he is so much of a gentleman's humour, clown though he be,' said Ramorny. 'I would he had been a precisian instead of a galliard, and I should have had better heart to aid thy revenge; and such revenge! revenge on a smith, in the quarrel of a pitiful manufacturer of rotten chevrons! Pah! And yet it shall be taken in full. Thou hast commenced it, I warrant me, by thine own manœuvres.'

'In a small degree only,' said the apothecary; 'I took care that two or three of the most notorious gossips in Curfew Street, who liked not to hear Catharine called the Fair Maid of Perth, should be possessed of this story of her faithful Valentine. They opened on the scent so keenly that, rather than doubt had fallen on the tale, they would have vouched for it as if their own eyes had seen it. The lover came to her father's within an hour after, and your worship may think what a reception he had from the angry Glover, for the damsel herself would not be looked upon. And thus your honour sees I had a foretaste of revenge. But I trust to receive the full draught from the hands of your lordship, with whom I am in a brotherly league, which'——

'Brotherly!' said the knight contemptuously. 'But be it so; the priests say we are all of one common earth. I cannot tell: there seems to me some difference; but the better mould shall keep faith with the baser, and thou shalt have thy revenge. Call thou my page hither.'

A young man made his appearance from the anteroom upon the physician's summons.

'Eviot,' said the knight, 'does Bonthron wait? and is he sober?'

'He is as sober as sleep can make him after a deep drink,' answered the page.

'Then fetch him hither, and do thou shut the door.'

A heavy step presently approached the apartment, and a man entered whose deficiency of height seemed made up in breadth of shoulders and strength of arm.

'There is a man thou must deal upon, Bonthron,' said the knight.

The man smoothed his rugged features, and grinned a smile of satisfaction.

'That mediciner will show thee the party.

Take such advantage of time, place, and circumstance as will insure the result; and mind you come not by the worst, for the man is the fighting Smith of the Wynd.'

'It will be a tough job,' growled the assassin; 'for if I miss my blow, I may esteem myself but a dead man. All Perth rings with the Smith's skill and strength.'

'Take two assistants with thee,' said the knight.

'Not I,' said Bonthron. 'If you double anything, let it be the reward.'

'Account it doubled,' said his master; 'but see thy work be thoroughly executed.'

'Trust me for that, Sir Knight; seldom have I failed.'

'Use this sage man's directions,' said the wounded knight, pointing to the physician. 'And hark thee, await his coming forth; and drink not till the business be done.'

'I will not,' answered the dark satellite; 'my own life depends on my blow being steady and sure. I know whom I have to deal with.'

'Vanish, then, till he summons you, and have axe and dagger in readiness.'

Bonthron nodded and withdrew.

'Will your knighthood venture to entrust such an act to a single hand?' said the mediciner, when the assassin had left the room. 'May I pray you to remember that yonder party did, two nights since, baffle six armed men?'

'Question me not, Sir Mediciner; a man like Bonthron, who knows time and place, is worth a score of confused revellers. Call Eviot. Thou shalt first exert thy powers of healing, and do not doubt that thou shalt, in the further work, be aided by one who will match thee in the art of sudden and unexpected destruction.'

The page Eviot again appeared at the mediciner's summons, and at his master's sign assisted the chirurgeon in removing the dressings from Sir John Ramorny's wounded arm. Dwining viewed the naked stump with a species of professional satisfaction, enhanced, no doubt, by the malignant pleasure which his evil disposition took in the pain and distress of his fellow-creatures. The knight just turned his eye on the ghastly spectacle, and uttered, under the pressure of bodily pain or mental agony, a groan which he would fain have repressed.

'You groan, sir,' said the leech, in his soft, insinuating tone of voice, but with a sneer of enjoyment, mixed with scorn, curling upon his lip, which his habitual dissimulation could not altogether disguise—'You groan, but be comforted. This Henry Smith knows his business: his sword is as true to its aim as his hammer to the anvil. Had a common swordsman struck this fatal blow, he had harmed the bone and damaged the muscles, so that even my art might not have been able to repair them. But Henry Smith's cut is clean, and as sure as that with which my own scalpel could have made the amputation. In a few days you will be able, with care and attention to the ordinances of medicine, to stir abroad.'

'But my hand, the loss of my hand'——

'It may be kept secret for a time,' said the mediciner. 'I have possessed two or three tattling fools, in deep confidence, that the hand which was found was that of your knighthood's groom, Black Quentin, and your knighthood knows that he has parted for Fife, in such sort as to make it generally believed.'

'I know well enough,' said Ramorny, 'that the rumour may stifle the truth for a short time. But what avails this brief delay?'

'It may be concealed till your knighthood retires for a time from the court, and then, when new accidents have darkened the recollection of the present stir, it may be imputed to a wound received from the shivering of a spear, or from a cross-bow bolt. Your slave will find a suitable device, and stand for the truth of it.'

'The thought maddens me,' said Ramorny, with another groan of mental and bodily agony. 'Yet I see no better remedy.'

'There is none other,' said the leech, to whose evil nature his patron's distress was delicious nourishment. 'In the meanwhile it is believed you are confined by the consequences of some bruises, aiding the sense of displeasure at the prince's having consented to dismiss you from his household, at the remonstrance of Albany; which is publicly known.'

'Villain, thou rack'st me!' exclaimed the patient.

'Upon the whole, therefore,' said Dwining. 'your knighthood has escaped well, and, saving the lack of your hand, a mischance beyond remedy, you ought rather to rejoice than complain; for no barber-chirurgeon in France or England could have more ably performed the operation than this churl with one downright blow.'

'I understand my obligation fully,' said Ramorny, struggling with his anger, and affecting composure; 'and if Bonthron pays him not with a blow equally downright, and rendering the aid of the leech unnecessary, say that John of Ramorny cannot requite an obligation.'

'That is spoke like yourself, noble knight!' answered the mediciner. 'And let me further say, that the operator's skill must have been vain, and the hemorrhage must have drained your life veins, but for the bandages, the cautery, and the styptics, applied by the good monks, and the poor services of your humble vassal, Henbane Dwining.'

'Peace,' exclaimed the patient, 'with thy ill-omened voice, and worse-omened name! Methinks, as thou mentionest the tortures I have undergone, my tingling nerves stretch and contract themselves as if they still actuated the fingers that once could clutch a dagger!'

'That,' explained the leech, 'may it please your knighthood, is a phenomenon well known to our profession. There have been those among the ancient sages who have thought that there still remained a sympathy between the severed nerves and those belonging to the amputated limb; and that the several fingers are seen to quiver and strain, as corresponding with the impulse which proceeds from their sympathy with the energies of the living system. Could we recover the hand from the cross, or from the custody of the Black Douglas, I would be pleased to observe this wonderful operation of occult sympathies. But I fear me one might as safely go to wrest the joint from the talons of a hungry eagle.'

'And thou mayst as safely break thy malignant jests on a wounded lion as on John of Ramorny!' said the knight, raising himself in uncontrollable indignation. 'Caitiff, proceed to thy duty; and remember, that if my hand can no longer clasp a dagger, I can command a hundred.'

'The sight of one drawn and brandished in anger were sufficient,' said Dwining, 'to consume the vital powers of your chirurgeon. But who then,' he added, in a tone partly insinuating, partly jeering, 'who would then relieve the fiery and scorching pain which my patron now suffers, and which renders him exasperated even with his poor servant for quoting the rules of healing, so contemptible, doubtless, compared with the power of inflicting wounds?'

Then, as daring no longer to trifle with the mood of his dangerous patient, the leech addressed himself seriously to salving the wound, and applied a fragrant balm, the odour of which was diffused through the apartment, while it communicated a refreshing coolness, instead of the burning heat; a change so gratifying to the fevered patient, that, as he had before groaned with agony, he could not now help sighing for pleasure, as he sank back on his couch to enjoy the ease which the dressing bestowed.

'Your knightly lordship now knows who is your friend,' said Dwining; 'had you yielded to a rash impulse, and said, "Slay me this worthless quacksalver," where, within the four seas of Britain, would you have found the man to have ministered to you as much comfort?'

'Forget my threats, good leech,' said Ramorny, 'and beware how you tempt me. Such as I brook not jests upon our agony. See thou keep thy scoffs, to pass upon misers * in the hospital.'

Dwining ventured to say no more, but poured some drops from a phial, which he took from his pocket, into a small cup of wine allayed with water.

'This draught,' said the man of art, 'is medicated to produce a sleep which must not be interrupted.'

'For how long will it last?' asked the knight.

'The period of its operation is uncertain,—perhaps till morning.'

'Perhaps for ever,' said the patient. 'Sir Mediciner, taste me that liquor presently, else it passes not my lips.'

The leech obeyed him, with a scornful smile. 'I would drink the whole with readiness; but the juice of this Indian gum will bring sleep on the healthy man as well as upon the patient, and the business of the leech requires me to be a watcher.'

'I crave your pardon, Sir Leech,' said Ramorny, looking downwards, as if ashamed to have manifested suspicion.

'There is no room for pardon where offence must not be taken,' answered the mediciner. 'An insect must thank a giant that he does not tread on him. Yet, noble knight, insects have their power of harming as well as physicians. What would it have cost me, save a moment's trouble, so to have drugged that balm as should have made your arm rot to the shoulder-joint, and your life-blood curdle in your veins to a corrupted jelly? What is there that prevented me to use means yet more subtle, and to taint your room with essences, before which the light of life twinkles more and more dimly, till it expires, like a torch amidst the foul vapours of some subterranean dungeon? You little estimate my power, if you know not that these, and yet deeper modes of destruction, stand at command of my art.† But a physician slays not the patient by whose generosity he lives, and far less will he, the breath of whose nostrils is the hope of revenge, destroy the vowed ally who is to favour his pursuit of it. Yet one word;—should a necessity occur for rousing yourself—for who in Scotland can promise himself eight hours' uninterrupted repose?—then smell at the strong essence contained in this pouncet-box. And now farewell, Sir Knight; and if you cannot think of me as a man of nice conscience, acknowledge me at least as one of reason and of judgment.'

So saying, the mediciner left the room; his usual mean and shuffling gait elevating itself into something more noble, as conscious of a victory over his imperious patient.

Sir John Ramorny remained sunk in unpleasing reflections, until he began to experience the incipient effects of his soporific draught. He then roused himself for an instant, and summoned his page.

'Eviot! what ho! Eviot! I have done ill to unbosom myself so far to this poisonous quacksalver. Eviot!'

The page entered.

'Is the mediciner gone forth?'

'Yes, so please your knighthood.'

'Alone, or accompanied?'

'Bonthron spoke apart with him, and followed him almost immediately—by your lordship's command, as I understood him.'

'Lack-a-day, yes! he goes to seek some medicaments; he will return anon. If he be intoxicated, see he comes not near my chamber, and permit him not to enter into converse with any one. He raves when drink has touched his brain. He was a rare fellow, before a Southron bill laid his brain-pan bare; but since that time he talks gibberish whenever the cup has crossed his lips. Said the leech aught to you, Eviot?'

'Nothing, save to reiterate his commands that your honour be not disturbed.'

'Which thou must surely obey,' said the knight. 'I feel the summons to rest, of which I have been deprived since this unhappy wound—at least, if I have slept it has been but for a snatch. Aid me to take off my gown, Eviot.'

'May God and the saints send you good rest,

* That is, miserable persons, as used in Spenser and other writers of his time; though the sense is now restricted to those who are covetous.

† The extent to which the science of poisoning was carried in the middle ages on the Continent is well known. The hateful practice was more and more refined, and still more generally adopted afterwards; and we are told, among other instances of diabolical cunning, of gloves which could not be put on without inflicting a mortal disease, of letters which on being opened diffused a fatal vapour, etc. etc. Voltaire justly and candidly mentions it as a distinguishing characteristic of the British, that political poisonings make little if any figure in their history.

my lord,' said the page, retiring after he had rendered his wounded master the assistance required.

As Eviot left the room, the knight, whose brain was becoming more and more confused, muttered over the page's departing salutation.

'God—saints—I *have* slept sound under such a benison. But now—methinks if I awake not to the accomplishment of my proud hopes of power and revenge, the best wish for me is, that the slumbers which now fall around my head were the forerunners of that sleep which shall return my borrowed powers to their original non-existence. I can argue it no further.'

Thus speaking, he fell into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER XVI.

On Fastern's E'en when we war fou.
SCOTS SONG.

THE night which sunk down on the sick-bed of Ramorny was not doomed to be a quiet one. Two hours had passed since curfew-bell, then rung at seven o'clock at night, and in those primitive times all were retired to rest, excepting such whom devotion, or duty, or debauchery, made watchers; and the evening being that of Shrovetide, or, as it was called in Scotland, Fastern's E'en,* the vigils of gaiety were by far the most frequented of the three.

The common people had, throughout the day, toiled and struggled at football; the nobles and gentry had fought cocks, and hearkened to the wanton music of the minstrel; while the citizens had gorged themselves upon pancakes fried in lard, and brose, or brewis—the fat broth, that is, in which salted beef had been boiled, poured upon highly-toasted oatmeal, a dish which even now is not ungrateful to simple old-fashioned Scottish palates. These were all exercises and festive dishes proper to the holiday. It was no less a solemnity of the evening, that the devout Catholic should drink as much good ale and wine as he had means to procure; and if young and able, that he should dance at the ring, or figure among the morrice-dancers, who, in the city of Perth, as elsewhere, wore a peculiarly fantastic garb, and distinguished themselves by their address and activity. All this gaiety took place under the prudential consideration that the long term of Lent, now approaching, with its fasts and deprivations, rendered it wise for mortals to cram as much idle and sensual indulgence as they could into the brief space which intervened before its commencement.

The usual revels had taken place, and in most parts of the city were succeeded by the usual pause. A particular degree of care had been taken by the nobility to prevent any renewal of discord betwixt their followers and the citizens of the town; so that the revels had proceeded with fewer casualties than usual, embracing only three deaths, and certain fractured limbs, which, occurring to individuals of little note, were not accounted worth inquiring into. The carnival was closing quietly in general, but in some places the sport was still kept up.

One company of revellers, who had been particularly noticed and applauded, seemed unwilling to conclude their frolic. The Entry, as it was called, consisted of thirteen persons, habited in the same manner, having doublets of chamois leather sitting close to their bodies, curiously slashed and laced. They wore green caps with silver tassels, red ribands, and white shoes, had bells hung at their knees and around their ankles, and naked swords in their hands. This gallant party, having exhibited a sword-dance before the king, with much clashing of weapons and fantastic interchange of postures, went on gallantly to repeat their exhibition before the door of Simon Glover, where, having made a fresh exhibition of their agility, they caused wine to be served round to their own company and the bystanders, and with a loud shout drank to the health of the Fair Maid of Perth. This summoned old Simon to the door of his habitation, to acknowledge the courtesy of his countrymen, and in his turn to send the wine around in honour of the merry morrice-dancers of Perth.

'We thank thee, father Simon,' said a voice, which strove to drown in an artificial squeak the pert, conceited tone of Oliver Proudfute. 'But a sight of thy lovely daughter had been more sweet to us young bloods than a whole vintage of Malvoisie.'

'I thank you, neighbours, for your good will,' replied the Glover. 'My daughter is ill at ease, and may not come forth into the cold night-air; but if this gay gallant, whose voice methinks I should know, will go into my poor house, she will charge him with thanks for the rest of you.'

'Bring them to us at the hostelrie of the Griffin,' cried the rest of the ballet to their favoured companion; 'for there will we ring in Lent, and have another rouse to the health of the lovely Catharine.'

'Have with you in half-an-hour,' said Oliver, 'and see who will quaff the largest flagon, or sing the loudest glee. Nay, I will be merry, in what remains of Fastern's Even, should Lent find me with my mouth closed for ever.'

'Farewell, then,' cried his mates in the morrice; 'farewell, slashing Bonnet-maker, till we meet again.'

The morrice-dancers accordingly set out upon their farther progress, dancing and caroling as they went along to the sound of four musicians, who led the joyous band, while Simon Glover drew their coryphæus into his house, and placed him in a chair by his parlour fire.

'But where is your daughter?' said Oliver. 'She is the bait for us brave blades.'

'Why, truly, she keeps her apartment, neighbour Oliver; and, to speak plainly, she keeps her bed.'

'Why, then will I up-stairs to see her in her sorrow; you have marred my ramble, Gaffer Glover, and you owe me amends—a roving

* *Fastern's E'en*, the evening before the commencement of the fast—*Anglicè*—*Shrove-tide*, the season of being shriven, or of confession and absolution, before beginning the penance of Lent. The cockfights, etc., still held at this period are relics of the Catholic carnival that preceded the weeks of abstinence.

blade like me—I will not lose both the lass and the glass. Keeps her bed, does she?

My dog and I we have a trick
To visit maids when they are sick;
When they are sick and like to die,
O thither do come my dog and I.

And when I die, as needs must hap,
Then bury me under the good ale-tap;
With folded arms there let me lie,
Cheek for jowl, my dog and I.'

'Canst thou not be serious for a moment, neighbour Proudfute?' said the Glover; 'I want a word of conversation with you.'

'Serious?' answered his visitor; 'why, I have been serious all this day; I can hardly open my mouth, but something comes out about death, a burial, or suchlike—the most serious subjects that I wot of.'

'Saint John, man!' said the Glover, 'art thou fey?'

'No, not a whit. It is not my own death which these gloomy fancies foretell; I have a strong horoscope, and shall live for fifty years to come. But it is the case of the poor fellow, the Douglas-man whom I struck down at the fray of Saint Valentine's—he died last night—it is that which weighs on my conscience, and awakens sad fancies. Ah, Father Simon, we martialists that have spilt blood in our choler, have dark thoughts at times. I sometimes wish that my knife had cut nothing but worsted thrums.'

'And I wish,' said Simon, 'that mine had cut nothing but buck's leather, for it has sometimes cut my own fingers. But thou mayest spare thy remorse for this bout; there was but one man dangerously hurt at the affray, and it was he from whom Henry Smith hewed the hand, and he is well recovered. His name is Black Quentin, one of Sir John Ramorny's followers. He has been sent privately back to his own country of Fife.'

'What, Black Quentin? why, that is the very man that Henry and I, as we ever keep close together, struck at in the same moment, only my blow fell somewhat earlier. I fear further feud will come of it, and so does the Provost. And is he recovered? Why, then, I will be jovial; and since thou wilt not let me see how Kate becomes her night-gear, I will back to the Griffin, to my morrice-dancers.'

'Nay, stay but one instant. Thou art a comrade of Henry Wynd, and hast done him the service to own one or two deeds, and this last among others. I would thou couldst clear him of other charges with which fame hath loaded him.'

'Nay, I will swear by the hilt of my sword, they are as false as hell, Father Simon. What! blades and targets! shall not men of the sword stick together?'

'Nay, neighbour Bonnet-maker, be patient; thou mayest do the Smith a kind turn, an thou takest this matter the right way. I have chosen thee to consult with anent this matter, not that I hold thee the wisest head in Perth, for should I say so I should lie.'

'Ay, ay,' answered the self-satisfied Bonnet-maker; 'I know where you think my fault lies: you cool heads think we hot heads are fools. I have heard men call Henry Wynd such a score of times.'

'Fool enough and cool enough may rhyme together passing well,' said the Glover; 'but thou art good-natured, and I think lovest this crony of thine. It stands awkwardly with us and him just now,' continued Simon. 'Thou knowest there hath been some talk of marriage between my daughter Catharine and Henry Gow?'

'I have heard some such song since Saint Valentine's morn. Ah! he that shall win the Fair Maid of Perth must be a happy man; and yet marriage spoils many a pretty fellow. I myself somewhat regret'——

'Prithee, truce with thy regrets for the present, man,' interrupted the Glover somewhat peevishly. 'You must know, Oliver, that some of these talking women, who, I think, make all the business of the world their own, have accused Henry of keeping light company with glee-women and such-like. Catharine took it to heart; and I held my child insulted, that he had not waited upon her like a Valentine, but had thrown himself into unseemly society on the very day when, by ancient custom, he might have had an opportunity to press his interest with my daughter. Therefore, when he came hither late on the evening of Saint Valentine's, I, like a hasty old fool, bade him go home to the company he had left, and denied him admittance. I have not seen him since, and I begin to think that I may have been too rash in the matter. She is my only child, and the grave should have her sooner than a debauchee. But I have hitherto thought I knew Henry Gow as if he were my son. I cannot think he would use us thus, and it may be there are means of explaining what is laid to his charge. I was led to ask Dwining, who is said to have saluted the Smith while he was walking with his choice mate; if I am to believe his words, this wench was the Smith's cousin, Joan Letham. But thou knowest that the potter-carrier ever speaks one language with his visage and another with his tongue. Now, thou, Oliver, hast too little wit—I mean, too much honesty—to belie the truth, and as Dwining hinted that thou also hadst seen her'——

'I see her, Simon Glover! Will Dwining say that I saw her?'

'No, not precisely that; but he says you *told* him you had met the Smith thus accompanied.'

'He lies, and I will pound him into a gallipot!' said Oliver Proudfute.

'How? Did you never tell him then of such a meeting?'

'What an if I did?' said the Bonnet-maker. 'Did not he swear that he would never repeat again to living mortal what I communicated to him? and therefore, in telling the occurrent to you, he hath made himself a liar.'

'Thou didst not meet the Smith, then,' said Simon, 'with such a loose baggage as fame reports?'

'Lack-a-day, not I; perhaps I did, perhaps I did not. Think, father Simon; I have been a four-years married man, and can you expect me to remember the turn of a glee-woman's ankle, the trip of her toe, the lace upon her petticoat, and

such toys? No, I leave that to unmarried wags, like my gossip Henry.'

'The upshot is, then,' said the Glover, much vexed, 'you *did* meet him on Saint Valentine's day walking the public streets'——

'Not so, neighbour; I met him in the most distant and dark lane in Perth, steering full for his own house, with bag and baggage, which, as a gallant fellow, he carried in his arms, the puppy dog on one, and the jilt herself (and to my thought she was a pretty one) hanging upon the other.'

'Now, by good Saint John,' said the Glover, 'this infamy would make a Christian man renounce his faith, and worship Mahound in very anger! But he has seen the last of my daughter. I would rather she went to the wild Highlands with a barelegged cateran than wed with one who could, at such a season, so broadly forget honour and decency. Out upon him!'

'Tush! tush! father Simon,' said the liberal-minded Bonnet-maker; 'you consider not the nature of young blood. Their company was not long, for—to speak truth, I did keep a little watch on him—I met him before sunrise, conducting his errant damsel to the Lady's Stairs, that the wench might embark on the Tay from Perth; and I know for certainty (for I made inquiry) that she sailed in a gabbart for Dundee. So you see it was but a slight escape of youth.'

'And he came here,' said Simon bitterly, 'beseeching for admittance to my daughter, while he had his harlot awaiting him at home! I had rather he had slain a score of men! It skills not talking, least of all to thee, Oliver Proudfute, who, if thou art not such a one as himself, would fain be thought so. But'——

'Nay, think not of it so seriously,' said Oliver, who began to reflect on the mischief his tattling was likely to occasion to his friend, and on the consequences of Henry Gow's displeasure, when he should learn the disclosure which he had made rather in vanity of heart than in evil intention. 'Consider,' he continued, 'that there are follies belonging to youth. Occasion provokes men to such frolics, and confession wipes them off. I care not if I tell thee, that though my wife be as goodly a woman as the city has, yet I myself'——

'Peace, silly braggart,' said the Glover in high wrath; 'thy loves and thy battles are alike apocryphal. If thou must needs lie, which I think is thy nature, canst thou invent no falsehood that may at least do thee some credit? Do I not see through thee, as I could see the light through the horn of a base lantern? Do I not know, thou filthy weaver of rotten worsted, that thou durst no more cross the threshold of thy own door, if thy wife heard of thy making such a boast, than thou darest cross naked weapons with a boy of twelve years old, who has drawn a sword for the first time of his life? By Saint John, it were paying you for your tale-bearing trouble, to send thy Maudie word of thy gay brags.'

The Bonnet-maker, at this threat, started as if a cross-bow bolt had whizzed past his head when least expected. And it was with a trembling voice that he replied, 'Nay, good father Glover, thou takest too much credit for thy grey hairs. Consider, good neighbour, thou art too old for a young martialist to wrangle with. And in the matter of my Maudie, I can trust thee, for I know no one who would be less willing than thou to break the peace of families.'

'Trust thy coxcomb no longer with me,' said the incensed Glover; 'but take thyself, and the thing thou call'st a head, out of my reach, lest I borrow back five minutes of my youth, and break thy pate!'

'You have had a merry Fastern's Even, neighbour,' said the Bonnet-maker, 'and I wish you a quiet sleep; we shall meet better friends to-morrow.'

'Out of my doors to-night!' said the Glover. 'I am ashamed so idle a tongue as thine should have power to move me thus. Idiot—beast—loose-tongued coxcomb!' he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair, as the Bonnet-maker disappeared; 'that a fellow made up of lies should not have had the grace to frame one when it might have covered the shame of a friend! And I—what am I, that I should, in my secret mind, wish that such a gross insult to me and my child had been glossed over? Yet such was my opinion of Henry, that I would have willingly believed the grossest figment the swaggering ass could have invented. Well! it skills not thinking of it. Our honest name must be maintained, though everything else should go to ruin.'

While the Glover thus moralized on the unwelcome confirmation of the tale he wished to think untrue, the expelled morrice-dancer had leisure, in the composing air of a cool and dark February night, to meditate on the consequences of the Glover's unrestrained anger.

'But it is nothing,' he bethought himself, 'to the wrath of Henry Wynd, who hath killed a man for much less than placing displeasure betwixt him and Catharine, as well as her fiery old father. Certainly I were better have denied everything. But the humour of seeming a knowing gallant (as in truth I am) fairly overcame me. Were I best go to finish the revel at the Griffin? but then Maudie will rampauge on my return,—ay, and this being holiday even I may claim a privilege. I have it: I will not to the Griffin; I will to the Smith's, who must be at home, since no one hath seen him this day amid the revel. I will endeavour to make peace with him, and offer my intercession with the Glover. Harry is a simple, downright fellow, and though I think he is my better in a broil, yet in discourse I can turn him my own way. The streets are now quiet, the night, too, is dark, and I may step aside if I meet any rioters. I will to the Smith's, and, securing him for my friend, I care little for old Simon. Saint Ringan bear me well through this night, and I will clip my tongue out ere it shall run my head into such peril again. Yonder old fellow, when his blood was up, looked more like a carver of buff jerkins than a clipper of kid gloves.'

With these reflections, the puissant Oliver walked swiftly, yet with as little noise as possible, towards the Wynd, in which the Smith, as our readers are aware, had his habitation. But his evil fortune had not ceased to pursue him. As he turned into the High, or principal street,

he heard a burst of music very near him, followed by a loud shout.

'My merry mates, the morrice-dancers,' thought he. 'I would know old Jeremy's rebeck among a hundred. I will venture across the street ere they pass on; if I am espied, I shall have the renown of some private quest, which may do me honour as a roving blade.'

With these longings for distinction among the gay and gallant, combated, however, internally, by more prudential considerations, the Bonnet-maker made an attempt to cross the street. But the revellers, whoever they might be, were accompanied by torches, the flash of which fell upon Oliver, whose light-coloured habit made him the more distinctly visible. The general shout of 'A prize, a prize,' overcame the noise of the minstrel, and before the Bonnet-maker could determine whether it were better to stand or fly, two active young men, clad in fantastic masking habits, resembling wild men, and holding great clubs, seized upon him, saying in a tragical tone, 'Yield thee, man of bells and bombast; yield thee, rescue or no rescue, or truly thou art but a dead morrice-dancer.'

'To whom shall I yield me?' said the Bonnet-maker, with a faltering voice; for though he saw he had to do with a party of mummers who were afoot for pleasure, yet he observed, at the same time, that they were far above his class, and he lost the audacity necessary to support his part in a game where the inferior was likely to come by the worst.

'Dost thou parley, slave?' answered one of the maskers; 'and must I show thee that thou art a captive, by giving thee incontinently the bastinado?'

'By no means, puissant man of Ind,' said the Bonnet-maker; 'lo, I am conformable to your pleasure.'

'Come, then,' said those who had arrested him, 'come and do homage to the Emperor of Mimes, King of Caperers, and Grand Duke of the Dark Hours, and explain by what right thou art so presumptuous as to prance and jingle, and wear out shoe-leather within his dominions, without paying him tribute. Know'st thou not thou hast incurred the pains of high treason?'

'That were hard, methinks,' said poor Oliver, 'since I knew not that his Grace exercised the government this evening. But I am willing to redeem the forfeit, if the purse of a poor Bonnet-maker may, by the mulct of a gallon of wine, or some such matter.'

'Bring him before the Emperor,' was the universal cry; and the morrice-dancer was placed before a slight, but easy and handsome figure of a young man, splendidly attired, having a cincture and tiara of peacock's feathers, then brought from the East as a marvellous rarity; a short jacket and under-dress of leopard's skin fitted closely the rest of his person, which was attired in flesh-coloured silk, so as to resemble the ordinary idea of an Indian prince. He wore sandals, fastened on with ribands of scarlet silk, and held in his hand a sort of fan such as ladies then used, composed of the same feathers, assembled into a plume or tuft.

'What mister wight have we here,' said the Indian chief, 'who dares to tie the bells of a morrice on the ankles of a dull ass? Hark ye, friend, your dress should make you a subject of ours, since our empire extends over all Merryland, including mimes and minstrels of every description. What, tongue-tied? He lacks wine; minister to him our nutshell full of sack.'

A huge calabash full of sack was offered to the lips of the supplicant, while this prince of revellers exhorted him,—

'Crack me this nut, and do it handsomely, and without wry faces.'

But however Oliver might have relished a moderate sip of the same good wine, he was terrified at the quantity he was required to deal with. He drank a draught, and then entreated for mercy.

'So please your princedom, I have yet far to go, and if I were to swallow your Grace's bounty, for which accept my dutiful thanks, I should not be able to stride over the next kennel.'

'Art thou in case to bear thyself like a galliard? Now, cut me a caper—ha! one—two—three—admirable! again—give him the spur' (here a satellite of the Indian gave Oliver a slight touch with his sword). 'Nay, that is best of all; he sprang like a cat in a gutter! Tender him the nut once more; nay, no compulsion, he has paid forfeit, and deserves not only free dismissal, but reward. Kneel down, kneel, and arise Sir Knight of the Calabash! What is thy name? And one of you lend me a rapier.'

'Oliver, may it please your honour—I mean your principality.'

'Oliver, man? nay, then thou art one of the *douze* peers* already, and fate has forestalled our intended promotion. Yet rise up, sweet Sir Oliver Thatchpate, Knight of the honourable order of the Pumpkin. Rise up in the name of Nonsense, and begone about thine own concerns, and the devil go with thee.'

So saying, the Prince of the Revels bestowed a smart blow with the flat of the weapon across the Bonnet-maker's shoulders, who sprung to his feet with more alacrity of motion than he had hitherto displayed, and, accelerated by the laugh and halloo which arose behind him, arrived at the Smith's house before he stopped, with the same speed with which a hunted fox makes for his den.

It was not till the affrighted Bonnet-maker had struck a blow on the door, that he recollected he ought to have bethought himself beforehand in what manner he was to present himself before Henry, and obtain his forgiveness for his rash communications to Simon Glover. No one answered to his first knock, and perhaps, as these reflections arose, in the momentary pause of recollection which circumstances permitted, the perplexed Bonnet-maker might have flinched from his purpose, and made his retreat to his own premises, without venturing upon the interview which he had proposed. But a distant strain of minstrelsy revived his apprehensions of falling once more into the hands of the gay maskers from whom he had escaped, and he renewed his summons on the door of the Smith's dwelling with a hurried, though faltering hand.

* The *twelve* peers of Charlemagne, immortal in romance.

He was then appalled by the deep, yet not unmusical voice of Henry Gow, who answered from within, 'Who calls at this hour? and what is it that you want?'

'It is I, Oliver Proudfute,' replied the Bonnet-maker; 'I have a merry jest to tell you, gossip Henry.'

'Carry thy foolery to some other market. I am in no jesting humour,' said Henry. 'Go hence; I will see no one to-night.'

'But, gossip, good gossip,' answered the martialist without, 'I am beset with villains, and beg the shelter of your roof!'

'Fool that thou art!' replied Henry; 'no dunghill cock, the most recreant that has fought this Eastern's Eve, would ruffle his feathers at such a craven as thou!'

At this moment another strain of minstrelsy, and, as the Bonnet-maker conceived, one which approached much nearer, goaded his apprehensions to the uttermost; and in a voice, the tones of which expressed the undisguised extremity of instant fear, he exclaimed,—

'For the sake of our old gossipred, and for the love of Our blessed Lady, admit me, Henry, if you would not have me found a bloody corpse at thy door, slain by the bloody-minded Douglases!'

'That would be a shame to me,' thought the good-natured Smith; 'and, sooth to say, his peril may be real. There are roving hawks that will strike at a sparrow as soon as a heron.'

With these reflections, half-muttered, half-spoken, Henry undid his well-fastened door, proposing to reconnoitre the reality of the danger before he permitted his unwelcome guest to enter the house. But as he looked abroad to ascertain how matters stood, Oliver bolted in like a scared deer into a thicket, and harboured himself by the Smith's kitchen fire, before Henry could look up and down the lane, and satisfy himself there were no enemies in pursuit of the apprehensive fugitive. He secured his door, therefore, and returned into the kitchen, displeased that he had suffered his gloomy solitude to be intruded upon by sympathizing with apprehensions which he thought he might have known were so easily excited as those of his timid townsman.

'How now?' he said, coldly enough, when he saw the Bonnet-maker calmly seated by his hearth. 'What foolish revel is this, Master Oliver? I see no one near to harm you.'

'Give me a drink, kind gossip,' said Oliver; 'I am choked with the haste I have made to come hither.'

'I have sworn,' said Henry, 'that this shall be no revel night in this house. I am in my work-day clothes, as you see, and keep fast, as I have reason, instead of holiday. You have had wassail enough for the holiday evening, for you speak thick already. If you wish more ale or wine you must go elsewhere.'

'I have had over much wassail already,' said poor Oliver, 'and have been well-nigh drowned in it. That accursed calabash! A draught of water, kind gossip, you will not surely let me ask for that in vain? or if it is your will, a cup of cold small ale.'

'Nay, if that be all,' said Henry, 'it shall not be lacking. But it must have been much which brought thee to the pass of asking for either.'

So saying, he filled a quart flagon from a barrel that stood nigh, and presented it to his guest. Oliver eagerly accepted it, raised it to his head with a trembling hand, imbibed the contents with lips which quivered with emotion, and though the potation was as thin as he had requested, so much was he exhausted with the combined fears of alarm and of former revelry, that, when he placed the flagon on the oak table, he uttered a deep sigh of satisfaction, and remained silent.

'Well, now you have had your draught, gossip,' said the Smith, 'what is it you want? Where are those that threatened you? I could see no one.'

'No—but there were twenty chased me into the Wynd,' said Oliver. 'But when they saw us together, you know, they lost the courage that brought all of them upon one of us.'

'Nay, do not trifle, friend Oliver,' replied his host; 'my mood lies not that way.'

'I jest not, by Saint John of Perth. I have been stayed and foully outraged' (gliding his hand sensitively over the place affected) 'by mad David of Rothsay, roaring Ramorny, and the rest of them. They made me drink a firkin of Malvoisie.'

'Thou speakest folly, man. Ramorny is sick nigh to death, as the potter-carrier everywhere reports; they and he cannot surely rise at midnight to do such frolics.'

'I cannot tell,' replied Oliver; 'but I saw the party by torchlight, and I can make bodily oath to the bonnets I made for them since last Innocents'. They are of a quaint device, and I should know my own stitch.'

'Well, thou mayst have had wrong,' answered Henry. 'If thou art in real danger, I will cause them get a bed for thee here. But you must fill it presently, for I am not in the humour of talking.'

'Nay, I would thank thee for my quarters for a night, only my Maudie will be angry—that is, not angry, for that I care not for—but the truth is, she is over anxious on a revel night like this, knowing my humour is like thine, for a word and a blow.'

'Why, then, go home,' said the Smith, 'and show her that her treasure is in safety, Master Oliver. The streets are quiet; and, to speak a blunt word, I would be alone.'

'Nay, but I have things to speak with thee about of moment,' replied Oliver, who, afraid to stay, seemed yet unwilling to go. 'There has been a stir in our City Council about the affair of Saint Valentine's Even. The Provost told me not four hours since, that the Douglas and he had agreed that the feud should be decided by a yeoman on either part, and that our acquaintance the Devil's Dick was to waive his gentry, and take up the cause for Douglas and the nobles, and that you or I should fight for the Fair City. Now, though I am the elder burgess, yet I am willing, for the love and kindness we have always borne to each other, to give thee the precedence, and content myself with the humbler office of stickler.' *

* The seconds in ancient single combats were so called, from the white sticks which they carried, in emblem of their duty to see fair play between the combatants.

Henry Smith, though angry, could scarce forbear a smile.

'If it is that which breaks thy quiet, and keeps thee out of thy bed at midnight, I will make the matter easy. Thou shalt not lose the advantage offered thee. I have fought a score of duels—far, far too many. Thou hast, I think, only encountered with thy wooden Soldan; it were unjust—unfair—unkind—in me to abuse thy friendly offer. So go home, good fellow, and let not the fear of losing honour disturb thy slumbers. Rest assured that thou shalt answer the challenge, as good right thou hast, having had injury from this rough-rider.'

'Gramercy, and thank thee kindly,' said Oliver, much embarrassed by his friend's unexpected deference; 'thou art the good friend I have always thought thee. But I have as much friendship for Henry Smith as he for Oliver Proudfute. I swear by Saint John, I will not fight in this quarrel to thy prejudice. So, having said so, I am beyond the reach of temptation, since thou wouldst not have me mansworn, though it were to fight twenty duels.'

'Hark thee,' said the Smith, 'acknowledge thou art afraid, Oliver; tell the honest truth at once, otherwise I leave thee to make the best of thy quarrel.'

'Nay, good gossip,' replied the Bonnet-maker, 'thou knowest I am never afraid. But in sooth, this is a desperate ruffian; and as I have a wife—poor Maudie, thou knowest—and a small family, and thou'——

'And I,' interrupted Henry hastily, 'have none, and never shall have.'

'Why, truly, such being the case, I would rather thou fought'st this combat than I.'

'Now, by our holidame, gossip,' answered the Smith, 'thou art easily gulled! Know, thou silly fellow, that Sir Patrick Charteris, who is ever a merry man, hath but jested with thee. Dost thou think he would venture the honour of the city on thy head? or that I would yield thee the precedence in which such a matter was to be disputed? Lack-a-day, go home, let Maudie tie a warm nightcap on thy head; get thee a warm breakfast, and a cup of distilled waters, and thou wilt be in case to-morrow to fight thy wooden dromond, or Soldan, as thou call'st him, the only thing thou wilt ever lay downright blow upon.'

'Ay, say'st thou so, comrade?' answered Oliver, much relieved, yet deeming it necessary to seem in part offended. 'I care not for thy dogged humour; it is well for thee thou canst not wake my patience to the point of falling foul. Enough; we are gossips, and this house is thine. Why should the two best blades in Perth clash with each other? What! I know thy rugged humour, and can forgive it. But is the feud really soldered up?'

'As completely as ever hammer fixed rivet,' said the Smith. 'The town hath given the Johnstone a purse of gold, for not ridding them of a troublesome fellow called Oliver Proudfute, when he had him at his mercy; and this purse of gold buys for the Provost the Sleepless Isle; which the King grants him; for the King pays all in the long run. And thus, Sir Patrick gets the comely Inch, which is opposite to his dwelling, and all honour is saved on both sides, for what is given to the Provost, is given, you understand, to the town. Besides all this, the Douglas hath left Perth to march against the Southron, who, men say, are called into the Marches by the false Earl of March. So the Fair City is quit of him and his cumber.'

'But, in Saint John's name, how came all that about,' said Oliver, 'and no one spoken to about it?'

'Why, look thee, friend Oliver, this I take to have been the case. The fellow whom I cropped of a hand is now said to have been a servant of Sir John Ramorny's, who hath fled to his motherland of Fife, to which Sir John himself is also to be banished, with full consent of every honest man. Now, anything which brings in Sir John Ramorny touches a much greater man; I think Simon Glover told as much to Sir Patrick Charteris. If it be as I guess, I have reason to thank Heaven and all the saints, I stabbed him not upon the ladder when I made him prisoner.'

'And I too thank Heaven and all the saints most devoutly,' said Oliver. 'I was behind thee, thou knowest, and'——

'No more of that, if thou be'st wise. There are laws against striking princes,' said the Smith; 'best not handle the horse-shoe till it cools. All is hushed up now.'

'If this be so,' said Oliver, partly disconcerted, but still more relieved, by the intelligence he received from his better-informed friend, 'I have reason to complain of Sir Patrick Charteris for jesting with the honour of an honest burgess, being, as he is, Provost of our town.'

'Do, Oliver; challenge him to the field, and he will bid his yeomen loose his dogs on thee. But come, night wears apace, will you be shogging?'

'Nay, I had one word more to say to thee, good gossip. But first, another cup of your cold ale.'

'Pest on thee, for a fool! Thou makest me wish thee where cold liquors are a scarce commodity. There, swill the barrelful an thou wilt.'

Oliver took the second flagon, but drank, or rather seemed to drink, very slowly, in order to gain time for considering how he should introduce his second subject of conversation, which seemed rather delicate for the Smith's present state of irritability. At length, nothing better occurred to him than to plunge into the subject at once, with, 'I have seen Simon Glover to-day, gossip.'

'Well,' said the Smith, in a low, deep, and stern tone of voice, 'and if thou hast, what is that to me?'

'Nothing—nothing,' answered the appalled Bonnet-maker. 'Only I thought you might like to know that he questioned me close if I had seen thee on Saint Valentine's Day, after the uproar at the Dominicans', and in what company thou wert.'

'And I warrant thou told'st him thou met'st me with a glee-woman, in the mirk loaning yonder?'

'Thou knowest, Henry, I have no gift at lying; but I made it all up with him.'

'As how, I pray you?' said the Smith.

'Marry, thus—Father Simon, said I, you are an old man, and know not the quality of us, in

whose veins youth is like quicksilver. You think, now, he cares about this girl, said I, and, perhaps, that he has her somewhere here in Perth in a corner? No such matter; I know, said I, and I will make oath to it, that she left his house early next morning for Dundee. Ha! have I helped thee at need?'

'Truly, I think thou hast; and if anything could add to my grief and vexation at this moment, it is that, when I am so deep in the mire, an ass like thee should place his clumsy hoof on my head, to sink me entirely. Come, away with thee, and mayst thou have such luck as thy meddling humour deserves, and then, I think, thou wilt be found with a broken neck in the next gutter. Come, get you out, or I will put you to the door with head and shoulders forward.'

'Ha, ha!' exclaimed Oliver, laughing with some constraint; 'thou art such a groom! But in sadness, gossip Henry, wilt thou not take a turn with me to my own house, in the Meal Vennel?'

'Curse thee, no,' answered the Smith.

'I will bestow the wine on thee, if thou wilt go,' said Oliver.

'I will bestow the cudgel on thee, if thou stay'st,' said Henry.

'Nay, then, I will don thy buff-coat and cap of steel, and walk with thy swashing step, and whistling thy pibroch of "Broken Bones at Loncarty;" and if they take me for thee, there dare not four of them come near me.'

'Take all, or anything thou wilt, in the Fiend's name! only be gone.'

'Well, well, Hal, we shall meet when thou art in better humour,' said Oliver, who had put on the dress.

'Go; and may I never see thy coxcombly face again!'

Oliver at last relieved his host by swaggering off, imitating, as well as he could, the sturdy step and outward gesture of his redoubted companion, and whistling a pibroch, composed on the rout of the Danes at Loncarty, which he had picked up from its being a favourite of the Smith's, whom he made a point of imitating as far as he could. But as the innocent, though conceited fellow stepped out from the entrance of the Wynd, where it communicated with the High Street, he received a blow from behind, against which his headpiece was no defence, and he fell dead upon the spot, an attempt to mutter the name of Henry, to whom he always looked for protection, quivering upon his dying tongue.

CHAPTER XVII.

Nay, I will fit you for a young prince.
FALSTAFF.

We return to the revellers, who had, half-an-hour before, witnessed, with such boisterous applause, Oliver's feat of agility, being the last which the poor Bonnet-maker was ever to exhibit, and at the hasty retreat which had followed it, animated by their wild shout. After they had laughed their fill, they passed on their mirthful path, in frolic and jubilee, stopping and frightening some of the people whom they met; but, it must be owned, without doing them any serious injury, either in their persons or feelings. At length, tired with his rambles, their chief gave a signal to his merry-men to close around him.

'We, my brave hearts and wise counsellors, are,' he said, 'the real King* over all in Scotland that is worth commanding. We sway the hours when the wine-cup circulates, and when beauty becomes kind, when frolic is awake, and gravity snoring upon his pallet. We leave to our vice-gerent, King Robert, the weary task of controlling ambitious nobles, gratifying greedy clergymen, subduing wild Highlanders, and composing deadly feuds. And since our empire is one of joy and pleasure, meet it is that we should haste, with all our forces, to the rescue of such as own our sway, when they chance, by evil fortune, to become the prisoners of care and hypochondriac malady. I speak in relation chiefly to Sir John, whom the vulgar call Ramorny. We have not seen him since the onslaught of Curfew Street; and though we know he was some deal hurt in that matter, we cannot see why he should not do homage in leal and duteous sort. Here, you, our Calabash King-at-arms, did you legally summon Sir John to his part of this evening's revels?'

'I did, my lord.'

'And did you acquaint him that we have for this night suspended his sentence of banishment, that, since higher powers have settled that part, we might at least take a mirthful leave of an old friend?'

'I so delivered it, my lord,' answered the mimic herald.

'And sent he not a word in writing, he that piques himself upon being so great a clerk?'

'He was in bed, my lord, and I might not see him. So far as I hear, he hath lived very retired, harmed with some bodily bruises, malcontent with your Highness's displeasure, and doubting insult in the streets, he having had a narrow escape from the burgesses, when the churls pursued him and his two servants into the Dominican convent. The servants, too, have been removed to Fife, lest they should tell tales.'

'Why, it was wisely done,' said the prince, who, we need not inform the intelligent reader, had a better title to be so called than arose from the humours of the evening; 'it was prudently done to keep light-tongued companions out of the way. But Sir John's absenting himself from our solemn revels, so long before decreed, is flat mutiny and disclamation of allegiance. Or if the knight be really the prisoner of illness and melancholy, we must ourself grace him with a visit, seeing there can be no better cure for those maladies than our own presence, and a gentle kiss of the calabash. Forward, ushers, minstrels, guard, and attendants! Bear on high the great

* The Scottish Statute Book affords abundant evidence of the extravagant and often fatal frolics practised among our ancestors under the personages elected to fill the high offices of *Quene of May*, Prince of Yule (Christmas), Abbot of Unreason, etc. etc., corresponding to the Boy Bishop of England, and the French *Abbé de Liesse*, or *Abbas Letitiæ*. Shrovetide was not less distinguished by such mumming dignitaries.

emblem of our dignity. Up with the calabash, I say! and let the merry-men who carry these firkins, which are to supply the wine-cup with their life-blood, be chosen with regard to their state of steadiness. Their burden is weighty and precious, and if the fault is not in our eyes, they seem to us to reel and stagger more than were desirable. Now, move on, sirs, and let our minstrels blow their blithest and boldest.'

On they went with tipsy mirth and jollity, the numerous torches flashing their red light against the small windows of the narrow streets, from whence nightcapped householders, and sometimes their wives to boot, peeped out by stealth to see what wild wassail disturbed the peaceful streets at that unwonted hour. At length the jolly train halted before the door of Sir John Ramorny's house, which a small court divided from the street.

Here they knocked, thundered, and hollowed, with many denunciations of vengeance against the recusants who refused to open the gates. The least punishment threatened was imprisonment in an empty hogshead, within the massamore * of the Prince of Pastimes' feudal palace, *videlicet*, the ale-cellar. But Eviot, Ramorny's page, heard and knew well the character of the intruders who knocked so boldly, and thought it better, considering his master's condition, to make no answer at all, in hopes that the revel would pass on, than to attempt to deprecate their proceedings, which he knew would be to no purpose. His master's bedroom looking into a little garden, his page hoped he might not be disturbed by the noise; and he was confident in the strength of the outward gate, upon which he resolved they should beat till they tired themselves, or till the tone of their drunken humour should change. The revellers accordingly seemed likely to exhaust themselves, in the noise they made by shouting and beating the door, when their mock prince (alas! too really such) upbraided them as lazy and dull followers of the god of wine and of mirth.

'Bring forward,' he said, 'our key—yonder it lies—and apply it to this rebellious gate.'

The key he pointed at was a large beam of wood, left on one side of the street, with the usual neglect of order characteristic of a Scottish burgh of the period.

The shouting men of Ind instantly raised it in their arms, and, supporting it by their united strength, ran against the door with such force, that hasp, hinge, and staple jingled, and gave fair promise of yielding. Eviot did not choose to wait the extremity of this battery; he came forth into the court, and, after some momentary questions for form's sake, caused the porter to undo the gate, as if he had for the first time recognised the midnight visitors.

'False slave of an unfaithful master,' said the prince, 'where is our disloyal subject, Sir John Ramorny, who has proved recreant to our summons?'

'My lord,' said Eviot, bowing at once to the real and to the assumed dignity of the leader, 'my master is just now very much indisposed; he has taken an opiate, and—your Highness must excuse me if I do my duty to him in saying—he cannot be spoken with without danger of his life.'

'Tush! tell me not of danger, Master Teviot—Cheviot—Eviot—what is it they call thee? But show me thy master's chamber, or rather undo me the door of his lodging, and I will make a good guess at it myself. Bear high the calabash, my brave followers, and see that you spill not a drop of the liquor, which Dan Bacchus has sent for the cure of all diseases of the body and cares of the mind. Advance it, I say, and let us see the holy rind which encloses such precious liquor.'

The prince made his way into the house accordingly, and, acquainted with its interior, ran up-stairs, followed by Eviot, in vain imploring silence, and, with the rest of the rabble rout, burst into the room of the wounded master of the lodging.

He who has experienced the sensation of being compelled to sleep, in spite of racking bodily pains, by the administration of a strong opiate, and of having been again startled by noise and violence out of the unnatural state of insensibility in which he had been plunged by the potency of the medicine, may be able to imagine the confused and alarmed state of Sir John Ramorny's mind, and the agony of his body, which acted and reacted upon each other. If we add to these feelings the consciousness of a criminal command, sent forth and in the act of being executed, it may give us some idea of an awakening, to which, in the mind of the party, eternal sleep would be a far preferable doom. The groan which he uttered as the first symptom of returning sensation, had something in it so terrific that even the revellers were awed into momentary silence; and as, from the half recumbent posture in which he had gone to sleep, he looked around the room, filled with fantastic shapes, rendered still more so by his disturbed intellects, he muttered to himself—

'It is thus, then, after all, and the legend is true! These are fiends, and I am condemned for ever! The fire is not external, but I feel it—I feel it at my heart, burning as if the seven times heated furnace were doing its work within!'

While he cast ghastly looks around him, and struggled to recover some share of recollection, Eviot approached the prince, and, falling on his knees, implored him to allow the apartment to be cleared.

'It may,' he said, 'cost my master his life.'

'Never fear, Cheviot,' replied the Duke of Rothsay; 'were he at the gates of death, here is what should make the fiends relinquish their prey. Advance the calabash, my masters.'

'It is death for him to taste it in his present state,' said Eviot; 'if he drinks wine he dies.'

'Some one must drink it for him, he shall be cured vicariously; and may our great Dan Bacchus deign to Sir John Ramorny the comfort, the elevation of heart, the lubrication of lungs, and lightness of fancy, which are his choicest gifts, while the faithful follower, who

* The *Massamore* or *Massy More*, the principal dungeon of the feudal castle, is supposed to have derived its name from our intercourse with the Eastern nations at the time of the Crusades. Doctor Jamieson quotes an old Latin Itinerary: 'Proximus est carcer subterraneus sive ut *Mauri* appellant *Mazmorra*.'

quaffs in his stead, shall have the qualms, the sickness, the racking of the nerves, the dimness of the eyes, and the throbbing of the brain, with which our great master qualifies gifts which would else make us too like the gods. What say you, Eviot? will you be the faithful follower that will quaff in your lord's behalf, and as his representative? Do this, and we will hold ourselves contented to depart, for, methinks, our subject doth look something ghastly.'

'I would do anything in my slight power,' said Eviot, 'to save my master from a draught which may be his death, and your Grace from the sense that you had occasioned it. But here is one who will perform the feat of good-will, and thank your Highness to boot.'

'Whom have we here?' said the prince; 'a butcher, and I think fresh from his office. Do butchers ply their craft on Fastern's Eve? Foh, how he smells of blood!'

This was spoken of Bonthron, who, partly surprised at the tumult in the house, where he had expected to find all dark and silent, and partly stupid through the wine which the wretch had drunk in great quantities, stood in the threshold of the door, staring at the scene before him, with his buff-coat splashed with blood, and a bloody axe in his hand, exhibiting a ghastly and disgusting spectacle to the revellers, who felt, though they could not tell why, fear as well as dislike at his presence.

As they approached the calabash to this ungainly and truculent-looking savage, and as he extended a hand soiled, as it seemed, with blood, to grasp it, the prince called out,—

'Down-stairs with him! let not the wretch drink in our presence; find him some other vessel than our holy calabash, the emblem of our revels; a swine's trough were best, if it could be come by. Away with him! let him be drenched to purpose, in atonement for his master's sobriety. Leave me alone with Sir John Ramorny and his page; by my honour, I like not yon ruffian's looks.'

The attendants of the prince left the apartment, and Eviot alone remained.

'I fear,' said the prince, approaching the bed in different form from that which he had hitherto used—'I fear, my dear Sir John, that this visit has been unwelcome, but it is your own fault. Although you know our old wont, and were yourself participant of our schemes for the evening, you have not come near us since Saint Valentine's; it is now Fastern's Even, and the desertion is flat disobedience and treason to our Kingdom of Mirth, and the Statutes of the Calabash.'

Ramorny raised his head and fixed a wavering eye upon the prince; then signed to Eviot to give him something to drink. A large cup of ptisan was presented by the page, which the sick man swallowed with eager and trembling haste. He then repeatedly used the stimulating essence left for the purpose by the leech, and seemed to collect his scattered senses.

'Let me feel your pulse, dear Ramorny,' said the prince; 'I know something of that craft. How? Do you offer me the left hand, Sir John? that is neither according to the rules of medicine nor of courtesy.'

'The right has already done its last act in your Highness's service,' muttered the patient in a low and broken tone.

'How mean you by that?' said the prince. 'I am aware thy follower, Black Quentin, lost a hand; but he can steal with the other as much as will bring him to the gallows, so his fate cannot be much altered.'

'It is not that fellow who has had the loss in your Grace's service; it is I, John of Ramorny.'

'You?' said the prince; 'you jest with me, or the opiate still masters your reason.'

'If the juice of all the poppies in Egypt were blended in one draught,' said Ramorny, 'it would lose influence over me when I look upon this.' He drew his right arm from beneath the cover of the bed-clothes, and extended it towards the prince, wrapped as it was in dressings. 'Were these undone and removed,' he said, 'your Highness would see that a bloody stump is all that remains of a hand ever ready to unsheath the sword at your Grace's slightest bidding.'

Rothsay started back in horror. 'This,' he said, 'must be avenged!'

'It is avenged in small part,' said Ramorny; 'that is, I thought I saw Bonthron but now; or was it that the dream of hell that first arose in my mind when I awakened summoned up an image so congenial? Eviot, call the miscreant —that is, if he is fit to appear.'

Eviot retired, and presently returned with Bonthron, whom he had rescued from the penance, to him no unpleasing infliction, of a second calabash of wine, the brute having gorged the first without much apparent alteration in his demeanour.

'Eviot,' said the prince, 'let not that beast come nigh me. My soul recoils from him in fear and disgust; there is something in his looks alien from my nature, and which I shudder at as at a loathsome snake, from which my instinct revolts.'

'First hear him speak, my lord,' answered Ramorny; 'unless a wine-skin were to talk, nothing could use fewer words. Hast thou dealt with him, Bonthron?'

The savage raised the axe which he still held in his hand, and brought it down again edgeways.

'Good. How knew you your man? the night, I am told, is dark.'

'By sight and sound, garb, gait, and whistle.'

'Enough, vanish!—and, Eviot, let him have gold and wine to his brutish contentment. Vanish! and go thou with him.'

'And whose death is achieved?' said the prince, released from the feelings of disgust and horror under which he suffered while the assassin was in presence. 'I trust this is but a jest? Else must I call it a rash and savage deed. Who has had the hard lot to be butchered by that bloody and brutal slave?'

'One little better than himself,' said the patient; 'a wretched artisan, to whom, however, fate gave the power of reducing Ramorny to a mutilated cripple—a curse go with his base spirit!—his miserable life is but to my revenge what a drop of water would be to a furnace. I must speak briefly, for my ideas again wander; it is only the necessity of the moment which

keeps them together, as a thong combines a handful of arrows. You are in danger, my lord —I speak it with certainty—you have braved Douglas and offended your uncle — displeased your father—though that were a trifle, were it not for the rest.'

'I am sorry I have displeased my father,' said the prince (entirely diverted from so insignificant a thing as the slaughter of an artisan, by the more important subject touched upon), 'if indeed it be so. But if I live, the strength of the Douglas shall be broken, and the craft of Albany shall little avail him!'

'Ay—*if*—*if*. My lord,' said Ramorny, 'with such opposites as you have, you must not rest upon *if* or *but*—you must resolve at once to slay or be slain.'

'How mean you, Ramorny? your fever makes you rave,' answered the Duke of Rothsay.

'No, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'were my frenzy at the highest, the thoughts that pass through my mind at this moment would qualify it. It may be that regret for my own loss has made me desperate; that anxious thoughts for your Highness's safety have made me nourish bold designs; but I have all the judgment with which Heaven has gifted me, when I tell you, that if ever you would brook the Scottish crown, nay, more, if ever you would see another Saint Valentine's Day, you must'——

'What is it that I must do, Ramorny?' said the prince, with an air of dignity; 'nothing unworthy of myself, I hope?'

'Nothing, certainly, unworthy or misbecoming a prince of Scotland, if the blood-stained annals of our country tell the tale truly; but that which may well shock the nerves of a prince of mimes and merry-makers.'

'Thou art severe, Sir John Ramorny,' said the Duke of Rothsay, with an air of displeasure; 'but thou hast dearly bought a right to censure us by what thou hast lost in our cause.'

'My Lord of Rothsay,' said the knight, 'the chirurgeon who dressed this mutilated stump, told me that the more I felt the pain his knife and brand inflicted, the better was my chance of recovery. I shall not, therefore, hesitate to hurt your feelings, while by doing so I may be able to bring you to a sense of what is necessary for your safety. Your Grace has been the pupil of mirthful folly too long; you must now assume manly policy, or be crushed like a butterfly, on the bosom of the flower you are sporting on.'

'I think I know your cast of morals, Sir John; you are weary of merry folly—the churchmen call it vice—and long for a little serious crime. A murder now, or a massacre, would enhance the flavour of debauch, as the taste of the olive gives zest to wine. But my worst acts are but merry malice; I have no relish for the bloody trade, and abhor to see or hear of its being acted even on the meanest caitiff. Should I ever fill the throne, I suppose, like my father before me, I must drop my own name, and be dubbed Robert, in honour of the Bruce—well, an if it be so, every Scots lad shall have his flagon in one hand, and the other around his lass's neck, and manhood shall be tried by kisses and bumpers, not by dirks and dourlachs, and they shall write on my grave, "Here lies Robert, fourth of his name. He won not battles like Robert the First. He rose not from a count to a king like Robert the Second. He founded not churches like Robert the Third, but was contented to live and die King of good fellows!" Of all my two centuries of ancestors, I would only emulate the fame of

> Old King Coul,
> Who had a brown bowl.'

'My gracious lord,' said Ramorny, 'let me remind you that your joyous revels involve serious evils. If I had lost this hand in fighting to attain for your Grace some important advantage over your too-powerful enemies, the loss would never have grieved me. But to be reduced from helmet and steel-coat, to biggin and gown, in a night-brawl'——

'Why, there again, now, Sir John,' interrupted the reckless prince—'How canst thou be so unworthy as to be for ever flinging thy bloody hand in my face, as the ghost of Gaskhall threw his head at Sir William Wallace?* Bethink thee, thou art more unreasonable than Fawdyon himself; for wight Wallace had swept his head off in somewhat a hasty humour, whereas I would gladly stick thy hand on again, were that possible. And hark thee, since that cannot be, I will get thee such a substitute as the steel hand of the old Knight of Carselogie, with which he greeted his friends, caressed his wife, braved his antagonists, and did all that might be done by a hand of flesh and blood, in offence or defence. Depend on it, John Ramorny, we have much that is superfluous about us. Man can see with one eye, hear with one ear, touch with one hand, smell with one nostril; and why we should have two of each (unless to supply an accidental loss or injury), I, for one, am at a loss to conceive.'

Sir John Ramorny turned from the prince with a low groan.

'Nay, Sir John,' said the duke, 'I am quite serious. You know the truth touching the legend of Steelhand of Carselogie better than I, since he was your own neighbour. In his time, that curious engine could only be made in Rome; but I will wager a hundred merks with you, that, let the Perth armourer have the use of it for a pattern, Henry of the Wynd will execute as complete an imitation as all the smiths in Rome could accomplish, with all the cardinals to bid a blessing on the work.'

'I could venture to accept your wager, my lord,' answered Ramorny bitterly, 'but there is no time for foolery.—You have dismissed me from your service, at command of your uncle?'

'At command of my father,' answered the prince.

'Upon whom your uncle's commands are imperative,' replied Ramorny. 'I am a disgraced man, thrown aside, as I may now fling away my right-hand glove, as a thing useless. Yet my head might help you, though my hand be gone. Is your Grace disposed to listen to me for one word of serious import?—for I am much exhausted, and feel my force sinking under me.'

* The passage referred to is perhaps the most poetical one in Blind Harry's Wallace. Book v., v. 180–220. [See note in regard to a similar reference to Blind Harry, p. 228.]

'Speak your pleasure,' said the prince; 'thy loss binds me to hear thee; thy bloody stump is a sceptre to control me. Speak, then; but be merciful in thy strength of privilege.'

'I will be brief, for mine own sake as well as thine;—indeed, I have but little to say. Douglas places himself immediately at the head of his vassals. He will assemble, in the name of King Robert, thirty thousand Borderers, whom he will shortly after lead into the interior, to demand that the Duke of Rothsay receive, or rather restore, his daughter to the rank and privileges of his Duchess. King Robert will yield to any conditions which may secure peace —What will the Duke do?'

'The Duke of Rothsay loves peace,' said the prince haughtily; 'but he never feared war. Ere he takes back yonder proud peat to his table and his bed, at the command of her father, Douglas must be King of Scotland.'

'Be it so—but even this is the less pressing peril, especially as it threatens open violence, for the Douglas works not in secret.'

'What is there which presses, and keeps us awake at this late hour? I am a weary man, thou a wounded one, and the very tapers are blinking as if tired of our conference.'

'Tell me, then, who is it that rules this kingdom of Scotland?' said Ramorny.

'Robert, third of the name,' said the prince, raising his bonnet as he spoke; 'and long may he sway the sceptre!'

'True, and amen,' answered Ramorny; 'but who sways King Robert, and dictates almost every measure which the good King pursues?'

'My Lord of Albany, you would say,' replied the prince. 'Yes, it is true my father is guided almost entirely by the counsels of his brother; nor can we blame him in our consciences, Sir John Ramorny, for little help hath he had from his son.'

'Let us help him now, my lord,' said Ramorny. 'I am possessor of a dreadful secret — Albany hath been trafficking with me, to join him in taking your Grace's life! He offers full pardon for the past —high favour for the future.'

'How, man—my life? I trust, though, thou dost only mean my kingdom? It were impious! He is my father's brother—they sat on the knees of the same father—lay on the bosom of the same mother—Out on thee, man! what follies they make thy sick-bed believe!'

'Believe, indeed!' said Ramorny. 'It is new to me to be termed credulous. But the man through whom Albany communicated his temptations, is one whom all will believe, so soon as he hints at mischief—even the medicaments which are prepared by his hands have a relish of poison.'

'Tush! such a slave would slander a saint,' replied the prince. 'Thou art duped for once, Ramorny, shrewd as thou art. My uncle of Albany is ambitious, and would secure for himself and for his house a larger portion of power and wealth than he ought in reason to desire. But to suppose he would dethrone or slay his brother's son—Fie, Ramorny! put me not to quote the old saw, that evil doers are evil dreaders—It is your suspicion, not your knowledge, which speaks.'

'Your Grace is fatally deluded—I will put it to an issue. The Duke of Albany is generally hated for his greed and covetousness — Your Highness is, it may be, more beloved than'——

Ramorny stopped, the prince calmly filled up the blank—'more beloved than I am honoured? It is so I would have it, Ramorny.'

'At least,' said Ramorny, 'you are more beloved than you are feared, and that is no safe condition for a prince. But give me your honour and knightly word that you will not resent what good service I shall do in your behalf, and lend me your signet to engage friends in your name, and the Duke of Albany shall not assume authority in this court, till the wasted hand which once terminated this stump shall be again united to the body, and acting in obedience to the dictates of my mind.'

'You would not venture to dip your hands in royal blood?' said the prince sternly.

'Fie, my lord—at no rate—blood need not be shed; life may, nay, will, be extinguished of itself. For want of trimming it with fresh oil, or screening it from a breath of wind, the quivering light will die in the socket. To suffer a man to die is not to kill him.'

'True—I had forgot that policy. Well, then, suppose my uncle Albany does not continue to live—I think that must be the phrase—who then rules the court of Scotland?'

'Robert the Third, with consent, advice, and authority of the most mighty David, Duke of Rothsay, Lieutenant of the kingdom, and ALTER EGO; in whose favour, indeed, the good King, wearied with the fatigues and troubles of sovereignty, will, I guess, be well disposed to abdicate. So long live our brave young monarch, King David the Third!

Ille manu fortis,
Anglis ludebit in hortis.'

'And our father and predecessor,' said Rothsay, 'will he continue to live to pray for us, as our beadsman, by whose favour he holds the privilege of laying his grey hairs in the grave as soon, and no earlier, than the course of nature permits?—or must he also encounter some of those negligences, in consequence of which men cease to continue to live, and exchange the limits of a prison, or of a convent resembling one, for the dark and tranquil cell, where the priests say that the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest?'

'You speak in jest, my lord,' replied Ramorny; 'to harm the good old King were equally unnatural and impolitic.'

'Why shrink from that, man, when thy whole scheme,' answered the prince, in stern displeasure, 'is one lesson of unnatural guilt, mixed with short-sighted ambition?—If the King of Scotland can scarcely make head against his nobles even now, when he can hold up before them an unsullied and honourable banner, who would follow a prince that is blackened with the death of an uncle and the imprisonment of a father? Why, man, thy policy were enough to revolt a heathen divan, to say nought of the council of a Christian nation.—Thou wert my tutor, Ramorny, and perhaps I might justly upbraid thy lessons and

example, for some of the follies which men chide in me. Perhaps, if it had not been for thee, I had not been standing at midnight in this fool's guise' (looking at his dress), 'to hear an ambitious profligate propose to me the murder of an uncle, the dethroning of the best of fathers. Since it is my fault as well as thine that has sunk me so deep in the gulf of infamy, it were unjust that thou alone shouldst die for it. But dare not to renew this theme to me on peril of thy life! I will proclaim thee to my father—to Albany—to Scotland—throughout its length and breadth! As many market crosses as are in the land shall have morsels of the traitor's carcass, who dare counsel such horrors to the heir of Scotland!—Well hope I, indeed, that the fever of thy wound, and the intoxicating influence of the cordials which act on thy infirm brain, have this night operated on thee, rather than any fixed purpose.'

'In sooth, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'if I have said anything which could so greatly exasperate your Highness, it must have been by excess of zeal, mingled with imbecility of understanding. Surely I, of all men, am least likely to propose ambitious projects with a prospect of advantage to myself! Alas! my only future views must be to exchange lance and saddle for the breviary and the confessional. The convent of Lindores* must receive the maimed and impoverished Knight of Ramorny, who will there have ample leisure to meditate upon the text, "Put not thy faith in princes."'

'It is a goodly purpose,' said the prince, 'and we will not be lacking to promote it. Our separation, I thought, would have been but for a time—It must now be perpetual. Certainly, after such talk as we have held, it were meet that we should live asunder. But the convent of Lindores, or whatever other house receives thee, shall be richly endowed and highly favoured by us.—And now, Sir John of Ramorny, sleep—sleep—and forget this evil-omened conversation, in which the fever of disease and wine has rather, I trust, held colloquy, than your own proper thoughts.—Light to the door, Eviot.'

A call from Eviot summoned the attendants of the prince, who had been sleeping on the staircase and hall, exhausted by the revels of the evening.

'Is there none amongst you sober?' said the Duke of Rothsay, disgusted by the appearance of his attendants.

'Not a man—not a man,' answered the followers, with a drunken shout; 'we are none of us traitors to the Emperor of Merry-makers!'

'And are all of you turned into brutes, then?' said the prince.

'In obedience and imitation of your Grace,' answered one fellow; 'or if we are a little behind your Highness, one pull at the pitcher will'——

'Peace, beast!' said the Duke of Rothsay. 'Are there none of you sober, I say?'

'Yes, my noble liege,' was the answer, 'here is one false brother, Watkins the Englishman.'

'Come hither, then, Watkins, and aid me with a torch—Give me a cloak, too, and another bonnet, and take away this trumpery,' throwing down his coronet of feathers; 'I would I could throw off all my follies as easily.—English Wat, attend me alone, and the rest of you end your revelry, and doff your mumming habits. The holytide is expended, and the Fast has begun.'

'Our monarch has abdicated sooner than usual this night,' said one of the revel rout; but as the prince gave no encouragement, such as happened for the time to want the virtue of sobriety endeavoured to assume it as well as they could, and the whole of the late rioters began to adopt the appearance of a set of decent persons, who, having been surprised into intoxication, endeavoured to disguise their condition by assuming a double portion of formality of behaviour. In the interim, the prince, having made a hasty reform in his dress, was lighted to the door by the only sober man of the company, but in his progress thither had well-nigh stumbled over the sleeping bulk of the brute Bonthron.

'How now—is that vile beast in our way once more?' he said, in anger and disgust. 'Here, some of you, toss this caitiff into the horse-trough, that for once in his life he may be washed clean.'

While the train executed his commands, availing themselves of a fountain which was in the outer court, and while Bonthron underwent a discipline which he was incapable of resisting, otherwise than by some inarticulate groans and snorts, like those of a dying boar, the prince proceeded on his way to his apartments, in a mansion called the Constable's Lodgings, from the house being the property of the Earls of Errol. On the way, to divert his thoughts from the more unpleasing matters, the prince asked his companion how he came to be sober, when the rest of the party had been so much overcome with liquor.

'So please your honour's Grace,' replied English Wat, 'I confess it was very familiar in me to be sober when it was your Grace's pleasure that your train should be mad drunk; but in respect they were all Scottishmen but myself, I thought it argued no policy in getting drunk in their company; seeing that they only endure me even when we are all sober, and if the wine were uppermost, I might tell them a piece of my mind, and be paid with as many stabs as there are skenes in the good company.'

'So it is your purpose never to join any of the revels of our household?'

'Under favour, yes; unless it be your Grace's pleasure that the residue of your train should remain one day sober, to admit Will Watkins to get drunk without terror of his life.'

'Such occasion may arrive.—Where dost thou serve, Watkins?'

'In the stable, so please you.'

'Let our chamberlain bring thee into the household, as a yeoman of the night-watch. I like thy favour, and it is something to have one sober fellow in the house, although he is only such through the fear of death. Attend, therefore, near our person, and thou shalt find sobriety a thriving virtue.'

Meantime a load of care and fear added to the distress of Sir John Ramorny's sick chamber.

* [In Fifeshire.]

His reflections, disordered as they were by the opiate, fell into great confusion when the prince, in whose presence he had suppressed its effect by strong resistance, had left the apartment. His consciousness, which he had possessed perfectly during the interview, began to be very much disturbed. He felt a general sense that he had incurred a great danger; that he had rendered the prince his enemy, and that he had betrayed to him a secret which might affect his own life. In this state of mind and body, it was not strange that he should either dream, or else that his diseased organs should become subject to that species of phantasmagoria which is excited by the use of opium. He thought that the shade of Queen Annabella stood by his bedside, and demanded the youth whom she had placed under his charge, simple, virtuous, gay, and innocent.

'Thou hast rendered him reckless, dissolute, and vicious,' said the shade of pallid majesty. 'Yet I thank thee, John of Ramorny, ungrateful to me, false to thy word, and treacherous to my hopes. Thy hate shall counteract the evil which thy friendship has done to him. And well do I hope that, now thou art no longer his counsellor, a bitter penance on earth may purchase my ill-fated child pardon and acceptance in a better world.'

Ramorny stretched out his arms after his benefactress, and endeavoured to express contrition and excuse; but the countenance of the apparition became darker and sterner, till it was no longer that of the late queen, but presented the gloomy and haughty aspect of the Black Douglas—then the timid and sorrowful face of King Robert, who seemed to mourn over the approaching dissolution of his royal house—and then a group of fantastic features, partly hideous, partly ludicrous, which moped and chattered, and twisted themselves into unnatural and extravagant forms, as if ridiculing his endeavour to obtain an exact idea of their lineaments.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A purple land, where law secures not life.
BYRON.

THE morning of Ash Wednesday arose pale and bleak, as usual at this season in Scotland, where the worst and most inclement weather often occurs in the early spring months. It was a severe day of frost, and the citizens had to sleep away the consequences of the preceding holiday's debauchery. The sun had therefore risen for an hour above the horizon, before there was any general appearance of life among the inhabitants of Perth, so that it was some time after daybreak, when a citizen, going early to mass, saw the body of the luckless Oliver Proudfute lying on its face, across the kennel, in the manner in which he had fallen under the blow, as our readers will easily imagine, of Anthony Bonthron, the 'boy of the belt,' that is, the executioner of the pleasure, of John of Ramorny.

This early citizen was Allan Griffin, so termed because he was master of the Griffin inn; and the alarm which he raised soon brought together, first straggling neighbours, and by and by a concourse of citizens. At first, from the circumstance of the well-known buff-coat, and the crimson feather in the headpiece, the noise arose that it was the stout Smith that lay there slain. This false rumour continued for some time; for the host of the Griffin, who himself had been a magistrate, would not permit the body to be touched or stirred till Bailie Craigdallie arrived, so that the face was not seen.

'This concerns the Fair City, my friends,' he said; 'and if it is the stout Smith of the Wynd who lies here, the man lives not in Perth, who will not risk land and life to avenge him. Look you, the villains have struck him down behind his back, for there is not a man within ten Scotch miles of Perth, gentle or semple, Highland or Lowland, that would have met him face to face with such evil purpose. O, brave men of Perth! the flower of your manhood has been cut down, and that by a base and treacherous hand!'

A wild cry of fury arose from the people, who were fast assembling.

'We will take him on our shoulders,' said a strong butcher; 'we will carry him to the King's presence at the Dominican convent.'

'Ay, ay,' answered a blacksmith, 'neither bolt nor bar shall keep us from the King; neither monk nor mass shall break our purpose. A better armourer never laid hammer on anvil!'

'To the Dominicans! to the Dominicans!' shouted the assembled people.

'Bethink you, burghers,' said another citizen, 'our King is a good King, and loves us like his children. It is the Douglas and the Duke of Albany that will not let good King Robert hear the distresses of his people.'

'Are we to be slain in our own streets for the King's softness of heart?' said the butcher. 'The Bruce did otherwise. If the King will not keep us, we will keep ourselves. Ring the bells backward, every bell of them that is made of metal. Cry, and spare not, Saint Johnston's hunt is up!'*

'Ay,' cried another citizen, 'and let us to the holds of Albany and the Douglas, and burn them to the ground. Let the fires tell far and near that Perth knew how to avenge her stout Henry Gow! He has fought a score of times for the Fair City's right—let us show we can fight once to avenge his wrong. Hallo! ho! brave citizens, Saint Johnston's hunt is up!'

This cry, the well-known rallying word amongst the inhabitants of Perth, and seldom heard but on occasions of general uproar, was echoed from voice to voice; and one or two neighbouring steeples, of which the enraged citizens possessed themselves, either by consent of the priests, or in spite of their opposition, began to ring out the ominous alarm notes, in which, as the ordinary succession of the chimes was reversed, the bells were said to be rung backward.

Still, as the crowd thickened, and the roar waxed more universal and louder, Allan Griffin, a burly man, with a deep voice, and well respected among high and low, kept his station as he

* Note J. Saint Johnston's Hunt is up.

bestrode the corpse, and called loudly to the multitude to keep back, and wait the arrival of the magistrates.

'We must proceed by order in this matter, my masters; we must have our magistrates at our head. They are duly chosen and elected in our town-hall, good men and true every one; we will not be called rioters, or idle perturbators of the King's peace. Stand you still, and make room, for yonder comes Bailie Craigdallie, ay, and honest Simon Glover, to whom the Fair City is so much bounden. Alas, alas, my kind townsmen! his beautiful daughter was a bride yesternight — this morning the Fair Maid of Perth is a widow before she has been a wife!'

This new theme of sympathy increased the rage and sorrow of the crowd the more, as many women now mingled with them, who echoed back the alarm cry to the men.

'Ay, ay, Saint Johnston's hunt is up! For the Fair Maid of Perth and the brave Henry Gow! Up, up, every one of you, spare not for your skin-cutting! To the stables!—to the stables!—when the horse is gone the man-at-arms is useless—cut off the grooms and yeomen; lame, maim, and stab the horses; kill the base squires and pages. Let these proud knights meet us on their feet if they dare!'

'They dare not—they dare not,' answered the men; 'their strength is in their horses and armour; and yet the haughty and ungrateful villains have slain a man whose skill as an armourer was never matched in Milan or Venice. —To arms! to arms, brave burghers! Saint Johnston's hunt is up!'

Amid this clamour, the magistrates and superior class of inhabitants with difficulty obtained room to examine the body, having with them the town-clerk to take an official protocol, or, as it is still called, a precognition, of the condition in which it was found. To these delays the multitude submitted, with a patience and order which strongly marked the national character of a people, whose resentment has always been the more deeply dangerous, that they will, without relaxing their determination of vengeance, submit with patience to all delays which are necessary to insure its attainment. The multitude, therefore, received their magistrates with a loud cry, in which the thirst of revenge was announced, together with the deferential welcome to the patrons by whose direction they expected to obtain it in right and legal fashion.

While these accents of welcome still rung above the crowd, who now filled the whole adjacent streets, receiving and circulating a thousand varying reports, the fathers of the city caused the body to be raised and more closely examined; when it was instantly perceived, and the truth publicly announced, that not the armourer of the Wynd, so highly, and, according to the esteemed qualities of the time, so justly popular among his fellow-citizens, but a man of far less general estimation, though not without his own value in society, lay murdered before them—the brisk Bonnet-maker, Oliver Proudfute. The resentment of the people had so much turned upon the general opinion, that their frank and brave champion, Henry Gow, was the slaughtered person, that the contradiction of the report served to cool the general fury, although, if poor Oliver had been recognised at first, there is little doubt that the cry of vengeance would have been as unanimous, though not probably so furious, as in the case of Henry Wynd.* The first circulation of the unexpected intelligence even excited a smile among the crowd, so near are the confines of the ludicrous to those of the terrible.

'The murderers have without doubt taken him for Henry Smith,' said Griffin, 'which must have been a great comfort to him in the circumstances.'

But the arrival of other persons on the scene soon restored its deeply tragic character.

CHAPTER XIX.

> Who's that that rings the bell?—Diabolus, ho!
> The town will rise.—
>
> OTHELLO, *Act II. Scene* 3.

THE wild rumours which flew through the town, speedily followed by the tolling of the alarm bells, spread general consternation. The nobles and knights, with their followers, gathered in different places of rendezvous, where a defence could best be maintained; and the alarm reached the royal residence, where the young prince was one of the first to appear, to assist, if necessary, in the defence of the old king. The scene of the preceding night ran in his recollection; and remembering the blood-stained figure of Bonthron, he conceived, though indistinctly, that the ruffian's action had been connected with this uproar. The subsequent and more interesting discourse with Sir John Ramorny had, however, been of such an impressive nature as to obliterate all traces of what he had vaguely heard of the bloody act of the assassin, excepting a confused recollection that some one or other had been slain. It was chiefly on his father's account that he had assumed arms with his household train, who, clad in bright armour, and bearing lances in their hands, made now a figure very different from that of the preceding night, when they appeared as intoxicated Bacchanalians. The kind old monarch received this mark of filial attachment with tears of gratitude, and proudly presented his son to his brother Albany, who entered shortly afterwards. He took them each by the hand.

'Now are we three Stuarts,' he said, 'as inseparable as the holy trefoil; and, as they say the wearer of that sacred herb mocks at magical delusion, so we, while we are true to each other, may set malice and enmity at defiance.'

The brother and son kissed the kind hand which pressed theirs, while Robert III. expressed his confidence in their affection. The kiss of the youth was, for the time, sincere; that of the brother was the salute of the apostate Judas.

In the meantime the bell of Saint John's Church alarmed, amongst others, the inhabitants

* Note K. Henry Smith or Wynd.

of Curfew Street. In the house of Simon Glover, old Dorothy Glover, as she was called (for she also took name from the trade she practised, under her master's auspices) was the first to catch the sound. Though somewhat deaf upon ordinary occasions, her ear for bad news was as sharp as a kite's scent for carrion; for Dorothy, otherwise an industrious, faithful, and even affectionate creature, had that strong appetite for collecting and retailing sinister intelligence, which is often to be marked in the lower classes. Little accustomed to be listened to, they love the attention which a tragic tale insures to the bearer, and enjoy, perhaps, the temporary equality to which misfortune reduces those who are ordinarily accounted their superiors. Dorothy had no sooner possessed herself of a slight packet of the rumours which were flying abroad, than she bounced into her master's bedroom, who had taken the privilege of age and the holytide to sleep longer than usual.

'There he lies, honest man!' said Dorothy, half in a screeching, and half in a wailing tone of sympathy,—'There he lies; his best friend slain, and he knowing as little about it as the babe new born, that kens not life from death.'

'How now!' said the Glover, starting up out of his bed,—'What is the matter, old woman? is my daughter well?'

'Old woman!' said Dorothy, who, having her fish hooked, chose to let him play a little. 'I am not so old,' said she, flouncing out of the room, 'as to bide in a place till a man rises from his naked bed'——

And presently she was heard at a distance in the parlour beneath, melodiously singing to the scrubbing of her own broom.

'Dorothy—screech-owl—devil,—say but my daughter is well!'

'I *am* well, my father,' answered the Fair Maid of Perth, speaking from her bedroom, 'perfectly well; but what, for Our Lady's sake, is the matter? The bells ring backward, and there is shrieking and crying in the streets.'

'I will presently know the cause.—Here, Conachar, come speedily and tie my points.—I forgot—the Highland loon is far beyond Fortingall.*—Patience, daughter, I will presently bring you news.'

'Ye need not hurry yourself for that, Simon Glover,' quoth the obdurate old woman; 'the best and the worst of it may be tauld before you could hobble over your door-stane. I ken the haill story abroad; for, thought I, our goodman is so wilful, that he'll be for banging out to the tuilzie, be the cause what it like; and sae I maun e'en stir my shanks, and learn the cause of all this, or he will hae his auld nose in the midst of it, and maybe get it nipt off before he knows what for.'

'And what *is* the news, then, old woman?' said the impatient Glover, still busying himself with the hundred points or latchets, which were the means of attaching the doublet to the hose.

Dorothy suffered him to proceed in his task, till she conjectured it must be nearly accomplished; and foresaw that, if she told not the secret herself, her master would be abroad to seek in person for the cause of the disturbance. She therefore hollowed out—'Aweel, aweel, ye canna say it is my fault, if you hear ill news before you have been at the morning mass. I would have kept it from ye till ye had heard the priest's word; but since you must hear it, you have e'en lost the truest friend that ever gave hand to another, and Perth maun mourn for the bravest burgher that ever took a blade in hand!'

'Harry Smith! Harry Smith!' exclaimed the father and the daughter at once.

'O ay, there ye hae it at last,' said Dorothy; 'and whase fault was it but your ain?—ye made such a piece of work about his companying with a glee-woman, as if he had companied with a Jewess!'

Dorothy would have gone on long enough, but her master exclaimed to his daughter, who was still in her own apartment, 'It is nonsense, Catharine—all the dotage of an old fool. No such thing has happened. I will bring you the true tidings in a moment;' and, snatching up his staff, the old man hurried out past Dorothy, and into the street, where the throng of people were rushing towards the High Street. Dorothy, in the meantime, kept muttering to herself, 'Thy father is a wise man, take his ain word for it. He will come next by some scathe in the hobbleshow, and then it will be, Dorothy, get the lint, and, Dorothy, spread the plaster; but now it is nothing but nonsense, and a lie, and impossibility, that can come out of Dorothy's mouth—Impossible! Does auld Simon think that Harry Smith's head was as hard as his stithy, and a haill clan of Highlandmen dinging at him?'

Here she was interrupted by a figure like an angel, who came wandering by her, with wild eye, cheek deadly pale, hair dishevelled, and an apparent want of consciousness, which terrified the old woman out of her discontented humour.

'Our Lady bless my bairn!' said she. 'What look you sae wild for?'

'Did you not say some one was dead?' said Catharine, with a frightful uncertainty of utterance, as if her organs of speech and hearing served her but imperfectly.

'Dead, hinny! Ay, ay, dead enouch; ye'll no hae him to gloom at ony mair.'

'Dead!' repeated Catharine, still with the same uncertainty of voice and manner. 'Dead—slain—and by Highlanders?'

'I'se warrant by Highlanders—the lawless loons. Wha is it else that kills maist of the folk about, unless now and then when the burghers take a tirrivie, and kill ane another, or whiles that the knights and nobles shed blood? But I'se uphauld it's been the Highlandmen this bout. The man was no in Perth, laird or loon, durst have faced Henry Smith man to man. There's been sair odds against him; ye'll see that when it's looked into.'

'Highlanders!' repeated Catharine, as if haunted by some idea which troubled her senses. 'Highlanders!—O, Conachar! Conachar!'

'Indeed, and I daresay you have lighted on the very man, Catharine. They quarrelled, as you saw, on the Saint Valentine's Even, and had

* [A village in the north-west of Perthshire, not far from the north shore of Loch Tay.]

a warstle. A Highlandman has a long memory for the like of that. Gie him a cuff at Martinmas, and his cheek will be tingling at Whitsunday. But what could have brought down the lang-legged loons to do their bloody wark within burgh?'

'Woe's me, it was I,' said Catharine; 'it was I brought the Highlanders down—I that sent for Conachar—ay, they have lain in wait—but it was I that brought them within reach of their prey. But I will see with my own eyes—and then—something we will do. Say to my father I will be back anon.'

'Are ye distraught, lassie?' shouted Dorothy, as Catharine made past her towards the street door. 'You would not gang into the street with the hair hanging down your haffets in that guise, and you kenned for the Fair Maid of Perth?—Mass! but she's out in the street, come o't what like, and the auld Glover will be as mad as if I could withhold her, will she nill she, flyte she fling she.—This is a brave morning for an Ash Wednesday!—What's to be done? If I were to seek my master among the multitude, I were like to be crushed beneath their feet, and little moan made for the old woman—And am I to run after Catharine, who ere this is out of sight, and far lighter of foot than I am?—so I will just down the gate to Nicol Barber's, and tell him a' about it!'

While the trusty Dorothy was putting her prudent resolve into execution, Catharine ran through the streets of Perth in a manner which at another moment would have brought on her the attention of every one who saw her, hurrying on with a reckless impetuosity wildly and widely different from the ordinary decency and composure of her step and manner, and without the plaid, scarf, or mantle, which 'women of good,' of fair character and decent rank, universally carried around them when they went abroad. But, distracted as the people were, every one inquiring or telling the cause of the tumult, and most recounting it different ways, the negligence of her dress and discomposure of her manner made no impression on any one; and she was suffered to press forward on the path she had chosen without attracting more notice than the other females, who, stirred by anxious curiosity or fear, had come out to inquire the cause of an alarm so general—it might be to seek for friends, for whose safety they were interested.

As Catharine passed along, she felt all the wild influence of the agitating scene, and it was with difficulty she forbore from repeating the cries of lamentation and alarm which were echoed around her. In the meantime she rushed rapidly on, embarrassed, like one in a dream, with a strange sense of dreadful calamity, the precise nature of which she was unable to define, but which implied the terrible consciousness that the man who loved her so fondly, whose good qualities she so highly esteemed, and whom she now felt to be dearer than perhaps she would before have acknowledged to her own bosom, was murdered, and most probably by her means. The connection betwixt Henry's supposed death, and the descent of Conachar and his followers, though adopted by her in a moment of extreme and engrossing emotion, was sufficiently probable to have been received for truth, even if her understanding had been at leisure to examine its credibility. Without knowing what she sought, except the general desire to know the worst of the dreadful report, she hurried forward to the very spot, which, of all others, her feelings of the preceding day would have induced her to avoid.

Who would, upon the evening of Shrovetide, have persuaded the proud, the timid, the shy, the rigidly decorous Catharine Glover, that before mass on Ash Wednesday she should rush through the streets of Perth, making her way amidst tumult and confusion, with her hair unbound and her dress disarranged, to seek the house of that same lover, who, she had reason to believe, had so grossly and indelicately neglected and affronted her, as to pursue a low and licentious amour! Yet so it was; and her eagerness taking, as if by instinct, the road which was most free, she avoided the High Street, where the pressure was greatest, and reached the Wynd by the narrow lanes on the northern skirt of the town, through which Henry Smith had formerly escorted Louise. But even these comparatively lonely passages were now astir with passengers, so general was the alarm. Catharine Glover made her way through them, however, while such as observed her looked on each other, and shook their heads in sympathy with her distress. At length, without any distinct idea of her own purpose, she stood before her lover's door, and knocked for admittance.

The silence which succeeded the echoing of her hasty summons increased the alarm which had induced her to take this desperate measure.

'Open—open, Henry!' she cried. 'Open, if you yet live!—Open, if you would not find Catharine Glover dead upon your threshold!'

As she cried thus frantically, to ears which she was taught to believe were stopped by death, the lover she invoked opened the door in person, just in time to prevent her sinking on the ground. The extremity of his ecstatic joy upon an occasion so unexpected, was qualified only by the wonder which forbade him to believe it real, and by his alarm at the closed eyes, half opened and blanched lips, total absence of complexion, and apparently total cessation of breathing.

Henry had remained at home, in spite of the general alarm, which had reached his ears for a considerable time, fully determined to put himself in the way of no brawls that he could avoid; and it was only in compliance with a summons from the magistrates, which, as a burgher, he was bound to obey, that, taking his sword and a spare buckler from the wall, he was about to go forth, for the first time unwillingly, to pay his service, as his tenure bound him.

'It is hard,' he said, 'to be put forward in all the town feuds, when the fighting work is so detestable to Catharine. I am sure there are enough of wenches in Perth, that say to their gallants, "Go out—do your devoir bravely, and win your lady's grace;" and yet they send not for their lovers, but for me, who cannot do the duties of a man to protect a minstrel woman, or of a burgess who fights for the honour of his town, but this peevish Catharine uses me as if I were a brawler and bordeller!'

Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind, when, as he opened his door to issue forth, the person dearest to his thoughts, but whom he certainly least expected to see, was present to his eyes, and dropped into his arms.

His mixture of surprise, joy, and anxiety did not deprive him of the presence of mind which the occasion demanded. To place Catharine Glover in safety, and recall her to herself, was to be thought of before rendering obedience to the summons of the magistrates, however pressingly that had been delivered. He carried his lovely burden, as light as a feather, yet more precious than the same quantity of purest gold, into a small bed-chamber which had been his mother's. It was the most fit for an invalid, as it looked into the garden, and was separated from the noise of the tumult.

'Here—Nurse—Nurse Shoolbred—come quick—come for death and life—here is one wants thy help!'

Up trotted the old dame. 'If it should but prove any one that will keep thee out of the scuffle'—for she also had been aroused by the noise—but what was her astonishment, when, placed in love and reverence on the bed of her late mistress, and supported by the athletic arms of her foster-son, she saw the apparently lifeless form of the Fair Maid of Perth! 'Catharine Glover!' she said; 'and, Holy Mother—a dying woman, as it would seem!'

'Not so, old woman,' said her foster-son; 'the dear heart throbs—the sweet breath comes and returns! Come thou, that may aid her more meetly than I—bring water—essences—whatever thy old skill can devise. Heaven did not place her in my arms to die, but to live for herself and me!'

With an activity which her age little promised, Nurse Shoolbred collected the means of restoring animation; for, like many women of the period, she understood what was to be done in such cases, nay, possessed a knowledge of treating wounds of an ordinary description, which the warlike propensities of her foster-son kept in pretty constant exercise.

'Come now,' she said, 'son Henry, unfold your arms from about my patient—though she is worth the pressing—and set thy hands at freedom to help me with what I want.—Nay, I will not insist on your quitting her hand, if you will beat the palm gently, as the fingers unclose their clenched grasp.'

'*I* beat her slight beautiful hand!' said Henry; 'you were as well bid me beat a glass cup with a fore-hammer, as tap her fair palm with my horn-hard fingers.—But the fingers do unfold, and we will find a better way than beating;' and he applied his lips to the pretty hand, whose motion indicated returning sensation. One or two deep sighs succeeded, and the Fair Maid of Perth opened her eyes, fixed them on her lover, as he kneeled by the bedside, and again sunk back on the pillow. As she withdrew not her hand from her lover's hold or from his grasp, we must in charity believe that the return to consciousness was not so complete as to make her aware that he abused the advantage, by pressing it alternately to his lips and his bosom. At the same time, we are compelled to own that the blood was colouring in her cheek, and that her breathing was deep and regular, for a minute or two during this relapse.

The noise at the door began now to grow much louder, and Henry was called for by all his various names, of Smith, Gow, and Hal of the Wynd, as heathens used to summon their deities by different epithets. At last, like Portuguese Catholics when exhausted with entreating their saints, the crowd without had recourse to vituperative exclamations.

'Out upon you, Henry! You are a disgraced man, man-sworn to your burgher-oath, and a traitor to the Fair City, unless you come instantly forth!'

It would seem that Nurse Shoolbred's applications were now so far successful, that Catharine's senses were in some measure restored; for, turning her face more towards that of her lover than her former posture permitted, she let her right hand fall on his shoulder, leaving her left still in his possession, and seeming slightly to detain him, while she whispered, 'Do not go, Henry—stay with me—they will kill thee, these men of blood.'

It would seem that this gentle invocation, the result of finding the lover alive whom she expected to have only recognised as a corpse, though it was spoken so low as scarcely to be intelligible, had more effect to keep Henry Wynd in his present posture, than the repeated summons of many voices from without had to bring him down-stairs.

'Mass, townsmen,' cried one hardy citizen to his companions, 'the saucy Smith but jests with us! Let us into the house, and bring him out by the lug and the horn.'

'Take care what you are doing,' said a more cautious assailant. 'The man that presses on Henry Gow's retirement may go into his house with sound bones, but will return with ready-made work for the surgeon.—But here comes one has good right to do our errand to him, and make the recreant hear reason on both sides of his head.'

The person of whom this was spoken was no other than Simon Glover himself. He had arrived at the fatal spot where the unlucky Bonnet-maker's body was lying, just in time to discover, to his great relief, that when it was turned with the face upwards by Bailie Craigdallie's orders, the features of the poor braggart Proudfute were recognised, when the crowd expected to behold those of their favourite champion, Henry Smith. A laugh, or something approaching to one, went among those who remembered how hard Oliver had struggled to obtain the character of a fighting man, however foreign to his nature and disposition, and remarked now that he had met with a mode of death much better suited to his pretensions than to his temper. But this tendency to ill-timed mirth, which savoured of the rudeness of the times, was at once hushed by the voice, and cries, and exclamations of a woman, who struggled through the crowd, screaming at the same time, —'O, my husband!—my husband!'

Room was made for the sorrower, who was followed by two or three female friends. Maudie Proudfute had been hitherto only noticed as a

good-looking, black-haired woman, believed to be *dink** and disdainful to those whom she thought meaner or poorer than herself, and lady and empress over her late husband, whom she quickly caused to lower his crest when she chanced to hear him crowing out of season. But now, under the influence of powerful passion, she assumed a far more imposing character.

'Do you laugh,' she said, 'you unworthy burghers of Perth, because one of your own citizens has poured his blood into the kennel?—or do you laugh because the deadly lot has lighted on my husband? How has he deserved this?—Did he not maintain an honest house by his own industry, and keep a creditable board, where the sick had welcome, and the poor had relief? Did he not lend to those who wanted—stand by his neighbours as a friend—keep counsel, and do justice like a magistrate?'

'It is true, it is true,' answered the assembly; 'his blood is our blood, as much as if it were Henry Gow's.'

'You speak truth, neighbours,' said Bailie Craigdallie; 'and this feud cannot be patched up as the former was.—Citizen's blood must not flow unavenged down our kennels, as if it were ditch-water, or we shall soon see the broad Tay crimsoned with it. But this blow was never meant for the poor man on whom it has unhappily fallen. Every one knew what Oliver Proudfute was, how wide he would speak, and how little he would do. He has Henry Smith's buff-coat, target, and headpiece. All the town know them as well as I do; there is no doubt on't. He had the trick, as you know, of trying to imitate the Smith in most things. Some one, blind with rage, or perhaps through liquor, has stricken the innocent Bonnet-maker, whom no man either hated or feared, or indeed cared either much or little about, instead of the stout Smith, who has twenty feuds upon his hands.'

'What then is to be done, Bailie?' cried the multitude.

'That, my friends, your magistrates will determine for you, as we shall instantly meet together when Sir Patrick Charteris cometh here, which must be anon. Meanwhile, let the chirurgeon Dwining examine that poor piece of clay, that he may tell us how he came by his fatal death; and then let the corpse be decently swathed in a clean shroud, as becomes an honest citizen, and placed before the high altar in the church of Saint John, the patron of the Fair City. Cease all clamour and noise, and every defensible man of you, as you would wish well to the Fair Town, keep his weapons in readiness, and be prepared to assemble on the High Street, at the tolling of the common bell from the town-house, and we will either revenge the death of our fellow-citizen, or else we shall take such fortune as Heaven will send us. Meanwhile, avoid all quarrelling with the knights and their followers, till we know the innocent from the guilty.—But wherefore tarries this knave Smith? He is ready enough in tumults when his presence is not wanted, and lags he now when his presence may serve the Fair City?—What ails him, doth any one know? Hath he been upon the frolic last Fastern's Even?'

'Rather he is sick or sullen, Master Bailie,' said one of the city's mairs, or sergeants; 'for though he is within door, as his knaves report, yet he will neither answer to us nor admit us.'

'So please your worship, Master Bailie,' said Simon Glover, 'I will go myself to fetch Henry Smith. I have some little difference to make up with him. And blessed be Our Lady, who hath so ordered it, that I find him alive, as a quarter of an hour since I could never have expected!'

'Bring the stout Smith to the Council-house,' said the bailie, as a mounted yeoman pressed through the crowd, and whispered in his ear,—'Here is a good fellow, who says the Knight of Kinfauns is entering the port.'

Such was the occasion of Simon Glover presenting himself at the house of Henry Gow at the period already noticed.

Unrestrained by the considerations of doubt and hesitation which influenced others, he repaired to the parlour; and, having overheard the bustling of Dame Shoolbred, he took the privilege of intimacy to ascend to the bedroom, and, with the slight apology of—'I crave your pardon, good neighbour,' he opened the door, and entered the apartment, where a singular and unexpected sight awaited him. At the sound of his voice, May Catharine experienced a revival much speedier than Dame Shoolbred's restoratives had been able to produce; and the paleness of her complexion changed into a deep glow of the most lovely red. She pushed her lover from her with both her hands, which, until this minute, her want of consciousness, or her affection, awakened by the events of the morning, had well-nigh abandoned to his caresses. Henry Smith, bashful as we know him, stumbled as he rose up; and none of the party were without a share of confusion, excepting Dame Shoolbred, who was glad to make some pretext to turn her back to the others, in order that she might enjoy a laugh at their expense, which she felt herself utterly unable to restrain, and in which the Glover, whose surprise, though great, was of short duration, and of a joyful character, sincerely joined.

'Now, by good Saint John,' he said, 'I thought I had seen a sight this morning that would cure me of laughter, at least till Lent was over; but this would make me curl my cheek, if I were dying. Why, here stands honest Henry Smith, who was lamented as dead, and tolled out for from every steeple in town, alive, merry, and, as it seems from his ruddy complexion, as like to live as any man in Perth. And here is my precious daughter, that yesterday would speak of nothing but the wickedness of the wights that haunt profane sports, and protect glee-maidens—Ay, she who set Saint Valentine and Saint Cupid both at defiance,—here she is, turned a glee-maiden herself, for what I can see! Truly I am glad to see that you, my good Dame Shoolbred, who give way to no disorder, have been of this loving party.'

'You do me wrong, my dearest father,' said Catharine, as if about to weep. 'I came here

* Contemptuous—scornful of others.

with far different expectations than you suppose. I only came because—because'——

'Because you expected to find a dead lover,' said her father, 'and you found a living one, who can receive the tokens of your regard, and return them. Now, were it not a sin, I could find in my heart to thank Heaven that thou hast been surprised at last into owning thyself a woman—Simon Glover is not worthy to have an absolute saint for his daughter.—Nay, look not so piteously, nor expect condolence from me! Only I will try not to look merry, if you will be pleased to stop your tears, or confess them to be tears of joy.'

'If I were to die for such a confession,' said poor Catharine, 'I could not tell what to call them. Only believe, dear father, and let Henry believe, that I would never have come hither, unless—unless'——

'Unless you had thought that Henry could not come to you,' said her father. 'And now, shake hands in peace and concord, and agree as Valentines should. Yesterday was Shrovetide, Henry—We will hold that thou hast confessed thy follies, hast obtained absolution, and art relieved of all the guilt thou stoodest charged with.'

'Nay, touching that, father Simon,' said the Smith, 'now that you are cool enough to hear me, I can swear on the Gospels, and I can call my nurse, Dame Shoolbred, to witness'——

'Nay, nay,' said the Glover, 'but wherefore rake up differences, which should all be forgotten?'

'Hark ye, Simon!—Simon Glover!' This was now echoed from beneath.

'True, son Smith,' said the Glover seriously, 'we have other work in hand. You and I must to the Council instantly. Catharine shall remain here with Dame Shoolbred, who will take charge of her till we return; and then, as the town is in misrule, we two, Harry, will carry her home, and they will be bold men that cross us.'

'Nay, my dear father,' said Catharine, with a smile, 'now you are taking Oliver Proudfute's office. That doughty burgher is Henry's brother-at-arms.'

Her father's countenance grew dark.

'You have spoke a stinging word, daughter; but you know not what has happened.—Kiss him, Catharine, in token of forgiveness.'

'Not so,' said Catharine; 'I have done him too much grace already. When he has seen the errant damsel safe home, it will be time enough to claim his reward.'

'Meantime,' said Henry, 'I will claim, as your host, what you will not allow me on other terms.'

He folded the fair maiden in his arms, and was permitted to take the salute which she had refused to bestow.

As they descended the stair together, the old man laid his hand on the Smith's shoulder, and said, 'Henry, my dearest wishes are fulfilled; but it is the pleasure of the saints that it should be in an hour of difficulty and terror.'

'True,' said the Smith; 'but thou knowest, father, if our riots be frequent at Perth, at least they seldom last long.'

Then, opening a door which led from the house into the smithy 'Here, comrades,' he cried, 'Anton, Cuthbert, Dingwell, and Ringan! Let none of you stir from the place till I return. Be as true as the weapons I have taught you to forge; a French crown and a Scotch merry-making for you, if you obey my command. I leave a mighty treasure in your charge. Watch the doors well—let little Janniken scout up and down the Wynd, and have your arms ready if any one approaches the house. Open the doors to no man, till father Glover or I return; it concerns my life and happiness.'

The strong swarthy giants to whom he spoke, answered, 'Death to him who attempts it!'

'My Catharine is now as safe,' said he to her father, 'as if twenty men garrisoned a royal castle in her cause. We shall pass most quietly to the Council-house by walking through the garden.'

He led the way through a little orchard accordingly, where the birds which had been sheltered and fed during the winter by the good-natured artisan, early in the season as it was, were saluting the precarious smiles of a February sun with a few faint and interrupted attempts at melody.

'Hear these minstrels, father,' said the Smith; 'I laughed at them this morning in the bitterness of my heart, because the little wretches sung, with so much of winter before them. But now, methinks, I could bear a blithe chorus, for I have my Valentine as they have theirs; and whatever ill may lie before me for to-morrow, I am to-day the happiest man in Perth, city or county, burgh or landward.'

'Yet I must allay your joy,' said the old Glover, 'though, Heaven knows, I share it.—Poor Oliver Proudfute, the inoffensive fool that you and I knew so well, has been found this morning dead in the streets.'

'Only dead drunk, I trust?' said the Smith; 'nay, a caudle and a dose of matrimonial advice will bring him to life again.'

'No, Henry, no. He is slain—slain with a battle-axe, or some such weapon.'

'Impossible!' replied the Smith; 'he was light-footed enough, and would not for all Perth have trusted to his hands, when he could extricate himself by his heels.'

'No choice was allowed him. The blow was dealt in the very back of his head; he who struck must have been a shorter man than himself, and used a horseman's battle-axe, or some such weapon, for a Lochaber-axe must have struck the upper part of his head.—But there he lies dead, brained, I may say, by a most frightful wound.'

'This is inconceivable,' said Henry Wynd. 'He was in my house at midnight, in a morricer's habit; seemed to have been drinking, though not to excess. He told me a tale of having been beset by revellers, and being in danger; but, alas! you know the man; I deemed it was a swaggering fit, as he sometimes took when he was in liquor; and, may the Merciful Virgin forgive me! I let him go without company, in which I did him inhuman wrong. Holy Saint John be my witness! I would have gone with any helpless creature; and far more with him, with whom I have

so often sat at the same board, and drunken of the same cup. Who, of the race of man, could have thought of harming a creature so simple, and so unoffending, excepting by his idle vaunts?'

'Henry, he wore thy headpiece, thy buff-coat, thy target—How came he by these?'

'Why, he demanded the use of them for the night, and I was ill at ease, and well pleased to be rid of his company; having kept no holiday, and being determined to keep none, in respect of our misunderstanding.'

'It is the opinion of Bailie Craigdallie, and all our sagest councillors, that the blow was intended for yourself, and that it becomes you to prosecute the due vengeance of our fellow-citizen, who received the death which was meant for you.'

The Smith was for some time silent. They had now left the garden, and were walking in a lonely lane, by which they meant to approach the Council-house of the burgh, without being exposed to observation or idle inquiry.

'You are silent, my son, yet we two have much to speak of,' said Simon Glover. 'Bethink thee that this widowed woman Maudlin, if she should see cause to bring a charge against any one for the wrong done to her and her orphan children, must support it by a champion, according to law and custom; for, be the murderer who he may, we know enough of these followers of the nobles to be assured, that the party suspected will appeal to the combat, in derision, perhaps, of those whom they will call the cowardly burghers. While we are men with blood in our veins, this must not be, Henry Wynd.'

'I see where you would draw me, father,' answered Henry dejectedly; 'and Saint John knows I have heard a summons to battle as willingly as war-horse ever heard the trumpet. But bethink you, father, how I have lost Catharine's favour repeatedly, and have been driven well-nigh to despair of ever regaining it, for being, if I may say so, even too ready a man of my hands. And here are all our quarrels made up, and the hopes, that seemed this morning removed beyond earthly prospect, have become nearer and brighter than ever; and must I, with the dear one's kiss of forgiveness on my lips, engage in a new scene of violence, which you are well aware will give her the deepest offence?'

'It is hard for me to advise you, Henry,' said Simon; 'but this I must ask you—Have you, or have you not, reason to think that this poor unfortunate Oliver has been mistaken for you?'

'I fear it too much,' said Henry. 'He was thought something like me, and the poor fool had studied to ape my gestures and manner of walking, nay, the very airs which I have the trick of whistling, that he might increase a resemblance which has cost him dear. I have ill-willers enough, both in burgh and landward, to owe me a shrewd turn; and he, I think, could have none such.'

'Well, Henry, I cannot say but my daughter will be offended. She has been much with Father Clement, and has received notions about peace and forgiveness, which methinks suit ill with a country where the laws cannot protect us, unless we have spirit to protect ourselves. If you determine for the combat, I will do my best to persuade her to look on the matter as the other good womanhood in the burgh will do; and if you resolve to let the matter rest—the man who has lost his life for yours remaining unavenged—the widow and the orphans without any reparation for the loss of a husband and father—I will then do you the justice to remember, that I, at least, ought not to think the worse of you for your patience, since it was adopted for love of my child. But, Henry, we must in that case remove ourselves from bonnie Saint Johnston, for here we will be but a disgraced family.'

Henry groaned deeply, and was silent for an instant, then replied, 'I would rather be dead than dishonoured, though I should never see her again! Had it been yester evening, I would have met the best blade among these men-at-arms as blithely as ever I danced at a Maypole. But to-day, when she had first as good as said, "Henry Smith, I love thee!"—Father Glover, it is very hard. Yet it is all my own fault! This poor unhappy Oliver! I ought to have allowed him the shelter of my roof, when he prayed me in his agony of fear; or, had I gone with him, I should then have prevented or shared his fate. But I taunted him, ridiculed him, loaded him with maledictions, though the saints know they were uttered in idle peevishness of impatience. I drove him out from my doors, whom I knew so helpless, to take the fate which was perhaps intended for me. I must avenge him, or be dishonoured for ever. See, father—I have been called a man hard as the steel I work in—Does burnished steel ever drop tears like these?—Shame on me that I should shed them!'

'It is no shame, my dearest son,' said Simon; 'thou art as kind as brave, and I have always known it. There is yet a chance for us. No one may be discovered to whom suspicion attaches, and where none such is found, the combat cannot take place. It is a hard thing to wish that the innocent blood may not be avenged. But if the perpetrator of this foul murder be hidden for the present, thou wilt be saved from the task of seeking that vengeance which Heaven, doubtless, will take at its own proper time.'

As they spoke thus, they arrived at the point of the High Street where the Council-house was situated. As they reached the door, and made their way through the multitude who thronged the street, they found the avenues guarded by a select party of armed burghers, and about fifty spears belonging to the Knight of Kinfauns, who, with his allies, the Grays, Blairs, Moncreiffs, and others, had brought to Perth a considerable body of horse, of which these were a part. So soon as the Glover and Smith presented themselves, they were admitted to the chamber in which the magistrates were assembled.

CHAPTER XX.

A woman wails for justice at the gate,
A widow'd woman, wan and desolate.
BERTHA.

THE Council-room of Perth* presented a singular spectacle. In a gloomy apartment, ill and inconveniently lighted by two windows of different form and of unequal size, were assembled, around a large oaken table, a group of men, of whom those who occupied the higher seats were merchants, that is, guild brethren or shopkeepers, arrayed in decent dresses becoming their station, but most of them bearing, like the Regent York, 'signs of war around their aged necks;' gorgets, namely, and baldricks, which sustained their weapons. The lower places around the table were occupied by mechanics and artisans, the presidents, or deacons, as they were termed, of the working classes, in their ordinary clothes, somewhat better arranged than usual. These, too, wore pieces of armour of various descriptions. Some had the black jack, or doublet, covered with small plates of iron of a lozenge shape, which, secured through the upper angle, hung in rows above each, and which, swaying with the motion of the wearer's person, formed a secure defence to the body. Others had buff-coats, which, as already mentioned, could resist the blow of a sword, and even a lance's point, unless propelled with great force. At the bottom of the table, surrounded as it was with this varied assembly, sat Sir Louis Lundin; no military man, but a priest and parson of Saint John's, arrayed in his canonical dress, and having his pen and ink before him. He was town-clerk of the burgh, and, like all the priests of the period (who were called from that circumstance the Pope's knights), received the honourable title of *Dominus*, contracted into Dom, or Dan, or translated into SIR, the title of reverence due to the secular chivalry.

On an elevated seat, at the head of the Council-board, was placed Sir Patrick Charteris, in complete armour brightly burnished; a singular contrast to the motley mixture of warlike and peaceful attire exhibited by the burghers, who were only called to arms occasionally. The bearing of the Provost, while it completely admitted the intimate connection which mutual interests had created betwixt himself, the burgh, and the magistracy, was at the same time calculated to assert the superiority, which, in virtue of gentle blood and chivalrous rank, the opinions of the age assigned to him over the members of the assembly in which he presided. Two squires stood behind him, one of them holding the knight's pennon, and another his shield, bearing his armorial distinctions, being a hand holding a dagger, or short sword, with the proud motto, *This is my charter*. A handsome page displayed the long sword of his master, and another bore his lance; all which chivalrous emblems and appurtenances were the more scrupulously exhibited, that the dignitary to whom they belonged was engaged in discharging the office of a burgh magistrate. In his own person, the Knight of Kinfauns appeared to affect something of state and stiffness, which did not naturally pertain to his frank and jovial character.

'So you are come at length, Henry Smith and Simon Glover,' said the Provost. 'Know that you have kept us waiting for your attendance. Should it so chance again while we occupy this place, we will lay such a fine on you as you will have small pleasure in paying. Enough—make no excuses. They are not asked now, and another time they will not be admitted. Know, sirs, that our reverend clerk hath taken down in writing, and at full length, what I will tell you in brief, that you may see what is to be required of you, Henry Smith, in particular. Our late fellow-citizen, Oliver Proudfute, hath been found dead in the High Street, close by the entrance into the Wynd. It seemeth he was slain by a heavy blow with a short axe, dealt from behind and at unawares; and the act by which he fell can only be termed a deed of foul and forethought murder. So much for the crime. The criminal can only be indicated by circumstances. It is recorded in the protocol of the Reverend Sir Louis Lundin, that divers well-reputed witnesses saw our deceased citizen, Oliver Proudfute, till a late period, accompanying the Entry of the morrice-dancers,† of whom he was one, as far as the house of Simon Glover, in Curfew Street, where they again played their pageant. It is also manifested that at this place he separated from the rest of the band, after some discourse with Simon Glover, and made an appointment to meet with the others of his company at the sign of the Griffin, there to conclude the holiday.—Now, Simon, I demand of you whether this be truly stated, so far as you know? and further, what was the purport of the defunct Oliver Proudfute's discourse with you?'

'My Lord Provost and very worshipful Sir Patrick,' answered Simon Glover, 'you and this honourable Council shall know, that, touching certain reports which had been made of the conduct of Henry Smith, some quarrel had arisen between myself and another of my family, and the said Smith here present. Now, this our poor fellow-citizen, Oliver Proudfute, having been active in spreading these reports, as indeed his element lay in such gossipred, some words passed betwixt him and me on the subject; and, as I think, he left me with the purpose of visiting Henry Smith, for he broke off from the morrice-dancers, promising, as it seems, to meet them, as your honour has said, at the sign of the Griffin, in order to conclude the evening. But what he actually did, I know not, as I never again saw him in life.'

'It is enough,' said Sir Patrick, 'and agrees with all that we have heard.—Now, worthy sirs, we next find our poor fellow-citizen environed by a set of revellers and maskers, who had assembled in the High Street, by whom he was shamefully ill treated, being compelled to kneel down in the street, and there to quaff huge quantities of liquor against his inclination, until at length he escaped from them by flight.

Note L. The Council-room.

† Note M. Morrice-dancers.

This violence was accomplished with drawn swords, loud shouts, and imprecations, so as to attract the attention of several persons, who, alarmed by the tumult, looked out from their windows, as well as of one or two passengers, who, keeping aloof from the light of the torches, lest they also had been maltreated, beheld the usage which our fellow-citizen received in the High Street of the burgh. And although these revellers were disguised, and used vizards, yet their disguises were well known, being a set of quaint masking habits, prepared some weeks ago by command of Sir John Ramorny, master of the horse to his Royal Highness the Duke of Rothsay, Prince Royal of Scotland.'

A low groan went through the assembly.

'Yes; so it is, brave burghers,' continued Sir Patrick; 'our inquiries have led us into conclusions both melancholy and terrible. But as no one can regret the point at which they seem likely to arrive more than I do, so no man living can dread its consequences less. It is even so—various artisans employed upon the articles have described the dresses prepared for Sir John Ramorny's mask as being exactly similar to those of the men by whom Oliver Proudfute was observed to be maltreated. And one mechanic, being Wingfield the feather-dresser, who saw the revellers when they had our fellow-citizen within their hands, remarked that they wore the cinctures and coronals of painted feathers, which he himself had made by the order of the prince's master of the horse.

'After the moment of his escape from these revellers, we lose all trace of Oliver; but we can prove that the maskers went to Sir John Ramorny's, where they were admitted, after some show of delay. It is rumoured that thou, Henry Smith, sawest our unhappy fellow-citizen after he had been in the hands of these revellers —What is the truth of that matter?'

'He came to my house in the Wynd,' said Henry, 'about half-an-hour before midnight; and I admitted him, something unwillingly, as he had been keeping carnival while I remained at home; and there is ill talk, says the proverb, betwixt a full man and a fasting.'

'And in which plight seemed he when thou didst admit him?' said the Provost.

'He seemed,' answered the Smith, 'out of breath, and talked repeatedly of having been endangered by revellers. I paid but small regard, for he was ever a timorous, chicken-spirited, though well-meaning man, and I held that he was speaking more from fancy than reality. But I shall always account it for foul offence in myself, that I did not give him my company, which he requested; and if I live, I will found masses for his soul, in expiation of my guilt.'

'Did he describe those from whom he received the injury?' said the Provost.

'Revellers in masking habits,' replied Henry.

'And did he intimate his fear of having to do with them on his return?' again demanded Sir Patrick.

'He alluded particularly to his being waylaid, which I treated as visionary, having been able to see no one in the lane.'

'Had he then no help from thee of any kind whatsoever?' said the Provost.

'Yes, worshipful,' replied the Smith; 'he exchanged his morrice-dress for my headpiece, buff-coat, and target, which I hear were found upon his body; and I have at home his morrice-cap and bells, with the jerkin and other things pertaining. He was to return my garb of fence, and get back his own masking-suit this day, had the saints so permitted.'

'You saw him not then afterwards?'

'Never, my lord.'

'One word more,' said the Provost. 'Have you any reason to think that the blow which slew Oliver Proudfute was meant for another man?'

'I have,' answered the Smith; 'but it is doubtful, and may be dangerous to add such a conjecture, which is besides only a supposition.'

'Speak it out, on your burgher faith and oath—For whom, think you, was the blow meant?'

'If I must speak,' replied Henry, 'I believe Oliver Proudfute received the fate which was designed for myself; the rather that, in his folly, Oliver spoke of trying to assume my manner of walking, as well as my dress.'

'Have you feud with any one, that you form such an idea?' said Sir Patrick Charteris.

'To my shame and sin be it spoken, I have feud with Highland and Lowland, English and Scot, Perth and Angus. I do not believe poor Oliver had feud with a new-hatched chicken. —Alas! he was the more fully prepared for a sudden call!'

'Hark ye, Smith,' said the Provost,—'Answer me distinctly—Is there cause of feud between the household of Sir John Ramorny and yourself?'

'To a certainty, my lord, there is. It is now generally said that Black Quentin, who went over Tay to Fife some days since, was the owner of the hand which was found in Couvrefew Street upon the eve of Saint Valentine. It was I who struck off that hand with a blow of my good sword. As this Black Quentin was a chamberlain of Sir John, and much trusted, it is like there must be feud between me and his master's dependents.'

'It bears a likely front, Smith,' said Sir Patrick Charteris.—'And now, good brothers and wise magistrates, there are two suppositions, each of which leads to the same conclusion. The maskers who seized our fellow-citizen, and misused him in a manner of which his body retains some slight marks, may have met with their former prisoner as he returned homewards, and finished their ill usage by taking his life. He himself expressed to Henry Gow fears that this would be the case. If this be really true, one or more of Sir John Ramorny's attendants must have been the assassins. But I think it more likely that one or two of the revellers may have remained on the field, or returned to it, having changed perhaps their disguise, and that to those men (for Oliver Proudfute, in his own personal appearance, would only have been a subject of sport) his apparition in the dress, and assuming, as he proposed to do, the manner, of Henry Smith, was matter of deep hatred; and

that, seeing him alone, they had taken, as they thought, a certain and safe mode to rid themselves of an enemy so dangerous as all men know Henry Wynd is accounted by those that are his unfriends. The same train of reasoning, again, rests the guilt with the household of Sir John Ramorny.—How think you, sirs? Are we not free to charge the crime upon them?'

The magistrates whispered together for several minutes, and then replied by the voice of Bailie Craigdallie,—'Noble Knight, and our worthy Provost,—we agree entirely in what your wisdom has spoken concerning this dark and bloody matter; nor do we doubt your sagacity in tracing to the fellowship and the company of John Ramorny of that Ilk, the villany which hath been done to our deceased fellow-citizen, whether in his own character and capacity, or as mistaking him for our brave townsman, Henry of the Wynd. But Sir John, in his own behalf, and as the prince's master of the horse, maintains an extensive household; and as of course the charge will be rebutted by a denial, we would ask, how we shall proceed in that case?—It is true, could we find law for firing the lodging, and putting all within it to the sword, the old proverb of "short rede, good rede," might here apply; for a fouler household of defiers of God, destroyers of men, and debauchers of women, are nowhere sheltered than are in Ramorny's band. But I doubt that this summary mode of execution would scarce be borne out by the laws; and no tittle of evidence which I have heard will tend to fix the crime on any single individual or individuals.'

Before the Provost could reply, the town-clerk arose, and, stroking his venerable beard, craved permission to speak, which was instantly granted.—'Brethren,' he said, 'as well in our fathers' time as ours, hath God, on being rightly appealed to, condescended to make manifest the crimes of the guilty, and the innocence of those who may have been rashly accused. Let us demand from our sovereign lord, King Robert, who, when the wicked do not interfere to pervert his good intentions, is as just and clement a prince as our annals can show in their long line, in the name of the Fair City, and of all the commons in Scotland, that he give us, after the fashion of our ancestors, the means of appealing to Heaven for light upon this dark murder. We will demand the proof by *bier-right*, often granted in the days of our sovereign's ancestors, approved of by bulls and decretals, and administered by the great Emperor Charlemagne in France, by King Arthur in Britain, and by Gregory the Great, and the mighty Achaius,* in this our land of Scotland.'

'I have heard of the bier-right, Sir Louis,' quoth the Provost, 'and I know we have it in our charters of the Fair City; but I am something ill-learned in the ancient laws, and would pray you to inform us more distinctly of its nature.'

'We will demand of the King,' said Sir Louis Lundin, 'my advice being taken, that the body of our murdered fellow-citizen be transported into the High Church of Saint John,† and suitable masses said for the benefit of his soul, and for the discovery of his foul murder. Meantime, we shall obtain an order that Sir John Ramorny give up a list of such of his household as were in Perth in the course of the night between Fastern's Even and this Ash Wednesday, and become bound to present them on a certain day and hour, to be early named, in the High Church of Saint John; there one by one to pass before the bier of our murdered fellow-citizen, and in the form prescribed to call upon God and his saints to bear witness that he is innocent of the acting, art or part, of the murder. And credit me, as has been indeed proved by numerous instances, that if the murderer shall endeavour to shroud himself by making such an appeal, the antipathy which subsists between the dead body, and the hand which dealt the fatal blow that divorced it from the soul, will awaken some imperfect life, under the influence of which the veins of the dead man will pour forth at the fatal wounds the blood which has been so long stagnant in the veins. Or, to speak more certainly, it is the pleasure of Heaven, by some hidden agency which we cannot comprehend, to leave open this mode of discovering the wickedness of him who has defaced the image of his Creator.'

'I have heard this law talked of,' said Sir Patrick, 'and it was enforced in the Bruce's time. This surely is no unfit period to seek, by such a mystic mode of inquiry, the truth, to which no ordinary means can give us access, seeing that a general accusation of Sir John's household would full surely be met by a general denial. Yet I must crave further of Sir Louis, our reverend town-clerk, how we shall prevent the guilty person from escaping in the interim?'

'The burghers will maintain a strict watch upon the wall, drawbridges shall be raised, and portcullises lowered, from sunset to sunrise, and strong patrols maintained through the night. This guard the burghers will willingly maintain, to secure against the escape of the murderer of their townsman.'

The rest of the councillors acquiesced, by word, sign, and look, in this proposal.

'Again,' said the provost, 'what if any one of the suspected household refuse to submit to the ordeal of bier-right?'

'He may appeal to that of combat,' said the reverend city scribe, 'with an opponent of equal rank; because the accused person must have his choice, in the appeal to the judgment of God, by what ordeal he will be tried. But if he refuses both, he must be held as guilty, and so punished.'

The sages of the Council unanimously agreed with the opinion of their Provost and town-clerk, and resolved, in all formality, to petition the king, as a matter of right, that the murder of their fellow-citizen should be inquired into, according to this ancient form, which was held to manifest the truth, and received as matter of evidence in case of murder, so late as towards the end of the seventeenth century. But before

* [A legendary king of Scotland, a contemporary and ally of Charlemagne.]

† Note N. High Church of Saint John.

the meeting dissolved, Bailie Craigdallie thought it meet to inquire who was to be the champion of Maudie, or Magdalen Proudfute, and her two children.

'There need be little inquiry about that,' said Sir Patrick Charteris; 'we are men, and wear swords, which should be broken over the head of any one amongst us who will not draw it in behalf of the widows and orphans of our murdered fellow-citizen, and in brave revenge of his death. If Sir John Ramorny shall personally resent the inquiry, Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns will do battle with him to the outrance, whilst horse and man may stand, or spear and blade hold together. But in case the challenger be of yeomanly degree, well wot I that Magdalen Proudfute may choose her own champion among the bravest burghers of Perth, and shame and dishonour were it to the Fair City for ever, could she light upon one who were traitor and coward enough to say her nay! Bring her hither, that she may make her election.'

Henry Smith heard this with a melancholy anticipation that the poor woman's choice would light upon him, and that his recent reconciliation with his mistress would be again dissolved, by his being engaged in a fresh quarrel, from which there lay no honourable means of escape, and which, in any other circumstances, he would have welcomed as a glorious opportunity of distinguishing himself both in sight of the court and of the city. He was aware that, under the tuition of Father Clement, Catharine viewed the ordeal of battle rather as an insult to religion, than an appeal to the Deity, and did not consider it as reasonable, that superior strength of arm, or skill of weapon, should be resorted to as the proof of moral guilt or innocence. He had, therefore, much to fear from her peculiar opinions in this particular, refined as they were beyond those of the age she lived in.

While he thus suffered under these contending feelings, Magdalen, the widow of the slaughtered man, entered the court, wrapped in a deep mourning veil, and followed and supported by five or six women of gude (that is, of respectability), dressed in the same melancholy attire. One of her attendants held an infant in her arms, the last pledge of poor Oliver's nuptial affections. Another led a little tottering creature of two years or thereabouts, which looked with wonder and fear, sometimes on the black dress in which they had muffled him, and sometimes on the scene around him.

The assembly rose to receive the melancholy group, and saluted them with an expression of the deepest sympathy, which Magdalen, though the mate of poor Oliver, returned with an air of dignity, which she borrowed, perhaps, from the extremity of her distress. Sir Patrick Charteris then stepped forward, and with the courtesy of a knight to a female, and of a protector to an oppressed and injured widow, took the poor woman's hand, and explained to her briefly by what course the city had resolved to follow out the vengeance due for her husband's slaughter.

Having, with a softness and gentleness which did not belong to his general manner, ascertained that the unfortunate woman perfectly understood what was meant, he said aloud to the assembly, 'Good citizens of Perth, and freeborn men of guild and craft, attend to what is about to pass, for it concerns your rights and privileges. Here stands Magdalen Proudfute, desirous to follow forth the revenge due for the death of her husband, foully murdered, as she sayeth, by Sir John Ramorny, Knight of that Ilk, and which she offers to prove, by the evidence of bier-right, or by the body of a man. Therefore, I, Patrick Charteris, being a belted knight and freeborn gentleman, offer myself to do battle in her just quarrel, whilst man and horse may endure, if any one of my degree shall lift my glove.—How say you, Magdalen Proudfute, will you accept me for your champion?'

The widow answered with difficulty,—'I can desire none nobler.'

Sir Patrick then took her right hand in his, and, kissing her forehead, for such was the ceremony, said solemnly,—'So may God and Saint John prosper me at my need, as I will do my devoir as your champion, knightly, truly, and manfully. Go now, Magdalen, and choose, at your will, among the burgesses of the Fair City, present or absent, any one upon whom you desire to rest your challenge, if he against whom you bring plaint shall prove to be beneath my degree.'

All eyes were turned to Henry Smith, whom the general voice had already pointed out as in every respect the fittest to act as champion on the occasion. But the widow waited not for the general prompting of their looks. As soon as Sir Patrick had spoken, she crossed the floor to the place where, near the bottom of the table, the armourer stood among the men of his degree, and took him by the hand:—

'Henry Gow, or Smith,' she said, 'good burgher and craftsman, my—my'——

Husband, she would have said, but the word would not come forth; she was obliged to change the expression.

'He who is gone loved and prized you over all men; therefore, meet it is that thou shouldst follow out the quarrel of his widow and orphans.'

If there had been a possibility, which in that age there was not, of Henry's rejecting or escaping from a trust for which all men seemed to destine him, every wish and idea of retreat was cut off, when the widow began to address him; and a command from Heaven could hardly have made a stronger impression than did the appeal of the unfortunate Magdalen. Her allusion to his intimacy with the deceased moved him to the soul. During Oliver's life, doubtless, there had been a strain of absurdity in his excessive predilection for Henry, which, considering how very differerrt they were in character, had in it something ludicrous. But all this was now forgotten, and Henry, giving way to his natural ardour, only remembered that Oliver had been his friend and intimate; a man who had loved and honoured him as much as he was capable of entertaining such sentiments for any one; and above all, that there was much reason to suspect that the deceased had fallen victim to a blow meant for Henry himself.

It was therefore with an alacrity which, the

minute before, he could scarce have commanded, and which seemed to express a stern pleasure, that, having pressed his lips to the cold brow of the unhappy Magdalen, the armourer replied,—

'I, Henry the Smith, dwelling in the Wynd of Perth, good man and true, and freely born, accept the office of champion to this widow Magdalen, and these orphans, and will do battle in their quarrel to the death, with any man whomsoever of my own degree, and that so long as I shall draw breath. So help me at my need God and good Saint John!'

There arose from the audience a half-suppressed cry, expressing the interest which the persons present took in the prosecution of the quarrel, and their confidence in the issue.

Sir Patrick Charteris then took measures for repairing to the king's presence, and demanding leave to proceed with inquiry into the murder of Oliver Proudfute according to the custom of bier-right, and, if necessary, by combat.

He performed this duty after the Town Council had dissolved, in a private interview between himself and the king, who heard of this new trouble with much vexation, and appointed next morning, after mass, for Sir Patrick and the parties interested to attend his pleasure in council. In the meantime, a royal pursuivant was despatched to the Constable's lodgings, to call over the roll of Sir John Ramorny's attendants, and charge him, with his whole retinue, under high penalties, to abide within Perth until the king's pleasure should be further known.

CHAPTER XXI.

In God's name, see the lists and all things fit;
There let them end it—God defend the right!
HENRY IV. *Part II.*

IN the same council-room of the conventual palace of the Dominicans, King Robert was seated with his brother Albany, whose affected austerity of virtue, and real art and dissimulation, maintained so high an influence over the feeble-minded monarch. It was indeed natural that one who seldom saw things according to their real forms and outlines, should view them according to the light in which they were presented to him by a bold astucious man, possessing the claim of such near relationship.

Ever anxious on account of his misguided and unfortunate son, the king was now endeavouring to make Albany coincide in opinion with him, in exculpating Rothsay from any part in the death of the Bonnet-maker, the precognition concerning which had been left by Sir Patrick Charteris for his Majesty's consideration.

'This is an unhappy matter, brother Robin,' he said, 'a most unhappy occurrence; and goes nigh to put strife and quarrel betwixt the nobility and the commons here, as they have been at war together in so many distant lands. I see but one cause of comfort in the matter, and that is, that Sir John Ramorny having received his dismissal from the Duke of Rothsay's family, it cannot be said that he or any of his people, who may have done this bloody deed (if it has truly been done by them), have been encouraged or hounded out upon such an errand by my poor boy. I am sure, brother, you and I can bear witness how readily, upon my entreaties, he agreed to dismiss Ramorny from his service, on account of that brawl in Curfew Street?'

'I remember his doing so,' said Albany; 'and well I do hope that the connection betwixt the prince and Ramorny has not been renewed since he seemed to comply with your Grace's wishes.'

'Seemed to comply?—The connection renewed?' said the king; 'what mean you by these expressions, brother? Surely, when David promised to me that, if that unhappy matter of Curfew Street were but smothered up and concealed, he would part with Ramorny, as he was a counsellor thought capable of involving him in similar fooleries, and would acquiesce in our inflicting on him either exile, or such punishment as it should please us to impose—surely you cannot doubt that he was sincere in his professions, and would keep his word? Remember you not, that when you advised that a heavy fine should be levied upon his estate in Fife in lieu of banishment, the prince himself seemed to say that exile would be better for Ramorny, and even for himself?'

'I remember it well, my royal brother. Nor, truly, could I have suspected Ramorny of having so much influence over the prince, after having been accessory to placing him in a situation so perilous, had it not been for my royal kinsman's own confession, alluded to by your Grace, that, if suffered to remain at court, he might still continue to influence his conduct. I then regretted I had advised a fine in place of exile. But that time is past, and now new mischief has occurred, fraught with much peril to your Majesty, as well as to your royal heir, and to the whole kingdom.'

'What mean you, Robin?' said the weak-minded king. 'By the tomb of our parents! by the soul of Bruce, our immortal ancestor! I entreat thee, my dearest brother, to take compassion on me. Tell me what evil threatens my son, or my kingdom?'

The features of the king, trembling with anxiety, and his eyes brimful of tears, were bent upon his brother, who seemed to assume time for consideration ere he replied.

'My lord, the danger lies here. Your Grace believes that the prince had no accession to this second aggression upon the citizens of Perth—the slaughter of this bonnet-making fellow, about whose death they clamour, as a set of gulls about their comrade, when one of the noisy brood is struck down by a boy's shaft.'

'Their lives,' said the king, 'are dear to themselves and their friends, Robin.'

'Truly, ay, my liege; and they make them dear to us too, ere we can settle with the knaves for the least blood-witt.—But, as I said, your Majesty thinks the prince had no share in this last slaughter: I will not attempt to shake your belief in that delicate point, but will endeavour to believe along with you. What you think is rule for me. Robert of Albany will never think otherwise than Robert of broad Scotland.'

'Thank you, thank you,' said the king, taking his brother's hand. 'I knew I might rely that

your affection would do justice to poor heedless Rothsay, who exposes himself to so much misconstruction that he scarcely deserves the sentiments you feel for him.'

Albany had such an immoveable constancy of purpose, that he was able to return the fraternal pressure of the king's hand, while tearing up by the very roots the hopes of the indulgent, fond old man.

'But, alas!' the duke continued, with a sigh, 'this burly, intractable Knight of Kinfauns, and his brawling herd of burghers, will not view the matter as we do. They have the boldness to say that this dead fellow had been misused by Rothsay and his fellows, who were in the street in mask and revel, stopping men and women, compelling them to dance, or to drink huge quantities of wine, with other follies needless to recount; and they say that the whole party repaired to Sir John Ramorny's, and broke their way into the house, in order to conclude their revel there; thus affording good reason to judge that the dismissal of Sir John from the prince's service was but a feigned stratagem to deceive the public. And hence, they urge, that if ill were done that night by Sir John Ramorny or his followers, much it is to be thought that the Duke of Rothsay must have at least been privy to, if he did not authorize it.'

'Albany, this is dreadful!' said the king; 'would they make a murderer of my boy; would they pretend my David would soil his hands in Scottish blood, without having either provocation or purpose? No, no—they will not invent calumnies so broad as these, for they are flagrant and incredible.'

'Pardon, my liege,' answered the Duke of Albany; 'they say the cause of quarrel which occasioned the riot in Curfew Street, and its consequences, were more proper to the prince than to Sir John; since none suspects, far less believes, that that hopeful enterprise was conducted for the gratification of the Knight of Ramorny.'

'Thou drivest me mad, Robin!' said the king.

'I am dumb,' answered his brother. 'I did but speak my poor mind according to your royal order.'

'Thou meanest well, I know,' said the king; 'but instead of tearing me to pieces with the display of inevitable calamities, were it not kinder, Robin, to point me out some mode to escape from them?'

'True, my liege; but as the only road of extrication is rough and difficult, it is necessary your Grace should be first possessed with the absolute necessity of using it, ere you hear it even described. The chirurgeon must first convince his patient of the incurable condition of a shattered member, ere he venture to name amputation, though it be the only remedy.'

The king at these words was roused to a degree of alarm and indignation greater than his brother had deemed he could be awakened to.

'Shattered and mortified member! my Lord of Albany? Amputation the only remedy!—These are unintelligible words, my lord.—If thou appliest them to our son Rothsay, thou must make them good to the letter, else mayst thou have bitter cause to rue the consequence.'

'You construe me too literally, my royal liege,' said Albany. 'I spoke not of the prince in such unbeseeming terms; for I call Heaven to witness that he is dearer to me as the son of a well-beloved brother, than had he been son of my own. But I spoke in regard to separating him from the follies and vanities of life, which holy men say are like to mortified members, and ought, like them, to be cut off and thrown from us, as things which interrupt our progress in better things.'

'I understand—thou wouldst have this Ramorny, who hath been thought the instrument of my son's follies, exiled from court,' said the relieved monarch, 'until these unhappy scandals are forgotten, and our subjects are disposed to look upon our son with different and more confiding eyes?'

'That were good counsel, my liege; but mine went a little—a very little—farther. I would have the prince himself removed for some brief period from court.'

'How, Albany! part with my child, my first-born, the light of my eyes, and—wilful as he is—the darling of my heart!—O, Robin! I cannot, and I will not.'

'Nay, I did but suggest, my lord—I am sensible of the wound such a proceeding must inflict on a parent's heart, for am I not myself a father?' And he hung his head, as if in hopeless despondency.

'I could not survive it, Albany. When I think that even our own influence over him, which, sometimes forgotten in our absence, is ever effectual whilst he is with us, is by your plan to be entirely removed, what perils might he not rush upon? I could not sleep in his absence—I should hear his death-groan in every breeze; and you, Albany, though you conceal it better, would be nearly as anxious.'

Thus spoke the facile monarch, willing to conciliate his brother and cheat himself, by taking it for granted that an affection, of which there were no traces, subsisted betwixt the uncle and nephew.

'Your paternal apprehensions are too easily alarmed, my lord,' said Albany. 'I do not propose to leave the disposal of the prince's motions to his own wild pleasure. I understand that the prince is to be placed for a short time under some becoming restraint—that he should be subjected to the charge of some grave counsellor, who must be responsible both for his conduct and his safety, as a tutor for his pupil.'

'How! a tutor? and at Rothsay's age?' exclaimed the king; 'he is two years beyond the space to which our laws limit the term of nonage.'

'The wiser Romans,' said Albany, 'extended it four years after the period we assign; and, in common sense, the right of control ought to last till it be no longer necessary, and so the time ought to vary with the disposition. Here is young Lindsay, the Earl of Crawford, who, they say, gives patronage to Ramorny on this appeal. He is a lad of fifteen, with the deep passions and fixed purpose of a man of thirty; while my royal nephew, with much more amiable and noble qualities both of head and heart, sometimes shows, at twenty-three years of age, the

wanton humours of a boy, towards whom restraint may be kindness.—And do not be discouraged that it is so, my liege, or angry with your brother for telling the truth; since the best fruits are those that are slowest in ripening, and the best horses such as give most trouble to the grooms who train them for the field or lists.'

The duke stopped; and, after suffering King Robert to indulge for two or three minutes in a reverie which he did not attempt to interrupt, he added, in a more lively tone—'But cheer up, my noble liege; perhaps the feud may be made up without further fighting or difficulty. The widow is poor, for her husband, though he was much employed, had idle and costly habits. The matter may be therefore redeemed for money, and the amount of an assythment* may be recovered out of Ramorny's estate.'

'Nay, that we will ourselves discharge,' said King Robert, eagerly catching at the hope of a pacific termination of this unpleasing debate. 'Ramorny's prospects will be destroyed by his being sent from court, and deprived of his charge in Rothsay's household; and it would be ungenerous to load a falling man.—But here comes our secretary, the Prior, to tell us the hour of council approaches.—Good-morrow, my worthy father.'

'Benedicite, my royal liege,' answered the abbot.

'Now, good father,' continued the king, 'without waiting for Rothsay, whose accession to our councils we will ourselves guarantee, proceed we to the business of our kingdom. What advices have you from the Douglas?'

He has arrived at his Castle of Tantallon,† my liege, and has sent a post to say that, though the Earl of March remains in sullen seclusion in his fortress of Dunbar, his friends and followers are gathering and forming an encampment near Coldingham,‡ where it is supposed they intend to await the arrival of a large force of English, which Hotspur and Sir Ralph Percy are assembling on the English frontier.'

'That is cold news,' said the king; 'and may God forgive George of Dunbar!'—The prince entered as he spoke, and he continued—'Ha! thou art here at length, Rothsay;—I saw thee not at mass.'

'I was an idler this morning,' said the prince, 'having spent a restless and feverish night.'

'Ah, foolish boy!' answered the king; 'hadst thou not been over restless on Fastern's Eve, thou hadst not been feverish on the night of Ash Wednesday.'

'Let me not interrupt your prayers, my liege,' said the prince lightly. 'Your Grace was invoking Heaven in behalf of some one—an enemy, doubtless, for these have the frequent advantage of your orisons.'

'Sit down and be at peace, foolish youth!' said his father, his eye resting at the same time on the handsome face and graceful figure of his favourite son. Rothsay drew a cushion near to his father's feet, and threw himself carelessly down upon it, while the king resumed.

'I was regretting that the Earl of March, having separated warm from my hand with full assurance that he should receive compensation for everything which he could complain of as injurious, should have been capable of caballing with Northumberland against his own country—Is it possible he could doubt our intentions to make good our word?'

'I will answer for him, No,' said the prince. 'March never doubted your Highness's word. Marry, he may well have made question whether your learned counsellors would leave your Majesty the power of keeping it.'

Robert the Third had adopted to a great extent the timid policy of not seeming to hear expressions which, being heard, required, even in his own eyes, some display of displeasure. He passed on, therefore, in his discourse, without observing his son's speech; but, in private, Rothsay's rashness augmented the displeasure which his father began to entertain against him.

'It is well the Douglas is on the marches,' said the king. 'His breast, like those of his ancestors, has ever been the best bulwark of Scotland.'

'Then woe betide us if he should turn his back to the enemy,' said the incorrigible Rothsay.

'Dare you impeach the courage of Douglas?' replied the king, extremely chafed.

'No man dare question the Earl's courage,' said Rothsay; 'it is as certain as his pride;—but his luck may be something doubted.'

'By Saint Andrew, David!' exclaimed his father, 'thou art like a screech-owl—every word thou say'st betokens strife and calamity.'

'I am silent, father,' answered the youth.

'And what news of our Highland disturbances?' continued the king, addressing the prior.

'I trust they have assumed a favourable aspect,' answered the clergyman. 'The fire which threatened the whole country is likely to be drenched out by the blood of some forty or fifty kerne; for the two great confederacies have agreed, by solemn indenture of arms, to decide their quarrels by such weapons as your Highness may name, and in your royal presence, in such place as shall be appointed, on the 30th of March next to come, being Palm Sunday; the number of combatants being limited to thirty on each side, and the fight to be maintained to extremity, since they affectionately make humble suit and petition to your Majesty that you will parentally condescend to waive for the day your royal privilege of interrupting the combat by flinging down of truncheon, or crying of Ho! until the battle shall be utterly fought to an end.'

'The wild savages!' exclaimed the king; 'would they limit our best and dearest royal privilege, that of putting a stop to strife, and crying truce to battle?—Will they remove the only motive which could bring me to the butcherly spectacle of their combat?—Would they fight like men, or like their own mountain wolves?'

'My lord,' said Albany, 'the Earl of Craw-

* A mulct, in atonement for bloodshed, due to the nearest relations of the deceased.

† [On the coast of Haddingtonshire, near North Berwick.]

‡ [A coast-town of Berwickshire.]

ford and I had presumed, without consulting you, to ratify that preliminary, for the adoption of which we saw much and pressing reason.'

'How! the Earl of Crawford!' said the king. 'Methinks he is a young counsellor on such grave occurrents.'

'He is,' replied Albany, 'notwithstanding his early years, of such esteem among his Highland neighbours, that I could have done little with them but for his aid and influence.'

'Hear this, young Rothsay!' said the king reproachfully to his heir.

'I pity Crawford, sire,' replied the prince. 'He has too early lost a father, whose counsels would have better become such a season as this.'

The king turned next towards Albany, with a look of triumph at the filial affection which his son displayed in his reply.

Albany proceeded without emotion. 'It is not the life of these Highlandmen, but their death, which is to be profitable to this commonwealth of Scotland; and truly it seemed to the Earl of Crawford and myself most desirable that the combat should be a strife of extermination.'

'Marry,' said the prince, 'if such be the juvenile policy of Lindsay, he will be a merciful ruler some ten or twelve years hence! Out upon a boy that is hard of heart before he has hair upon his lip! Better he had contented himself with fighting cocks on Fastern's Even, than laying schemes for massacring men on Palm Sunday, as if he were backing a Welsh main, where all must fight to death.'

'Rothsay is right, Albany,' said the king; 'it were unlike a Christian monarch to give way in this point. I cannot consent to see men battle until they are all hewn down like cattle in the shambles. It would sicken me to look at it, and the warder would drop from my hand for mere lack of strength to hold it.'

'It would drop unheeded,' said Albany. 'Let me entreat your Grace to recollect that you only give up a royal privilege, which, exercised, would win you no respect, since it would receive no obedience. Were your Majesty to throw down your warder when the war is high, and these men's blood is hot, it would meet no more regard than if a sparrow should drop among a herd of battling wolves the straw which he was carrying to his nest. Nothing will separate them but the exhaustion of slaughter; and better they sustain it at the hands of each other, than from the swords of such troops as might attempt to separate them at your Majesty's commands. An attempt to keep the peace by violence would be construed into an ambush laid for them; both parties would unite to resist it,—the slaughter would be the same, and the hoped-for results of future peace would be utterly disappointed.'

'There is even too much truth in what you say, brother Robin,' replied the flexible king. 'To little purpose is it to command what I cannot enforce; and although I have the unhappiness to do so each day of my life, it were needless to give such a very public example of royal impotency, before the crowds who may assemble to behold this spectacle. Let these savage men, therefore, work their bloody will to the uttermost upon each other; I will not attempt to forbid what I cannot prevent them from executing.—Heaven help this wretched country! I will to my oratory and pray for her, since to aid her by hand and head is alike denied to me. Father Prior, I pray the support of your arm.'

'Nay, but, brother,' said Albany, 'forgive me if I remind you that we must hear the matter between the citizens of Perth and Ramorny, about the death of a townsman'——

'True, true,' said the monarch, reseating himself; 'more violence—more battle!—O, Scotland, Scotland! if the best blood of thy bravest children could enrich thy barren soil, what land on earth would excel thee in fertility! When is it that a white hair is seen on the beard of a Scottish man, unless he be some wretch like thy sovereign, protected from murder by impotence, to witness the scenes of slaughter to which he cannot put a period?—Let them come in—delay them not. They are in haste to kill, and grudge each other each fresh breath of their Creator's blessed air. The demon of strife and slaughter hath possessed the whole land!'

As the mild prince threw himself back on his seat, with an air of impatience and anger not very usual with him, the door at the lower end of the room was unclosed, and, advancing from the gallery into which it led (where in perspective was seen a guard of the Bute-men, or Brandanes, under arms), came, in mournful procession, the widow of poor Oliver, led by Sir Patrick Charteris, with as much respect as if she had been a lady of the first rank. Behind them came two women of good, the wives of magistrates of the city, both in mourning garments, one bearing the infant, and the other leading the elder child. The Smith followed in his best attire, and wearing over his buff-coat a scarf of crape. Bailie Craigdallie and a brother magistrate closed the melancholy procession, exhibiting similar marks of mourning.

The good king's transitory passion was gone the instant he looked on the pallid countenance of the sorrowing widow, and beheld the unconsciousness of the innocent orphans who had sustained so great a loss; and when Sir Patrick Charteris had assisted Magdalen Proudfute to kneel down, and, still holding her hand, kneeled himself on one knee, it was with a sympathetic tone that King Robert asked her name and business. She made no answer, but muttered something, looking towards her conductor.

'Speak for the poor woman, Sir Patrick Charteris,' said the king, 'and tell us the cause of her seeking our presence.'

'So please you, my liege,' answered Sir Patrick, rising up, 'this woman, and these unhappy orphans, make plaint to your Highness upon Sir John Ramorny of Ramorny, Knight, that by him, or by some of his household, her umquhile husband, Oliver Proudfute, freeman and burgess of Perth, was slain upon the streets of the city on the eve of Shrove Tuesday, or morning of Ash Wednesday.'

'Woman,' replied the king, with much kindness, 'thou art gentle by sex, and shouldst be pitiful even by thy affliction; for our own calamity ought to make us—nay, I think, doth make us—merciful to others. Thy husband

hath only trodden the path appointed to us all.'

'In his case,' said the widow, 'my liege must remember it has been a brief and a bloody one.'

'I agree he hath had foul measure. But since I have been unable to protect him, as I confess was my royal duty, I am willing, in atonement, to support thee and these orphans, as well, or better than you lived in the days of your husband; only do thou pass from this charge, and be not the occasion of spilling more life. Remember, I put before you the choice betwixt practising mercy and pursuing vengeance, and that betwixt plenty and penury.'

'It is true, my liege, we are poor,' answered the widow, with unshaken firmness; 'but I and my children will feed with the beasts of the field, ere we live on the price of my husband's blood. I demand the combat by my champion, as you are belted knight and crowned king.'

'I knew it would be so!' said the king, aside to Albany. 'In Scotland, the first words stammered by an infant, and the last uttered by a dying grey-beard, are—"combat—blood—revenge."—It skills not arguing further. Admit the defendants.'

Sir John Ramorny entered the apartment. He was dressed in a long furred robe, such as men of quality wore when they were unarmed. Concealed by the folds of drapery, his wounded arm was supported by a scarf, or sling of crimson silk, and with the left arm he leaned on a youth, who, scarcely beyond the years of boyhood, bore on his brow the deep impression of early thought and premature passion. This was that celebrated Lindsay, Earl of Crawford, who, in his after-days, was known by the epithet of the Tiger Earl,* and who ruled the great and rich valley of Strathmore with the absolute power and unrelenting cruelty of a feudal tyrant. Two or three gentlemen, friends of the earl, or of his own, countenanced Sir John Ramorny by their presence on this occasion. The charge was again stated, and met by a broad denial on the part of the accused; and, in reply, the challengers offered to prove their assertion by an appeal to the ordeal of bier-right.

'I am not bound,' answered Sir John Ramorny, 'to submit to this ordeal, since I can prove, by the evidence of my late royal master, that I was in my own lodgings, lying on my bed, ill at ease, while this Provost and these Bailies pretend I was committing a crime to which I had neither will nor temptation. I can therefore be no just object of suspicion.'

'I can aver,' said the prince, 'that I saw and conversed with Sir John Ramorny about some matters concerning my own household on the very night when this murder was a-doing. I therefore know that he was ill at ease, and could not in person commit the deed in question. But I know nothing of the employment of his attendants, and will not take it upon me to say that some of them may not have been guilty of the crime now charged on them.'

Sir John Ramorny had, during the beginning of this speech, looked round with an air of defiance, which was somewhat disconcerted by the concluding sentence of Rothsay's speech. 'I thank your Highness,' he said, with a smile, 'for your cautious and limited testimony in my behalf. He was wise who wrote, "Put not your faith in princes."'

'If you have no other evidence of your innocence, Sir John Ramorny,' said the king, 'we may not, in respect to your followers, refuse to the injured widow and orphans, the complainers, the grant of a proof by ordeal of bier-right, unless any of them should prefer that of combat. For yourself, you are, by the prince's evidence, freed from the attaint.'

'My liege,' answered Sir John, 'I can take warrant upon myself for the innocence of my household and followers.'

'Why, so a monk or a woman might speak,' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'In knightly language, wilt thou, Sir John de Ramorny, do battle with me in the behalf of thy followers?'

'The Provost of Perth had not obtained time to name the word combat,' said Ramorny, 'ere I would have accepted it. But I am not at present fit to hold a lance.'

'I am glad of it, under your favour, Sir John—There will be the less bloodshed,' said the king. 'You must therefore produce your followers, according to your steward's household-book, in the great church of Saint John, that, in presence of all whom it may concern, they may purge themselves of this accusation. See that every man of them do appear at the time of high mass, otherwise your honour may be sorely tainted.'

'They shall attend to a man,' said Sir John Ramorny. Then, bowing low to the king, he directed himself to the young Duke of Rothsay, and, making a deep obeisance, spoke so as to be heard by him alone. 'You have used me generously, my lord!—One word of your lips could have ended this controversy, and you have refused to speak it!'

'On my life,' whispered the prince, 'I spake as far as the extreme verge of truth and conscience would permit. I think thou couldst not expect I should frame lies for thee;—and after all, John, in my broken recollections of that night, I do bethink me of a butcherly-looking mute, with a curtal-axe, much like such a one as may have done yonder night-job!—Ha! have I touched you, Sir Knight?'

Ramorny made no answer, but turned away as precipitately as if some one had pressed suddenly on his wounded arm, and regained his lodgings with the Earl of Crawford; to whom, though disposed for anything rather than revelry, he was obliged to offer a splendid collation, to acknowledge in some degree his sense of the countenance which the young noble had afforded him.

CHAPTER XXII.

In pottingry he wrocht great pyne;
He murdreit mony in medecyne.

DUNBAR.

WHEN, after an entertainment, the prolonging of which was like torture to the wounded knight,

* Sir Alexander Lyndsaye, fourth Earl of Crawford, and brother-in-law to Robert III.

the Earl of Crawford at length took horse, to go to his distant quarters in the Castle of Dupplin,* where he resided as a guest, the Knight of Ramorny retired into his sleeping apartment, agonized by pains of body and anxiety of mind. Here he found Henbane Dwining, on whom it was his hard fate to depend for consolation in both respects. The physician, with his affectation of extreme humility, hoped he saw his exalted patient merry and happy.

'Merry as a mad dog!' said Ramorny, 'and happy as the wretch whom the cur hath bitten, and who begins to feel the approach of the ravening madness.—That ruthless boy Crawford saw my agony, and spared not a single carouse. I must do him *justice*, forsooth! If I had done justice to him and to the world, I had thrown him out of window, and cut short a career, which, if he grow up as he has begun, will prove a source of misery to all Scotland, but especially to Tayside.—Take heed as thou undoest the ligatures, chirurgeon; the touch of a fly's wing on that raw glowing stump were like a dagger to me.'

'Fear not, my noble patron,' said the leech, with a chuckling laugh of enjoyment, which he vainly endeavoured to disguise under a tone of affected sensibility. 'We will apply some fresh balsam, and—he, he, he!—relieve your knightly honour of the irritation which you sustain so firmly.'

'Firmly, man?' said Ramorny, grinning with pain; 'I sustain it as I would the scorching flames of purgatory—the bone seems made of red-hot iron—thy greasy ointment will hiss as it drops upon the wound—And yet it is December's ice, compared to the fever-fit of my mind!'

'We will first use our emollients upon the body, my noble patron,' said Dwining; 'and then, with your knighthood's permission, your servant will try his art on the troubled mind—though I fain hope even the mental pain also may in some degree depend on the irritation of the wound, and that, abated as I trust the corporeal pangs will soon be, perhaps the stormy feelings of the mind may subside of themselves.'

'Henbane Dwining,' said the patient, as he felt the pain of his wound assuaged, 'thou art a precious and invaluable leech, but some things are beyond thy power. Thou canst stupefy my bodily sense of this raging agony, but thou canst not teach me to bear the scorn of the boy whom I have brought up;—whom I loved, Dwining—for I did love him—dearly love him! The worst of my ill deeds have been to flatter his vices—and he grudged me a word of his mouth, when a word would have allayed this cumber! He smiled, too—I saw him smile, when yon paltry Provost, the companion and patron of wretched burghers, defied me, whom this heartless prince knew to be unable to bear arms.—Ere I forget or forgive it, thou thyself shalt preach up the pardoning of injuries! And then the care for to-morrow—Think'st thou, Henbane Dwining, that, in very reality, the wounds of the slaughtered corpse will gape, and shed tears of fresh blood at the murderer's approach?'

'I cannot tell, my lord, save by report,' said Dwining, 'which avouches the fact.'

'The brute Bonthron,' said Ramorny, 'is startled at the apprehension of such a thing, and speaks of being rather willing to stand the combat. What think'st thou?—he is a fellow of steel.'

'It is the armourer's trade to deal with steel,' replied Dwining.

'Were Bonthron to fall, it would little grieve me,' said Ramorny; 'though I should miss a useful hand.'

'I well believe your lordship will not sorrow as for that you lost in Curfew Street—Excuse my pleasantry—he, he, he!—But what are the useful properties of this fellow Bonthron?'

'Those of a bull-dog,' answered the knight; 'he worries without barking.'

'You have no fear of his confessing,' said the physician.

'Who can tell what the dread of approaching death may do?' replied the patient. 'He has already shown a timorousness entirely alien from his ordinary sullenness of nature; he that would scarce wash his hands after he had slain a man, is now afraid to see a dead body bleed.'

'Well,' said the leech, 'I must do something for him if I can, since it was to further my revenge that he struck yonder downright blow, though by ill-luck it lighted not where it was intended.'

'And whose fault was that, timid villain,' said Ramorny, 'save thine own, who marked a rascal deer for a buck of the first head?'

'Benedicite, noble sir,' replied the mediciner; 'would you have me, who know little save of chamber practice, be as skilful of woodcraft as your noble self, or tell hart from hind, doe from roe, in a glade at midnight? I misdoubted me little when I saw the figure run past us to the Smith's habitation in the Wynd, habited like a morrice-dancer; and yet my mind partly misgave me whether it was our man, for methought he seemed less of stature. But when he came out again, after so much time as to change his dress, and swaggered onwards with buff-coat and steel-cap, whistling after the armourer's wonted fashion, I do own I was mistaken, *super totam materiem*, and loosed your knighthood's bull-dog upon him, who did his devoir most duly, though he pulled down the wrong deer. Therefore, unless the accursed Smith kill our poor friend stone-dead on the spot, I am determined, if art may do it, that the ban-dog Bonthron shall not miscarry.'

'It will put thine art to the test, man of medicine,' said Ramorny; 'for know that, having the worst of the combat, if our champion be not killed stone-dead in the lists, he will be drawn forth of them by the heels, and without further ceremony knitted up to the gallows, as convicted of the murder; and when he hath swung there like a loose tassel for an hour or so, I think thou wilt hardly take it in hand to cure his broken neck.'

'I am of a different opinion, may it please your knighthood,' answered Dwining gently. 'I will carry him off from the very foot of the gallows into the land of faëry, like King Arthur, or Sir Huon of Bordeaux,† or Ugero the Dane;†

* [About six miles south-west of Perth.]

† [Heroes of mediæval romances. The Dane is more usually known as Ogier.]

or I will, if I please, suffer him to dangle on the gibbet for a certain number of minutes, or hours, and then whisk him away from the sight of all, with as much ease as the wind wafts away the withered leaf.'

'This is idle boasting, Sir Leech,' replied Ramorny. 'The whole mob of Perth will attend him to the gallows, each more eager than another to see the retainer of a nobleman die for the slaughter of a cuckoldy citizen. There will be a thousand of them round the gibbet's foot.'

'And were there ten thousand,' said Dwining, 'shall I, who am a high clerk, and have studied in Spain, and Araby itself, not be able to deceive the eyes of this hoggish herd of citizens, when the pettiest juggler that ever dealt in legerdemain can gull even the sharp observation of your most intelligent knighthood? I tell you, I will put the change on them as if I were in possession of Keddie's ring.'

'If thou speakest truth,' answered the knight, 'and I think thou darest not palter with me on such a theme, thou must have the aid of Satan, and I will have nought to do with him. I disown and defy him.'

Dwining indulged in his internal chuckling laugh, when he heard his patron testify his defiance of the foul Fiend, and saw him second it by crossing himself. He composed himself, however, upon observing Ramorny's aspect become very stern, and said, with tolerable gravity, though a little interrupted by the effort necessary to suppress his mirthful mood,—

'Confederacy, most devout sir; confederacy is the soul of jugglery. But—he, he, he!—I have not the honour to be—he, he!—an ally of the gentleman of whom you speak—in whose existence I am—he, he!—no very profound believer, though your knightship, doubtless, hath better opportunities of acquaintance.'

'Proceed, rascal, and without that sneer, which thou may'st otherwise dearly pay for.'

'I will, most undaunted,' replied Dwining. 'Know that I have my confederate too, else my skill were little worth.'

'And who may that be, pray you?'

'Stephen Smotherwell, if it like your honour, lockman* of this Fair City. I marvel your knighthood knows him not.'

'And I marvel thy knaveship knows him not on professional acquaintance,' replied Ramorny; 'but I see thy nose is unslit, thy ears yet uncropped, and if thy shoulders are scarred or branded, thou art wise for using a high-collared jerkin.'

'He, he! your honour is pleasant,' said the mediciner. 'It is not by personal circumstances that I have acquired the intimacy of Stephen Smotherwell, but on account of a certain traffic betwixt us, in which, an't please you, I exchange certain sums of silver for the bodies, heads, and limbs of those who die by aid of friend Stephen.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the knight with horror 'is it to compose charms and forward works of witchcraft, that you trade for these miserable relics of mortality?'

'He, he, he!—No, an it please your knighthood,' answered the mediciner, much amused with the ignorance of his patron; 'but we, who are knights of the scalpel, are accustomed to practise careful carving of the limbs of defunct persons, which we call dissection, whereby we discover, by examination of a dead member, how to deal with one belonging to a living man, which hath become diseased through injury or otherwise. Ah! if your honour saw my poor laboratory, I could show you heads and hands, feet and lungs, which have been long supposed to be rotting in the mould. The skull of Wallace, stolen from London Bridge; the heart of Sir Simon Fraser,† that never feared man; the lovely skull of the fair Maggie Logie,‡—O, had I but had the fortune to have preserved the chivalrous hand of mine honoured patron!'

'Out upon thee, slave!—Thinkest thou to disgust me with thy catalogue of horrors?—Tell me at once where thy discourse drives. How can thy traffic with the hang-dog executioner be of avail to serve me, or to help my servant Bonthron?'

'Nay, I do not recommend it to your knighthood, save in an extremity,' replied Dwining.—'But we will suppose the battle fought, and our cock beaten. Now, we must first possess him with the certainty that, if unable to gain the day, we will at least save him from the hangman, provided he confess nothing which can prejudice your knighthood's honour.'

'Ha!—ay, a thought strikes me,' said Ramorny. 'We can do more than this—we can place a word in Bonthron's mouth that will be troublesome enough to him whom I am bound to curse, for being the cause of my misfortune. Let us to the ban-dog's kennel, and explain to him what is to be done in every view of the question. If we can persuade him to stand the bier-ordeal, it may be a mere bugbear, and in that case we are safe. If he take the combat, he is fierce as a baited bear, and may, perchance, master his opponent; then we are more than safe—we are revenged. If Bonthron himself is vanquished, we will put thy device in exercise; and if thou canst manage it cleanly, we may dictate his confession, take the advantage of it, as I will show thee on further conference, and make a giant stride towards satisfaction for my wrongs.—Still there remains one hazard. Suppose our mastiff mortally wounded in the lists, who shall prevent his growling out some species of confession different from what we would recommend?'

'Marry, that can his mediciner,' said Dwining. 'Let me wait on him, and have the opportunity to lay but a finger on his wound, and trust me he shall betray no confidence.'

'Why, there's a willing fiend, that needs neither pushing nor prompting,' said Ramorny.

'As I trust I shall need neither in your knighthood's service.'

'We will go indoctrinate our agent,' continued

* Executioner. So called because one of his dues consisted in taking a small ladleful (*Scottice*, *lock*) of meal out of every caskful exposed in the market.

† The famous ancestor of the Lovats, hanged and quartered at London Bridge.

‡ The beautiful mistress of David II.

the knight. 'We shall find him pliant; for, hound as he is, he knows those who feed from those who browbeat him; and he holds a late royal master of mine in deep hate for some injurious treatment and base terms which he received at his hand. I must also further concert with thee the particulars of thy practice for saving the ban-dog from the hands of the herd of citizens.'

We leave this worthy pair of friends to their secret practices, of which we shall afterwards see the results. They were, although of different qualities, as well matched for device and execution of criminal projects, as the greyhound is to destroy the game which the slowhound raises, or the slowhound to track the prey which the gazehound discovers by the eye. Pride and selfishness were the characteristics of both; but, from the difference of rank, education, and talents, they had assumed the most different appearance in the two individuals.

Nothing could less resemble the high-blown ambition of the favourite courtier, the successful gallant, and the bold warrior, than the submissive, unassuming mediciner, who seemed even to court and delight in insult; whilst, in his secret soul, he felt himself possessed of a superiority of knowledge—a power, both of science and of mind, which placed the rude nobles of the day infinitely beneath him. So conscious was Henbane Dwining of this elevation, that, like a keeper of wild beasts, he sometimes adventured, for his own amusement, to rouse the stormy passions of such men as Ramorny, trusting, with his humble manner, to elude the turmoil he had excited, as an Indian boy will launch his light canoe, secure from its very fragility, upon a broken surf, in which the boat of an argosy would be assuredly dashed to pieces. That the feudal baron should despise the humble practitioner in medicine was a matter of course; but Ramorny felt not the less the influence which Dwining exercised over him, and was in the encounter of their wits often mastered by him, as the most eccentric efforts of a fiery horse are overcome by a boy of twelve years old, if he has been bred to the arts of the *manège*. But the contempt of Dwining for Ramorny was far less qualified. He regarded the knight, in comparison with himself, as scarcely rising above the brute creation; capable, indeed, of working destruction, as the bull with his horns, or the wolf with his fangs, but mastered by mean prejudices, and a slave to priestcraft, in which phrase Dwining included religion of every kind. On the whole, he considered Ramorny as one whom nature had assigned to him as a serf, to mine for the gold which he worshipped, and the avaricious love of which was his greatest failing, though by no means his worst vice. He vindicated this sordid tendency in his own eyes, by persuading himself that it had its source in the love of power.

'Henbane Dwining,' he said, as he gazed in delight upon the hoards which he had secretly amassed, and which he visited from time to time, 'is no silly miser, that doats on those pieces for their golden lustre; it is the power with which they endow the possessor which makes him thus adore them. What is there that these put not within your command? Do you love beauty, and are mean, deformed, infirm, and old?—here is a lure the fairest hawk of them all will stoop to. Are you feeble, weak, subject to the oppression of the powerful?—here is that will arm in your defence those more mighty than the petty tyrant whom you fear. Are you splendid in your wishes, and desire the outward show of opulence?—this dark chest contains many a wide range of hill and dale, many a fair forest full of game; the allegiance of a thousand vassals. Wish you for favour in courts, temporal or spiritual?—the smiles of kings, the pardon of popes and priests for old crimes, and the indulgence which encourages priest-ridden fools to venture on new ones,—all these holy incentives to vice may be purchased for gold. Revenge itself, which the gods are said to reserve to themselves, doubtless because they envy humanity so sweet a morsel—revenge itself is to be bought by it. But it is also to be won by superior skill, and that is the nobler mode of reaching it. I will spare, then, my treasure for other uses, and accomplish my revenge gratis; or rather I will add the luxury of augmented wealth to the triumph of requited wrongs.'

Thus thought Dwining, as, returned from his visit to Sir John Ramorny, he added the gold he had received for his various services to the mass of his treasure; and, having gloated over the whole for a minute or two, turned the key on his concealed treasure-house, and walked forth on his visits to his patients, yielding the wall to every man whom he met, and bowing and doffing his bonnet to the poorest burgher that owned a petty booth, nay, to the artificers who gained their precarious bread by the labour of their welked hands.

'Caitiffs,' was the thought of his heart, while he did such obeisance, 'base, sodden-witted mechanics! did you know what this key could disclose, what foul weather from heaven would prevent your unbonneting? what putrid kennel in your wretched hamlet would be disgusting enough to make you scruple to fall down and worship the owner of such wealth? But I will make you feel my power, though it suits my humour to hide the source of it. I will be an incubus to your city, since you have rejected me as a magistrate. Like the nightmare, I will hag-ride ye, yet remain invisible myself.—This miserable Ramorny too, he who, in losing his hand, has, like a poor artisan, lost the only valuable part of his frame, *he* heaps insulting language on me, as if anything which *he* can say had power to chafe a constant mind like mine! Yet while he calls me rogue, villain, and slave, he acts as wisely as if he should amuse himself by pulling hairs out of my head, while my hand had hold of his heart-strings. Every insult I can pay back instantly by a pang of bodily pain or mental agony—and—he! he!—I run no long accounts with his knighthood, that must be allowed.'

While the mediciner was thus indulging his diabolical musing, and passing, in his creeping manner, along the street, the cry of females was heard behind him.

'Ay, there he is, Our Lady be praised!—there is the most helpful man in Perth,' said one voice.

'They may speak of knights and kings for redressing wrongs, as they call it—but give me worthy Master Dwining the potter-carrier, cummers,' replied another.

At the same moment the leech was surrounded and taken hold of by the speakers, good women of the Fair City.

'How now—what's the matter?' said Dwining; 'whose cow has calved?'

'There is no calving in the case,' said one of the women, 'but a poor fatherless wean dying; so come awa' wi' you, for our trust is constant in you, as Bruce said to Donald of the Isles.'

'*Opiferque per orbem dicor*,' said Henbane Dwining. 'What is the child dying of?'

'The croup—the croup,' screamed one of the gossips; 'the innocent is rouping like a corbie.'

'*Cynanche trachealis*—that disease makes brief work. Show me the house instantly,' continued the mediciner, who was in the habit of exercising his profession liberally, notwithstanding his natural avarice, and humanely, in spite of his natural malignity. As we can suspect him of no better principle, his motive most probably may have been vanity and the love of his art.

He would nevertheless have declined giving his attendance in the present case, had he known whither the kind gossips were conducting him, in time sufficient to frame an apology. But, ere he guessed where he was going, the leech was hurried into the house of the late Oliver Proudfute, from which he heard the chant of the women, as they swathed and dressed the corpse of the umquhile Bonnet-maker for the ceremony of next morning: of which chant the following verses may be received as a modern imitation:—

1.

Viewless Essence, thin and bare,
Well-nigh melted into air;
Still with fondness hovering near
The earthly form thou once didst wear;

2.

Pause upon thy pinion's flight,
Be thy course to left or right;
Be thou doom'd to soar or sink,
Pause upon the awful brink.

3.

To avenge the deed expelling
Thee untimely from thy dwelling,
Mystic force thou shalt retain
O'er the blood and o'er the brain.

4.

When the form thou shalt espy
That darken'd on thy closing eye;
When the footstep thou shalt hear,
That thrill'd upon thy dying ear;

5.

Then strange sympathies shall wake,
The flesh shall thrill, the nerves shall quake;
The wounds renew their clotter'd flood,
And every drop cry blood for blood.

Hardened as he was, the physician felt reluctance to pass the threshold of the man to whose death he had been so directly, though, so far as the individual was concerned, mistakenly accessory.

'Let me pass on, women,' he said; 'my art can only help the living—the dead are past our power.'

'Nay, but your patient is up-stairs — the youngest orphan'——

Dwining was compelled to go into the house. But he was surprised, when, the instant he stepped over the threshold, the gossips, who were busied with the dead body, stinted suddenly in their song, while one said to the others,—

'In God's name, who entered?—that was a large gout of blood!'

'Not so,' said another voice, 'it is a drop of the liquid balm.'

'Nay, cummer, it was blood—Again, I say, who entered the house even now?'

One looked out from the apartment into the little entrance, where Dwining, under pretence of not distinctly seeing the trap-ladder by which he was to ascend into the upper part of this house of lamentation, was delaying his progress purposely, disconcerted with what had reached him of the conversation.

'Nay, it is only worthy Master Henbane Dwining,' answered one of the sibyls.

'Only Master Dwining?' replied the one who had first spoken, in a tone of acquiescence; 'our best helper in need?—then it must have been balm, sure enough.'

'Nay,' said the other, 'it may have been blood nevertheless — for the leech, look you, when the body was found, was commanded by the magistrates to probe the wound with his instruments, and how could the poor dead corpse know that that was done with good purpose?'

'Ay, truly, cummer; and as poor gossip Oliver often mistook friends for enemies while he was in life, his judgment cannot be thought to have mended now.'

Dwining heard no more, being now forced up-stairs into a species of garret, where Magdalen sat on her widowed bed, clasping to her bosom her infant, which, already black in the face, and uttering the gasping, crowing sound which gives the popular name to the complaint, seemed on the point of rendering up its brief existence. A Dominican monk sat near the bed, holding the other child in his arms, and seeming from time to time to speak a word or two of spiritual consolation, or intermingle some observation on the child's disorder.

The mediciner cast upon the good father a single glance, filled with that ineffable disdain which men of science entertain against interlopers. His own aid was instant and efficacious; he snatched the child from the despairing mother, stripped its throat, and opened a vein, which, as it bled freely, relieved the little patient instantaneously. In a brief space every dangerous symptom disappeared, and Dwining, having bound up the vein, replaced the infant in the arms of the half-distracted mother.

The poor woman's distress for her husband's loss, which had been suspended during the extremity of the child's danger, now returned on Magdalen with the force of an augmented torrent, which has borne down the dam-dyke that for a while interrupted its waves.

'O, learned sir,' she said, 'you see a poor woman of her that you once knew a richer—But the hands that restored this bairn to my arms must not leave this house empty. Generous, kind Master Dwining, accept of his beads—they

are made of ebony and silver—he aye liked to have his things as handsome as any gentleman—and liker he was in all his ways to a gentleman than any one of his standing, and even so came of it.'

With these words, in a mute passion of grief she pressed to her breast and to her lips the chaplet of her deceased husband, and proceeded to thrust it into Dwining's hands.

'Take it,' she said, 'for the love of one who loved you well—Ah! he used ever to say, if ever man could be brought back from the brink of the grave it must be by Master Dwining's guidance.—And his ain bairn is brought back this blessed day, and he is lying there stark and stiff, and kens naething of its health and sickness! O, woe is me, and walawa!—But take the beads, and think on his puir soul, as you put them through your fingers; he will be freed from purgatory the sooner that good people pray to assoilzie him.'

'Take back your beads, cummer—I know no legerdemain—can do no conjuring tricks,' said the mediciner, who, more moved than perhaps his rugged nature had anticipated, endeavoured to avoid receiving the ill-omened gift. But his last words gave offence to the churchman, whose presence he had not recollected when he uttered them.

'How now, Sir Leech!' said the Dominican; 'do you call prayers for the dead juggling tricks? I know that Chaucer, the English maker, says of you mediciners, that your study is but little on the Bible. Our mother the Church hath nodded of late, but her eyes are now opened to discern friends from foes; and be well assured'——

'Nay, reverend father,' said Dwining, 'you take me at too great advantage. I said I could do no miracles, and was about to add, that as the Church certainly could work such conclusions, those rich beads should be deposited in your hands, to be applied as they may best benefit the soul of the deceased.'

He dropped the beads into the Dominican's hand, and escaped from the house of mourning.

'This was a strangely timed visit,' he said to himself, when he got safe out of doors. 'I hold such things cheap as any can; yet, though it is but a silly fancy, I am glad I saved the squalling child's life.—But I must to my friend Smotherwell, whom I have no doubt to bring to my purpose in the matter of Bonthron; and thus on this occasion I shall save two lives, and have destroyed only one.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

Lo! where he lies embalm'd in gore,
His wound to Heaven cries;
The floodgates of his blood implore
For vengeance from the skies.
URANUS AND PSYCHE.

THE High Church of Saint John in Perth, being that of the patron saint of the burgh, had been selected by the magistrates as that in which the community was likely to have most fair play for the display of the ordeal. The churches and convents of the Dominicans, Carthusians, and others of the regular clergy, had been highly endowed by the king and nobles, and therefore it was the universal cry of the City Council, that 'their ain good auld Saint John,' of whose good graces they thought themselves sure, ought to be fully confided in, and preferred to the new patrons, for whom the Dominicans, Carthusians, Carmelites, and others, had founded newer seats around the Fair City. The disputes between the regular and secular clergy added to the jealousy which dictated this choice of the spot in which Heaven was to display a species of miracle, upon a direct appeal to the divine decision in a case of doubtful guilt; and the town-clerk was as anxious that the church of Saint John should be preferred, as if there had been a faction in the body of saints for and against the interests of the beautiful town of Perth.

Many, therefore, were the petty intrigues entered into and disconcerted, for the purpose of fixing on the church. But the magistrates, considering it as a matter touching in a close degree the honour of the city, determined, with judicious confidence in the justice and impartiality of their patron, to confide the issue to the influence of Saint John.

It was, therefore, after high mass had been performed, with the greatest solemnity of which circumstances rendered the ceremony capable, and after the most repeated and fervent prayers had been offered to Heaven by the crowded assembly, that preparations were made for appealing to the direct judgment of Heaven on the mysterious murder of the unfortunate Bonnetmaker.

The scene presented that effect of imposing solemnity which the rites of the Catholic Church are so well qualified to produce. The eastern window, richly and variously painted, streamed down a torrent of chequered light upon the high altar. On the bier placed before it were stretched the mortal remains of the murdered man, his arms folded on his breast, and his palms joined together, with the fingers pointed upwards, as if the senseless clay were itself appealing to Heaven for vengeance against those who had violently divorced the immortal spirit from its mangled tenement.

Close to the bier was placed the throne, which supported Robert of Scotland and his brother Albany. The prince sat upon a lower stool beside his father; an arrangement which occasioned some observation, as, Albany's seat being little distinguished from that of the king, the heir-apparent, though of full age, seemed to be degraded beneath his uncle in the sight of the assembled people of Perth. The bier was so placed, as to leave the view of the body it sustained open to the greater part of the multitude assembled in the church.

At the head of the bier stood the Knight of Kinfauns, the challenger, and at the foot the young Earl of Crawford, as representing the defendant. The evidence of the Duke of Rothsay, in expurgation, as it was termed, of Sir John Ramorny, had exempted him from the necessity of attendance as a party subjected to the ordeal; and his illness served as a reason for his remaining at home. His household, including those who, though immediately in waiting upon Sir

John, were accounted the prince's domestics, and had not yet received their dismissal, amounted to eight or ten persons, most of them esteemed men of profligate habits, and who might therefore be deemed capable, in the riot of a festival evening, of committing the slaughter of the Bonnet-maker. They were drawn up in a row on the left side of the church, and wore a species of white cassock, resembling the dress of a penitentiary. All eyes being bent on them, several of this band seemed so much disconcerted, as to excite among the spectators strong prepossessions of their guilt. The real murderer had a countenance incapable of betraying him, — a sullen, dark look, which neither the feast nor wine-cup could enliven, and which the peril of discovery and death could not render dejected.

We have already noticed the posture of the dead body. The face was bare, as were the breast and arms. The rest of the corpse was shrouded in a winding-sheet of the finest linen, so that if blood should flow from any place which was covered, it could not fail to be instantly manifest.

High mass having been performed, followed by a solemn invocation to the Deity, that he would be pleased to protect the innocent, and make known the guilty, Eviot, Sir John Ramorny's page, was summoned to undergo the ordeal.* He advanced with an ill-assured step. Perhaps he thought his internal consciousness that Bonthron must have been the assassin, might be sufficient to implicate him in the murder, though he was not directly accessory to it. He paused before the bier; and his voice faltered as he swore by all that was created in seven days and seven nights, by heaven, by hell, by his part of paradise, and by the God and Author of all, that he was free and sackless of the bloody deed done upon the corpse before which he stood, and on whose breast he made the sign of the cross, in evidence of the appeal. No consequences ensued. The body remained stiff as before; the curdled wounds gave no sign of blood.

The citizens looked on each other with faces of blank disappointment. They had persuaded themselves of Eviot's guilt; and their suspicions had been confirmed by his irresolute manner. Their surprise at his escape was therefore extreme. The other followers of Ramorny took heart, and advanced to take the oath, with a boldness which increased as, one by one, they performed the ordeal, and were declared, by the voice of the judges, free and innocent of every suspicion attaching to them on account of the death of Oliver Proudfute.

But there was one individual who did not partake that increasing confidence. The name of 'Bonthron—Bonthron!' sounded three times through the aisles of the church, but he who owned it acknowledged the call no otherwise than by a sort of shuffling motion with his feet, as if he had been suddenly affected with a fit of the palsy.

'Speak, dog,' whispered Eviot, 'or prepare for a dog's death!'

But the murderer's brain was so much disturbed by the sight before him, that the judges, beholding his deportment, doubted whether to ordain him to be dragged before the bier, or to pronounce judgment in default; and it was not until he was asked for the last time whether he would submit to the ordeal, that he answered, with his usual brevity,—

'I will not;—what do I know what juggling tricks may be practised to take a poor man's life?—I offer the combat to any man who says I harmed that dead body.'

And, according to usual form, he threw his glove upon the floor of the church.

Henry Smith stepped forward, amidst the murmured applauses of his fellow-citizens, which even the august presence could not entirely suppress; and, lifting the ruffian's glove, which he placed in his bonnet, laid down his own in the usual form, as a gage of battle. But Bonthron raised it not.

'He is no match for me,' growled the savage, 'nor fit to lift my glove. I follow the Prince of Scotland, in attending on his master of horse. This fellow is a wretched mechanic.'

Here the prince interrupted him. 'Thou follow *me*, caitiff! I discharge thee from my service on the spot.—Take him in hand, Smith, and beat him as thou didst never thump anvil!—The villain is both guilty and recreant. It sickens me even to look at him; and if my royal father will be ruled by me, he will give the parties two handsome Scottish axes, and we will see which of them turns out the best fellow, before the day is half an hour older.'

This was readily assented to by the Earl of Crawford and Sir Patrick Charteris, the godfathers of the parties, who, as the combatants were men of inferior rank, agreed that they should fight in steel-caps, buff jackets, and with axes; and that as soon as they could be prepared for the combat.

The lists were appointed in the Skinners' Yards,† a neighbouring space of ground, occupied by the corporation from which it had the name, and who quickly cleared a space of about thirty feet by twenty-five, for the combatants. Thither thronged the nobles, priests, and commons,—all excepting the old king, who, detesting such scenes of blood, retired to his residence, and devolved the charge of the field upon the Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, to whose office it more particularly belonged. The Duke of Albany watched the whole proceeding with a close and wary eye. His nephew gave the scene the heedless degree of notice which corresponded with his character.

When the combatants appeared in the lists, nothing could be more striking than the contrast betwixt the manly, cheerful countenance of the Smith, whose sparkling, bright eye seemed already beaming with the victory he hoped for, and the sullen, downcast aspect of the brutal Bonthron, who looked as if he were some obscene bird, driven into sunshine out of the shelter of its darksome haunts. They made oath severally, each to the truth of his quarrel; a ceremony which Henry Gow performed with serene and manly confidence—Bonthron with a

* Note O. Ordeal by Fire.

† Note P. Skinners' Yards.

dogged resolution, which induced the Duke of Rothsay to say to the High Constable, 'Didst thou ever, my dear Errol, behold such a mixture of malignity, cruelty, and I think fear, as in that fellow's countenance?'

'He is not comely,' said the earl, 'but a powerful knave, as I have seen.'

'I'll gage a hogshead of wine with you, my good lord, that he loses the day. Henry the armourer is as strong as he, and much more active. And then look at his bold bearing! There is something in that other fellow that is loathsome to look upon. Let them yoke presently, my dear Constable, for I am sick of beholding him.'

The High Constable then addressed the widow, who, in her deep weeds, and having her children still beside her, occupied a chair within the lists:—'Woman, do you willingly accept of this man, Henry the Smith, to do battle as your champion in this cause?'

'I do—I do most willingly,' answered Magdalen Proudfute; 'and may the blessing of God and Saint John give him strength and fortune, since he strikes for the orphan and fatherless!'

'Then I pronounce this a fenced field of battle,' said the Constable aloud. 'Let no one dare, upon peril of his life, to interrupt this combat by word, speech, or look.—Sound trumpets, and fight combatants!'

The trumpets flourished, and the combatants, advancing from the opposite ends of the lists, with a steady and even pace, looked at each other attentively, well skilled in judging, from the motion of the eye, the direction in which a blow was meditated. They halted opposite to, and within reach of, each other, and in turn made more than one feint to strike, in order to ascertain the activity and vigilance of the opponent. At length, whether weary of these manœuvres, or fearing lest, in a contest so conducted, his unwieldy strength would be foiled by the activity of the Smith, Bonthron heaved up his axe for a downright blow, adding the whole strength of his sturdy arms to the weight of the weapon in its descent. The Smith, however, avoided the stroke by stepping aside; for it was too forcible to be controlled by any guard which he could have interposed. Ere Bonthron recovered guard, Henry struck him a sideling blow on the steel headpiece, which prostrated him on the ground.

'Confess or die,' said the victor, placing his foot on the body of the vanquished, and holding to his throat the point of the axe, which terminated in a spike or poniard.

'I will confess,' said the villain, glaring wildly upward on the sky. 'Let me rise.'

'Not till you have yielded,' said Harry Smith.

'I do yield,' again murmured Bonthron, and Henry proclaimed aloud that his antagonist was defeated.

The Dukes of Rothsay and Albany, the High Constable, and the Dominican prior, now entered the lists, and, addressing Bonthron, demanded if he acknowledged himself vanquished.

'I do,' answered the miscreant.

'And guilty of the murder of Oliver Proudfute?'

'I am—but I mistook him for another.'

'And whom didst thou intend to slay?' said the prior. 'Confess, my son, and merit thy pardon in another world; for with this thou hast little more to do.'

'I took the slain man,' answered the discomfited combatant, 'for him whose hand has struck me down, whose foot now presses me.'

'Blessed be the saints!' said the prior; 'now all those who doubt the virtue of the holy ordeal may have their eyes opened to their error. Lo, he is trapped in the snare which he laid for the guiltless.'

'I scarce ever saw the man before,' said the Smith. 'I never did wrong to him or his.—Ask him, an it please your reverence, why he should have thought of slaying me treacherously.'

'It is a fitting question,' answered the prior.—'Give glory where it is due, my son, even though it is manifested by thy shame. For what reason wouldst thou have waylaid this armourer, who says he never wronged thee?'

'He had wronged him whom I served,' answered Bonthron; 'and I meditated the deed by his command.'

'By whose command?' asked the prior.

Bonthron was silent for an instant, then growled out,—'He is too mighty for me to name.'

'Hearken, my son,' said the churchman; 'tarry but a brief hour, and the mighty and the mean of this earth shall to thee alike be empty sounds. The sledge is even now preparing to drag thee to the place of execution. Therefore, son, once more I charge thee to consult thy soul's weal by glorifying Heaven, and speaking the truth. Was it thy master, Sir John Ramorny, that stirred thee to so foul a deed?'

'No,' answered the prostrate villain, 'it was a greater than he.' And at the same time he pointed with his finger to the prince.

'Wretch!' said the astonished Duke of Rothsay; 'do you dare to hint that *I* was your instigator?'

'You yourself, my lord,' answered the unblushing ruffian.

'Die in thy falsehood, accursed slave!' said the prince; and, drawing his sword, he would have pierced his calumniator, had not the Lord High Constable interposed with word and action.

'Your Grace must forgive my discharging mine office—this caitiff must be delivered into the hands of the executioner. He is unfit to be dealt with by any other, much less by your Highness.'

'What, noble Earl!' said Albany aloud, and with much real or affected emotion, 'would you let the dog pass alive from hence, to poison the people's ears with false accusations against the Prince of Scotland?—I say cut him to mammocks upon the spot!'

'Your Highness will pardon me,' said the Earl of Errol; 'I must protect him till his doom is executed.'

'Then let him be gagged instantly,' said Albany.—'And you, my royal nephew, why stand you there fixed in astonishment? Call your resolution up—speak to the prisoner—swear—protest by all that is sacred that you

knew not of this felon deed.—See how the people look on each other, and whisper apart! My life on't that this lie spreads faster than any gospel truth.—Speak to them, royal kinsman, no matter what you say, so you be constant in denial.'

'What, sir!' said Rothsay, starting from his pause of surprise and mortification, and turning haughtily towards his uncle; 'would you have me gage my royal word against that of an abject recreant? Let those who *can* believe the son of their sovereign, the descendant of Bruce, capable of laying ambush for the life of a poor mechanic, enjoy the pleasure of thinking the villain's tale true.'

'That will not I for one,' said the Smith bluntly. 'I never did aught but what was in honour towards his royal Grace the Duke of Rothsay, and never received unkindness from him, in word, look, or deed; and I cannot think he would have given aim to such base practice.'

'Was it in honour that you threw his Highness from the ladder in Curfew Street, upon Saint Valentine's Eve?' said Bonthron; 'or think you the favour was received kindly or unkindly?'

This was so boldly said, and seemed so plausible, that it shook the Smith's opinion of the prince's innocence.

'Alas, my lord!' said he, looking sorrowfully towards Rothsay, 'could your Highness seek an innocent fellow's life for doing his duty by a helpless maiden?—I would rather have died in these lists, than live to hear it said of the Bruce's heir!'

'Thou art a good fellow, Smith,' said the prince; 'but I cannot expect thee to judge more wisely than others.—Away with that convict to the gallows, and gibbet him alive an you will, that he may speak falsehood and spread scandal on us to the last prolonged moment of his existence!'

So saying, the prince turned away from the lists, disdaining to notice the gloomy looks cast towards him, as the crowd made slow and reluctant way for him to pass, and expressing neither surprise nor displeasure at a deep hollow murmur, or groan, which accompanied his retreat. Only a few of his own immediate followers attended him from the field, though various persons of distinction had come there in his train. Even the lower class of citizens ceased to follow the unhappy prince, whose former indifferent reputation had exposed him to so many charges of impropriety and levity, and around whom there seemed now darkening suspicions of the most atrocious nature.

He took his slow and thoughtful way to the church of the Dominicans; but the ill news, which fly proverbially fast, had reached his father's place of retirement, before he himself appeared. On entering the palace and inquiring for the king, the Duke of Rothsay was surprised to be informed that he was in deep consultation with the Duke of Albany, who, mounting on horseback as the prince left the lists, had reached the convent before him. He was about to use the privilege of his rank and birth, to enter the royal apartment, when MacLouis, the commander of the guard of Brandanes, gave him to understand, in the most respectful terms, that he had special instructions which forbade his admittance.

'Go at least, MacLouis, and let them know that I wait their pleasure,' said the prince. 'If my uncle desires to have the credit of shutting the father's apartment against the son, it will gratify him to know that I am attending in the outer hall like a lackey.'

'May it please you,' said MacLouis, with hesitation, 'if your Highness would consent to retire just now, and to wait a while in patience, I will send to acquaint you when the Duke of Albany goes; and I doubt not that his Majesty will then admit your Grace to his presence. At present, your Highness must forgive me,—it is impossible you can have access.'

'I understand you, MacLouis; but go, nevertheless, and obey my commands.'

The officer went accordingly, and returned with a message that the king was indisposed, and on the point of retiring to his private chamber; but that the Duke of Albany would presently wait upon the Prince of Scotland.

It was, however, a full half-hour ere the Duke of Albany appeared,—a period of time which Rothsay spent partly in moody silence, and partly in idle talk with MacLouis and the Brandanes, as the levity or irritability of his temper obtained the ascendant.

At length the duke came, and with him the Lord High Constable, whose countenance expressed much sorrow and embarrassment.

'Fair kinsman,' said the Duke of Albany, 'I grieve to say that it is my royal brother's opinion that it will be best, for the honour of the royal family, that your Royal Highness do restrict yourself for a time to the seclusion of the High Constable's lodgings,* and accept of the noble Earl here present for your principal, if not sole companion, until the scandals which have been this day spread abroad shall be refuted, or forgotten.'

'How is this, my Lord of Errol?' said the prince, in astonishment. 'Is your house to be my jail, and is your lordship to be my jailor?'

'The saints forbid, my lord,' said the Earl of Errol; 'but it is my unhappy duty to obey the commands of your father, by considering your Royal Highness for some time as being under my ward.'

'The prince—the heir of Scotland, under the ward of the High Constable!—What reason can be given for this? Is the blighting speech of a convicted recreant of strength sufficient to tarnish my royal escutcheon?'

'While such accusations are not refuted and denied, my kinsman,' said the Duke of Albany, 'they will contaminate that of a monarch.'

'Denied, my lord!' exclaimed the prince; 'by whom are they asserted? save by a wretch too infamous, even by his own confession, to be credited for a moment, though a beggar's character, not a prince's, were impeached. Fetch him hither,—let the rack be shown to him; you will soon hear him retract the calumny which he dared to assert.'

'The gibbet has done its work too surely to

* Note Q. Earl of Errol's Lodgings.

leave Bonthron sensible to the rack,' said the Duke of Albany. 'He has been executed an hour since.'

'And why such haste, my lord?' said the prince; 'know you it looks as if there were practice in it, to bring a stain on my name?'

'The custom is universal—the defeated combatant in the ordeal of battle is instantly transferred from the lists to the gallows.—And yet, fair kinsman,' continued the Duke of Albany, 'if you had boldly and strongly denied the imputation, I would have judged right to keep the wretch alive for further investigation; but, as your Highness was silent, I deemed it best to stifle the scandal in the breath of him that uttered it.'

'Saint Mary, my lord, but this is too insulting! Do you, my uncle and kinsman, suppose me guilty of prompting such a useless and unworthy action as that which the slave confessed?'

'It is not for me to bandy question with your Highness; otherwise I would ask whether you also mean to deny the scarce less unworthy, though less bloody, attack upon the house in Couvrefew Street?—Be not angry with me, kinsman; but, indeed, your sequestering yourself for some brief space from the court, were it only during the King's residence in this city, where so much offence has been given, is imperiously demanded.'

Rothsay paused when he heard this exhortation; and, looking at the duke in a very marked manner, replied,—

'Uncle, you are a good huntsman. You have pitched your toils with much skill; but you would have been foiled, notwithstanding, had not the stag rushed among the nets of freewill. God speed you, and may you have the profit by this matter which your measures deserve. Say to my father, I obey his arrest.—My Lord High Constable, I wait only your pleasure to attend you to your lodgings. Since I am to lie in ward, I could not have desired a kinder or more courteous warden.'

The interview between the uncle and nephew being thus concluded, the prince retired with the Earl of Errol to his apartments; the citizens whom they met in the streets passing to the farther side, when they observed the Duke of Rothsay, to escape the necessity of saluting one whom they had been taught to consider as a ferocious as well as unprincipled libertine. The Constable's lodgings received the owner and his princely guest, both glad to leave the streets, yet neither feeling easy in the situation which they occupied with regard to each other within doors.

We must return to the lists after the combat had ceased, and when the nobles had withdrawn. The crowds were now separated into two distinct bodies. That which made the smallest in number was at the same time the most distinguished for respectability, consisting of the better class of inhabitants of Perth, who were congratulating the successful champion, and each other, upon the triumphant conclusion to which they had brought their feud with the courtiers. The magistrates were so much elated on the occasion, that they entreated Sir Patrick Charteris's acceptance of a collation in the town-hall. To this, Henry, the hero of the day, was of course invited, or he was rather commanded to attend. He listened to the summons with great embarrassment, for it may be readily believed his heart was with Catharine Glover. But the advice of his father Simon decided him. That veteran citizen had a natural and becoming deference for the magistracy of the Fair City; he entertained a high estimation of all honours which flowed from such a source, and thought that his intended son-in-law would do wrong not to receive them with gratitude.

'Thou must not think to absent thyself from such a solemn occasion, son Henry,' was his advice. 'Sir Patrick Charteris is to be there himself, and I think it will be a rare occasion for thee to gain his goodwill. It is like he may order of thee a new suit of harness; and I myself heard worthy Bailie Craigdallie say, there was a talk of furbishing up the city's armoury. Thou must not neglect the good trade, now that thou takest on thee an expensive family.'

'Tush, father Glover,' answered the embarrassed victor, 'I lack no custom—and thou knowest there is Catharine, who may wonder at my absence, and have her ear abused once more by tales of glee-maidens, and I wot not what.'

'Fear not for that,' said the Glover, 'but go, like an obedient burgess, where thy betters desire to have thee. I do not deny that it will cost thee some trouble to make thy peace with Catharine about this duel; for she thinks herself wiser on such matters than King and Council, Kirk and Canons, Provost and Bailies. But I will take up the quarrel with her myself, and will so work for thee, that though she may receive thee to-morrow with somewhat of a chiding, it shall melt into tears and smiles, like an April morning, that begins with a mild shower. Away with thee, then, my son, and be constant to the time, to-morrow morning after mass.'

The Smith, though reluctantly, was obliged to defer to the reasoning of his proposed father-in-law, and, once determined to accept the honour destined for him by the fathers of the city, he extricated himself from the crowd, and hastened home to put on his best apparel; in which he presently afterwards repaired to the Council-house, where the ponderous oak table seemed to bend under the massy dishes of choice Tay salmon, and delicious sea-fish from Dundee, being the dainties which the fasting season permitted, whilst neither wine, ale, nor metheglin were wanting to wash them down. The waits, or minstrels of the burgh, played during the repast, and in the intervals of the music one of them recited, with great emphasis, a long poetical account of the battle of Blackearn-side, fought by Sir William Wallace, and his redoubted captain and friend, Thomas of Longueville, against the English general, Seward—a theme perfectly familiar to all the guests, who nevertheless, more tolerant than their descendants, listened as if it had all the zest of novelty. It was complimentary to the ancestor of the Knight of Kinfauns, doubtless, and to other Perthshire families, in passages which the audience applauded vociferously, whilst they pledged each other in mighty draughts, to the memory of the heroes who had fought by the side of the

champion of Scotland. The health of Henry Wynd was quaffed with repeated shouts, and the Provost announced publicly that the magistrates were consulting how they might best invest him with some distinguished privilege, or honorary reward, to show how highly his fellow-citizens valued his courageous exertions.

'Nay, take it not thus, an it like your worships,' said the Smith, with his usual blunt manner, 'lest men say that valour must be rare in Perth, when they reward a man for fighting for the right of a forlorn widow. I am sure there are many scores of stout burghers in the town who would have done this day's dargue as well or better than I. For, in good sooth, I ought to have cracked yonder fellow's headpiece like an earthen pipkin—ay, and would have done it too, if it had not been one which I myself tempered for Sir John Ramorny. But an the Fair City think my service of any worth, I will conceive it far more than acquitted by any aid which you may afford from the common good * to the support of the widow Magdalen and her poor orphans.'

'That may well be done,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'and yet leave the Fair City rich enough to pay her debts to Henry Wynd, of which every man of us is a better judge than himself, who is blinded with an unavailing nicety, which men call modesty—And if the burgh be too poor for this, the Provost will bear his share. The Rover's golden angels have not all taken flight yet.'

The beakers were now circulated, under the name of a cup of comfort to the widow, and, anon, flowed around once more to the happy memory of the murdered Oliver, now so bravely avenged. In short, it was a feast so jovial, that all agreed nothing was wanting to render it perfect, but the presence of the Bonnet-maker himself, whose calamity had occasioned the meeting, and who had usually furnished the standing jest at such festive assemblies. 'Had his attendance been possible,' it was dryly observed by Bailie Craigdallie, 'he would certainly have claimed the success of the day, and vouched himself the avenger of his own murder.'

At the sound of the vesper bell the company broke up, some of the graver sort going to evening prayers, where, with half-shut eyes and shining countenances, they made a most orthodox and edifying portion of a Lenten congregation; others to their own homes, to tell over the occurrences of the fight and feast, for the information of the family circle; and some, doubtless, to the licensed freedoms of some tavern, the door of which Lent did not keep so close shut as the forms of the Church required. Henry returned to the Wynd, warm with the good wine and the applause of his fellow-citizens, and fell asleep to dream of perfect happiness and Catharine Glover.

We have said that, when the combat was decided, the spectators were divided into two bodies. Of these, when the more respectable portion attended the victor in joyous procession, much the greater number, or what might be termed the rabble, waited upon the subdued and sentenced Bonthron, who was travelling in a different direction and for a very opposite purpose. Whatever may be thought of the comparative attractions of the house of mourning and of feasting under other circumstances, there can be little doubt which will draw most visitors, when the question is, whether we would witness miseries which we are not to share, or festivities of which we are not to partake. Accordingly, the tumbril in which the criminal was conveyed to execution was attended by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of Perth.

A friar was seated in the same car with the murderer, to whom he did not hesitate to repeat, under the seal of confession, the same false asseveration which he had made upon the place of combat, which charged the Duke of Rothsay with being director of the ambuscade by which the unfortunate Bonnet-maker had suffered. The same falsehood he disseminated among the crowd, averring, with unblushing effrontery, to those who were nighest to the car, that he owed his death to his having been willing to execute the Duke of Rothsay's pleasure. For a time he repeated these words, sullenly and doggedly, in the manner of one reciting a task, or a liar who endeavours by reiteration to obtain a credit for his words, which he is internally sensible they do not deserve. But when he lifted up his eyes, and beheld in the distance the black outline of a gallows, at least forty feet high, with its ladder and its fatal cord, rising against the horizon, he became suddenly silent, and the friar could observe that he trembled very much.

'Be comforted, my son,' said the good priest; 'you have confessed the truth, and received absolution. Your penitence will be accepted according to your sincerity; and though you have been a man of bloody hands and cruel heart, yet, by the Church's prayers, you shall be in due time assoilzied from the penal fires of purgatory.'

These assurances were calculated rather to augment than to diminish the terrors of the culprit, who was agitated by doubts whether the mode suggested for his preservation from death would to a certainty be effectual, and some suspicion whether there was really any purpose of employing them in his favour; for he knew his master well enough to be aware of the indifference with which he would sacrifice one who might on some future occasion be a dangerous evidence against him.

His doom, however, was sealed, and there was no escaping from it. They slowly approached the fatal tree, which was erected on a bank by the river's side, about half-a-mile from the walls of the city; a site chosen that the body of the wretch, which was to remain food for the carrion crows, might be seen from a distance in every direction. Here the priest delivered Bonthron to the executioner, by whom he was assisted up the ladder, and to all appearance despatched according to the usual forms of the law. He seemed to struggle for life for a minute, but soon after hung still and inanimate. The executioner, after remaining upon duty for more than half-an-hour, as if to permit the last spark of life to be extinguished, announced to the admirers of such spectacles, that the irons for the permanent suspension of the carcass not having been got ready, the concluding ceremony of dis-

* The public property of the burgh.

embowelling the dead body, and attaching it finally to the gibbet, would be deferred till the next morning at sunrise.

Notwithstanding the early hour which he had named, Master Smotherwell had a reasonable attendance of rabble at the place of execution, to see the final proceedings of justice with its victim. But great was the astonishment and resentment of these amateurs, to find that the dead body had been removed from the gibbet. They were not, however, long at a loss to guess the cause of its disappearance. Bonthron had been the follower of a baron whose estates lay in Fife, and was himself a native of that province. What was more natural than that some of the Fife men, whose boats were frequently plying on the river, should have clandestinely removed the body of their countryman from the place of public shame? The crowd vented their rage against Smotherwell, for not completing his job on the preceding evening; and had not he and his assistant betaken themselves to a boat, and escaped across the Tay, they would have run some risk of being pelted to death. The event, however, was too much in the spirit of the times to be much wondered at. Its real cause we shall explain in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Let gallows gape for dogs, let men go free.
HENRY V.

THE incidents of a narrative of this kind must be adapted to each other, as the wards of a key must tally accurately with those of the lock to which it belongs. The reader, however gentle, will not hold himself obliged to rest satisfied with the mere fact that such and such occurrences took place, which is, generally speaking, all that in ordinary life he can know of what is passing around him; but he is desirous, while reading for amusement, of knowing the interior movements occasioning the course of events. This is a legitimate and reasonable curiosity; for every man hath a right to open and examine the mechanism of his own watch, put together for his proper use, although he is not permitted to pry into the interior of the timepiece which, for general information, is displayed on the town-steeple.

It would be, therefore, uncourteous to leave my readers under any doubt concerning the agency which removed the assassin Bonthron from the gallows; an event which some of the Perth citizens ascribed to the foul Fiend himself, while others were content to lay it upon the natural dislike of Bonthron's countrymen of Fife to see him hanging on the river-side as a spectacle dishonourable to their province.

About midnight succeeding the day when the execution had taken place, and while the inhabitants of Perth were deeply buried in slumber, three men, muffled in their cloaks, and bearing a dark lantern, descended the alleys of a garden which led from the house occupied by Sir John Ramorny to the banks of the Tay, where a small boat lay moored to a landing-place, or little projecting pier. The wind howled in a low and melancholy manner through the leafless shrubs and bushes; and a pale moon *waded*, as it is termed in Scotland, amongst drifting clouds, which seemed to threaten rain. The three individuals entered the boat with great precaution, to escape observation. One of them was a tall, powerful man; another short and bent downwards; the third middle-sized, and apparently younger than his companions, well made and active. Thus much the imperfect light could discover. They seated themselves in the boat, and unmoored it from the pier.

'We must let her drift with the current till we pass the bridge, where the burghers still keep guard; and you know the proverb—A Perth arrow hath a perfect flight,' said the most youthful of the party, who assumed the office of helmsman, and pushed the boat off from the pier; whilst the others took the oars, which were muffled, and rowed with all precaution till they attained the middle of the river; they then ceased their efforts, lay upon their oars, and trusted to the steersman for keeping her in mid-channel.

In this manner they passed unnoticed or disregarded beneath the stately Gothic arches of the old bridge, erected by the magnificent patronage of Robert Bruce in 1329, and carried away by an inundation in 1621. Although they heard the voices of a civic watch, which, since these disturbances commenced, had been nightly maintained in that important pass, no challenge was given; and when they were so far down the stream as to be out of hearing of these guardians of the night, they began to row, but still with precaution, and to converse, though in a low tone.

'You have found a new trade, comrade, since I left you,' said one of the rowers to the other. 'I left you engaged in tending a sick knight, and I find you employed in purloining a dead body from the gallows.'

'A living body, so please your squirehood, Master Buncle; or else my craft hath failed of its purpose.'

'So I am told, Master Potter-carrier; but, saving your clerkship, unless you tell me your trick, I will take leave to doubt of its success.'

'A simple toy, Master Buncle, not likely to please a genius so acute as that of your valiancy. Marry, thus it is. The suspension of the human body, which the vulgar call hanging, operates death by apoplexia,—that is, the blood being unable to return to the heart by the compression of the veins, it rushes to the brain, and the man dies. Also, and as an additional cause of dissolution, the lungs no longer receive the needful supply of the vital air, owing to the ligature of the cord around the thorax; and hence the patient perishes.'

'I understand that well enough—But how is such a revulsion of blood to the brain to be prevented, Sir Mediciner?' said the third person, who was no other than Ramorny's page, Eviot.

'Marry, then,' replied Dwining, 'hang me the patient up in such fashion that the carotid arteries shall not be compressed, and the blood will not determine to the brain, and apoplexy

will not take place; and again, if there be no ligature around the thorax, the lungs will be supplied with air, whether the man be hanging in the middle heaven, or standing on the firm earth.'

'All this I conceive,' said Eviot; 'but how these precautions can be reconciled with the execution of the sentence of hanging, is what my dull brain cannot comprehend.'

'Ah! good youth, thy valiancy hath spoiled a fair wit. Hadst thou studied with me, thou shouldst have learned things more difficult than this. But here is my trick. I get me certain bandages, made of the same substance with your young valiancy's horse-girths, having especial care that they are of a kind which will not shrink on being strained, since that would spoil my experiment. One loop of this substance is drawn under each foot, and returns up either side of the leg to a cincture, with which it is united; these cinctures are connected by divers straps down the breast and back, in order to divide the weight, and there are sundry other conveniences for easing the patient; but the chief is this. The straps, or ligatures, are attached to a broad steel collar, curving outwards, and having a hook or two, for the better security of the halter, which the friendly executioner passes around that part of the machine, instead of applying it to the bare throat of the patient. Thus, when thrown off from the ladder, the sufferer will find himself suspended, not by his neck, if it please you, but by the steel circle, which supports the loops in which his feet are placed, and on which his weight really rests, diminished a little by similar supports under each arm. Thus, neither vein nor windpipe being compressed, the man will breathe as free, and his blood, saving from fright and novelty of situation, will flow as temperately as your valiancy's when you stand up in your stirrups to view a field of battle.'

'By my faith, a quaint and rare device!' quoth Buncle.

'Is it not?' pursued the leech; 'and well worth being known to such mounting spirits as your valiancies, since there is no knowing to what height Sir John Ramorny's pupils may arrive; and if these be such that it is necessary to descend from them by a rope, you may find my mode of management more convenient than the common practice. Marry, but you must be provided with a high-collared doublet, to conceal the ring of steel; and, above all such a *bonus socius* as Smotherwell to adjust the noose.'

'Base poison-vendor,' said Eviot, 'men of our calling die on the field of battle!'

'I will save the lesson, however,' replied Buncle, 'in case of some pinching occasion.—But what a night the bloody hang-dog Bonthron must have had of it, dancing a pavise in mid-air to the music of his own shackles, as the night wind swings him that way and this!'

'It were an almsdeed to leave him there,' said Eviot; 'for his descent from the gibbet will but encourage him to new murders. He knows but two elements, drunkenness and bloodshed.'

'Perhaps Sir John Ramorny might have been of your opinion,' said Dwining; 'but it would first have been necessary to cut out the rogue's tongue, lest he had told strange tales from his airy height. And there are other reasons that it concerns not your valiancies to know. In truth, I myself have been generous in serving him, for the fellow is built as strong as Edinburgh Castle, and his anatomy would have matched any that is in the chirurgical hall of Padua.—But tell me, Master Buncle, what news bring you from the doughty Douglas?'

'They may tell that know,' said Buncle. 'I am the dull ass that bears the message, and kens nought of its purport. The safer for myself, perhaps. I carried letters from the Duke of Albany and from Sir John Ramorny to the Douglas, and he looked black as a northern tempest when he opened them—I brought them answers from the Earl, at which they smiled like the sun when the harvest storm is closing over him. Go to your Ephemerides, leech, and conjure the meaning out of that.'

'Methinks I can do so without much cost of wit,' said the chirurgeon; 'but yonder I see in the pale moonlight our dead-alive. Should he have screamed out to any chance passenger, it were a curious interruption to a night-journey to be hailed from the top of such a gallows as that.—Hark, methinks I do hear his groans amid the whistling of the wind and the creaking of the chains. So—fair and softly—make fast the boat with the grappling—and get out the casket with my matters—we would be better for a little fire, but the light might bring observation on us. Come on, my men of valour, march warily, for we are bound for the gallows-foot—Follow with the lantern—I trust the ladder has been left.

Sing, three merry-men, and three merry-men,
And three merry-men are we;
Thou on the land, and I on the sand,
And Jack on the gallows-tree.'

As they advanced to the gibbet, they could plainly hear groans, though uttered in a low tone. Dwining ventured to give a low cough once or twice, by way of signal; but receiving no answer, 'We had best make haste,' said he to his companions, 'for our friend must be *in extremis*, as he gives no answer to the signal which announces the arrival of help.—Come, let us to the gear. I will go up the ladder first, and cut the rope. Do you two follow, one after another, and take fast hold of the body, so that he fall not when the halter is unloosed. Keep sure grip, for which the bandages will afford you convenience. Bethink you that, though he plays an owl's part to-night, he hath no wings, and to fall out of a halter may be as dangerous as to fall into one.'

While he spoke thus with sneer and gibe, he ascended the ladder, and, having ascertained that the men-at-arms who followed him had the body in their hold, he cut the rope, and then gave his aid to support the almost lifeless form of the criminal.

By a skilful exertion of strength and address, the body of Bonthron was placed safely on the ground, and the faint yet certain existence of life having been ascertained, it was thence transported to the river-side, where, shrouded by the bank, the party might be best concealed from observation, while the leech employed himself in

the necessary means of recalling animation, with which he had taken care to provide himself.

For this purpose he first freed the recovered person from his shackles, which the executioner had left unlocked on purpose, and at the same time disengaged the complicated envelopes and bandages by which he had been suspended. It was some time ere Dwining's efforts succeeded; for, in despite of the skill with which his machine had been constructed, the straps designed to support the body had stretched so considerably as to occasion the sense of suffocation becoming extremely overpowering. But the address of the surgeon triumphed over all obstacles; and, after sneezing and stretching himself, with one or two brief convulsions, Bonthron gave decided proofs of reanimation, by arresting the hand of the operator as it was in the act of dropping strong waters on his breast and throat; and, directing the bottle which contained them to his lips, he took, almost perforce, a considerable gulp of the contents.

'It is spiritual essence, double distilled,' said the astonished operator, 'and would blister the throat and burn the stomach of any other man. But this extraordinary beast is so unlike all other human creatures, that I should not wonder if it brought him to the complete possession of his faculties.'

Bonthron seemed to confirm this; he started with a strong convulsion, sat up, stared around, and indicated some consciousness of existence.

'Wine—wine,' were the first words which he articulated.

The leech gave him a draught of medicated wine, mixed with water. He rejected it under the dishonourable epithet of 'kennel-washings,' and again uttered the words—'Wine, wine.'

'Nay, take it to thee, i' the devil's name,' said the leech, 'since none but he can judge of thy constitution.'

A draught, long and deep enough to have discomposed the intellects of any other person, was found effectual in recalling those of Bonthron to a more perfect state; though he betrayed no recollection of where he was or what had befallen him, and, in his brief and sullen manner, asked why he was brought to the river-side at this time of night.

'Another frolic of the wild prince, for drenching me as he did before—Nails and blood, but I would'——

'Hold thy peace,' interrupted Eviot, 'and be thankful, I pray you, if you have any thankfulness in you, that thy body is not crows' meat, and thy soul in a place where water is too scarce to duck thee.'

'I begin to bethink me,' said the ruffian; and, raising the flask to his mouth, which he saluted with a long and hearty kiss, he set the empty bottle on the earth, dropped his head on his bosom, and seemed to muse for the purpose of arranging his confused recollections.

'We can abide the issue of his meditations no longer,' said Dwining; 'he will be better after he has slept.—Up, sir! you have been riding the air these some hours—try if the water be not an easier mode of conveyance.—Your valours must lend me a hand. I can no more lift this mass than I could raise in my arms a slaughtered bull.'

'Stand upright on thine own feet, Bonthron, now we have placed thee upon them,' said Eviot.

'I cannot,' answered the patient. 'Every drop of blood tingles in my veins as if it had pin-points, and my knees refuse to bear their burden. What can be the meaning of all this? This is some practice of thine, thou dog leech!'

'Ay, ay, so it is, honest Bonthron,' said Dwining, 'a practice thou shalt thank me for, when thou comest to learn it. In the meanwhile, stretch down in the stern of that boat, and let me wrap this cloak about thee.' Assisted into the boat accordingly, Bonthron was deposited there as conveniently as things admitted of. He answered their attentions with one or two snorts resembling the grunt of a boar, who has got some food particularly agreeable to him.

'And now, Buncle,' said the chirurgeon, 'your valiant squireship knows your charge. You are to carry this lively cargo by the river to Newburgh, where you are to dispose of him as you wot of; meantime, here are his shackles and bandages, the marks of his confinement and liberation. Bind them up together, and fling them into the deepest pool you pass over; for, found in your possession, they might tell tales against us all. This low, light breath of wind from the west will permit you to use a sail as soon as the light comes in, and you are tired of rowing. Your other valiancy, Master Page Eviot, must be content to return to Perth with me afoot, for here severs our fair company. Take with thee the lantern, Buncle, for thou wilt require it more than we, and see thou send me back my flasket.'

As the pedestrians returned to Perth, Eviot expressed his belief that Bonthron's understanding would never recover the shock which terror had inflicted upon it, and which appeared to him to have disturbed all the faculties of his mind, and in particular his memory.

'It is not so, an it please your pagehood,' said the leech. 'Bonthron's intellect, such as it is, hath a solid character—It will but vacillate to and fro like a pendulum which hath been put in motion, and then will rest in its proper point of gravity. Our memory is, of all our powers of mind, that which is peculiarly liable to be suspended. Deep intoxication or sound sleep alike destroy it, and yet it returns when the drunkard becomes sober, or the sleeper is awakened. Terror sometimes produces the same effects. I knew at Paris a criminal condemned to die by the halter, who suffered the sentence accordingly, showing no particular degree of timidity upon the scaffold, and behaving and expressing himself as men in the same condition are wont to do. Accident did for him what a little ingenious practice hath done for our amiable friend from whom we but now parted. He was cut down and given to his friends before life was extinct, and I had the good fortune to restore him. But though he recovered in other particulars, he remembered but little of his trial and sentence. Of his confession on the morning of his execution—he! he! he!'—(in his usual chuckling manner)—'he remembered him not a word. Neither of leaving the prison—nor of

his passage to the Grève,* where he suffered—nor of the devout speeches with which he—he! he!—edified—he! he! he!—so many good Christians—nor of ascending the fatal tree, nor of taking the fatal leap, had my revenant the slightest recollection.†—But here we reach the point where we must separate; for it were unfit, should we meet any of the watch, that we be found together, and it were also prudent that we enter the city by different gates. My profession forms an excuse for my going and coming at all times. Your valiant pagehood will make such explanation as may seem sufficing.'

'I shall make my will a sufficient excuse if I am interrogated,' said the haughty young man. 'Yet I will avoid interruption, if possible. The moon is quite obscured, and the road as black as a wolf's mouth.'

'Tut,' said the physicianer, 'let not your valour care for that; we shall tread darker paths ere it be long.'

Without inquiring into the meaning of these evil-boding sentences, and indeed hardly listening to them, in the pride and recklessness of his nature, the page of Ramorny parted from his ingenious and dangerous companion; and each took his own way.

CHAPTER XXV.

The course of true love never did run smooth.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE ominous anxiety of our armourer had not played him false. When the good Glover parted with his intended son-in-law, after the judicial combat had been decided, he found, what he indeed had expected, that his fair daughter was in no favourable disposition towards her lover. But although he perceived that Catharine was cold, restrained, collected, had cast away the appearance of mortal passion, and listened with a reserve, implying contempt, to the most splendid description he could give her of the combat in the Skinners' Yards, he was determined not to take the least notice of her altered manner, but to speak of her marriage with his son Henry as a thing which must of course take place. At length, when she began, as on a former occasion, to intimate that her attachment to the armourer did not exceed the bounds of friendship,—that she was resolved never to marry,—that the pretended judicial combat was a mockery of the divine will, and of human laws,—the Glover not unnaturally grew angry.

'I cannot read thy thoughts, wench; nor can I pretend to guess under what wicked delusion it is that you kiss a declared lover,—suffer him to kiss you,—run to his house when a report is spread of his death, and fling yourself into his arms when you find him alive. All this shows very well in a girl prepared to obey her parents in a match sanctioned by her father; but such tokens of intimacy, bestowed on one whom a young woman cannot esteem, and is determined not to marry, are uncomely and unmaidenly. You have already been more bounteous of your favours to Henry Smith, than your mother, whom God assoilzie, ever was to me before I married her. I tell thee, Catharine, this trifling with the love of an honest man is what I neither can, will, nor ought to endure. I have given my consent to the match, and I insist it shall take place without delay; and that you receive Henry Wynd to-morrow, as a man whose bride you are to be with all despatch.'

'A power more potent than yours, father, will say no,' replied Catharine.

'I will risk it; my power is a lawful one, that of a father over a child, and an erring child,' answered her father. 'God and man allow of my influence.'

'Then may Heaven help us!' said Catharine; 'for if you are obstinate in your purpose, we are all lost.'

'We can expect no help from Heaven,' said the Glover, 'when we act with indiscretion. I am clerk enough myself to know that; and that your causeless resistance to my will is sinful, every priest will inform you. Ay, and more than that, you have spoken degradingly of the blessed appeal to God in the combat of ordeal. Take heed! for the Holy Church is awakened to watch her sheepfold, and to extirpate heresy by fire and steel; so much I warn thee of.'

Catharine uttered a suppressed exclamation; and, with difficulty compelling herself to assume an appearance of composure, promised her father, that if he would spare her any further discussion of the subject till to-morrow morning, she would then meet him, determined to make a full discovery of her sentiments.

With this promise Simon Glover was obliged to remain contented, though extremely anxious for the postponed explanation. It could not be levity or fickleness of character which induced his daughter to act with so much apparent inconsistency towards the man of his choice, and whom she had so lately unequivocally owned to be also the man of her own. What external force there could exist, of a kind powerful enough to change the resolutions she had so decidedly expressed within twenty-four hours, was a matter of complete mystery.

'But I will be as obstinate as she can be,' thought the Glover, 'and she shall either marry Henry Smith without further delay, or old Simon Glover will know an excellent reason to the contrary.'

The subject was not renewed during the evening; but early on the next morning, just at sunrising, Catharine knelt before the bed in which her parent still slumbered. Her heart sobbed as if it would burst, and her tears fell thick upon her father's face. The good old man awoke, looked up, crossed his child's forehead, and kissed her affectionately.

'I understand thee, Kate,' he said; 'thou art come to confession, and, I trust, art desirous to escape a heavy penance by being sincere.'

Catharine was silent for an instant.

'I need not ask, my father, if you remember

* [A square in Paris, before the town-hall, and the place of public executions.]

† An incident precisely similar to that in the text actually occurred, within the present century, at Oxford, in the case of a young woman who underwent the last sentence of the law for child-murder. A learned professor of that university has published an account of his conversation with the girl after her recovery.

the Carthusian monk Clement, and his preachings and lessons; at which, indeed, you assisted so often, that you cannot be ignorant men called you one of his converts, and with greater justice termed me so likewise?'

'I am aware of both,' said the old man, raising himself on his elbow; 'but I defy foul fame to show that I ever owned him in any heretical proposition, though I loved to hear him talk of the corruptions of the Church, the misgovernment of the nobles, and the wild ignorance of the poor, proving, as it seemed to me, that the sole virtue of our commonweal, its strength, and its estimation, lay among the burgher craft of the better class, which I received as comfortable doctrine, and creditable to the town. And if he preached other than right doctrine, wherefore did his superiors in the Carthusian convent permit it? If the shepherds turn a wolf in sheep's clothing into the flock, they should not blame the sheep for being worried.'

'They endured his preaching, nay, they encouraged it,' said Catharine, 'while the vices of the laity, the contentions of the nobles, and the oppression of the poor, were the subject of his censure, and they rejoiced in the crowds, who, attracted to the Carthusian church, forsook those of the other convents. But the hypocrites—for such they are—joined with the other fraternities in accusing their preacher Clement, when, passing from censuring the crimes of the State, he began to display the pride, ignorance, and luxury of the churchmen themselves; their thirst of power, their usurpation over men's consciences, and their desire to augment their worldly wealth.'

'For God's sake, Catharine,' said her father, 'speak within doors; your voice rises in tone, and your speech in bitterness,—your eyes sparkle. It is owing to this zeal in what concerns you no more than others, that malicious persons fix upon you the odious and dangerous name of a heretic.'

'You know I speak no more than what is truth,' said Catharine, 'and which you yourself have avouched often.'

'By needle and buckskin, no!' answered the Glover hastily; 'wouldst thou have me avouch what might cost me life and limb, land and goods? For a full commission hath been granted for taking and trying heretics, upon whom is laid the cause of all late tumults and miscarriages; wherefore, few words are best, wench. I am ever of mind with the old maker,—

> Since word is thrall, and thought is free,
> Keep well thy tongue, I counsel thee.'*

'The counsel comes too late, father,' answered Catharine, sinking down on a chair by her father's bedside. 'The words have been spoken and heard; and it is indited against Simon Glover, burgess in Perth, that he hath spoken irreverent discourses of the doctrines of Holy Church'——

'As I live by knife and needle,' interrupted Simon, 'it is a lie! I never was so silly as to speak of what I understood not.'

'And hath slandered the anointed of the Church, both regular and secular,' continued Catharine.

'Nay, I will never deny the truth,' said the Glover; 'an idle word I may have spoken at the ale-bench, or over a pottle-pot of wine, or in right sure company; but, else, my tongue is not one to run my head into peril.'

'So you think, my dearest father; but your slightest language has been espied, your best-meaning phrases have been perverted, and you are in dittay as a gross railer against Church and churchmen, and for holding discourse against them with loose and profligate persons, such as the deceased Oliver Proudfute, the Smith Henry of the Wynd, and others, set forth as commending the doctrines of Father Clement, whom they charge with seven rank heresies, and seek for with staff and spear, to try him to the death.—But that,' said Catharine, kneeling, and looking upwards with the aspect of one of those beauteous saints whom the Catholics have given to the fine arts,—'that they shall never do. He hath escaped from the net of the fowler; and, I thank Heaven, it was by my means.'

'Thy means, girl! art thou mad?' said the amazed Glover.

'I will not deny what I glory in,' answered Catharine; 'it was by my means that Conachar was led to come hither with a party of men, and carry off the old man, who is now far beyond the Highland line.'

'O, my rash—my unlucky child!' said the Glover; 'hast thou dared to aid the escape of one accused of heresy, and to invite Highlanders in arms to interfere with the administration of justice within burgh? Alas! thou hast offended both against the laws of the Church and those of the realm. What—what would become of us were this known?'

'It *is* known, my dear father,' said the maiden firmly; 'known even to those who will be the most willing avengers of the deed.'

'This must be some idle notion, Catharine, or some trick of those cogging priests and nuns; it accords not with thy late cheerful willingness to wed Henry Smith.'

'Alas! dearest father, remember the dismal surprise occasioned by his reported death, and the joyful amazement at finding him alive; and deem it not wonder if I permitted myself, under your protection, to say more than my reflection justified. But then, I knew not the worst, and thought the danger exaggerated. Alas! I was yesterday fearfully undeceived, when the Abbess herself came hither, and with her the Dominican. They showed me the commission under the broad seal of Scotland, for inquiring into and punishing heresy; they showed me your name and my own, in a list of suspected persons; and it was with tears, real tears, that the Abbess conjured me to avert a dreadful fate, by a speedy retreat into the cloister; and that the monk pledged his word that you should not be molested if I complied.'

'The foul Fiend take them both, for weeping crocodiles!' said the Glover.

'Alas!' replied Catharine, 'complaint or anger will little help us; but you see I have had real cause for this present alarm.'

'Alarm!—call it utter ruin.—Alas! my reck-

* These lines are still extant in the ruinous house of an abbot, and are said to be allusive to the holy man having kept a mistress.

less child, where was your prudence when you ran headlong into such a snare?'

'Hear me, father,' said Catharine; 'there is still one mode of safety held out; it is one which I have often proposed, and for which I have in vain supplicated your permission.'

'I understand you—the convent,' said her father. 'But, Catharine, what abbess or prioress would dare'——

'That I will explain to you, father, and it will also show the circumstances which have made me seem unsteady of resolution to a degree which has brought censure upon me from yourself and others. Our confessor, old Father Francis, whom I chose from the Dominican convent at your command'——

'Ay, truly,' interrupted the Glover; 'and I so counselled and commanded thee, in order to take off the report that thy conscience was altogether under the direction of Father Clement.'

'Well, this Father Francis has at different times urged and provoked me to converse on such matters as he judged I was likely to learn something of from the Carthusian preacher. Heaven forgive me my blindness! I fell into the snare, spoke freely, and, as he argued gently, as one who would fain be convinced, I even spoke warmly in defence of what I believed devoutly. The confessor assumed not his real aspect, and betrayed not his secret purpose, until he had learned all that I had to tell him. It was then that he threatened me with temporal punishment, and with eternal condemnation. Had his threats reached me alone, I could have stood firm; for their cruelty on earth I could have endured, and their power beyond this life I have no belief in.'

'For Heaven's sake!' said the Glover, who was well-nigh beside himself at perceiving at every new word the increasing extremity of his daughter's danger, 'beware of blaspheming the Holy Church—whose arms are as prompt to strike as her ears are sharp to hear.'

'To me,' said the Maid of Perth, again looking up, 'the terrors of the threatened denunciations would have been of little avail; but when they spoke of involving thee, my father, in the charge against me, I own I trembled, and desired to compromise. The Abbess Martha, of Elcho nunnery, being my mother's kinswoman, I told her my distresses, and obtained her promise that she would receive me, if, renouncing worldly love and thoughts of wedlock, I would take the veil in her sisterhood. She had conversation on the topic, I doubt not, with the Dominican Francis, and both joined in singing the same song. "Remain in the world," said they, "and thy father and thou shall be brought to trial as heretics—assume the veil, and the errors of both shall be forgiven and cancelled." They spoke not even of recantation of errors of doctrine; all should be peace if I would but enter the convent.'

'I doubt not—I doubt not,' said Simon; 'the old Glover is thought rich, and his wealth would follow his daughter to the convent of Elcho, unless what the Dominicans might claim as their own share. So this was thy call to the veil—these thy objections to Henry Wynd?'

'Indeed, father, the course was urged on all hands; nor did my own mind recoil from it. Sir John Ramorny threatened me with the powerful vengeance of the young prince, if I continued to repel his wicked suit;—and as for poor Henry, it is but of late that I have discovered, to my own surprise—that—that I love his virtues more than I dislike his faults. Alas! the discovery has only been made to render my quitting the world more difficult than when I thought I had thee only to regret!'

She rested her head on her hand, and wept bitterly.

'All this is folly,' said the Glover. 'Never was there an extremity so pinching, but what a wise man might find counsel, if he was daring to act upon it. This has never been the land or the people over whom priests could rule in the name of Rome, without their usurpation being controlled. If they are to punish each honest burgher who says the monks love gold, and that the lives of some of them cry shame upon the doctrines they teach, why, truly, Stephen Smotherwell will not lack employment—and if all foolish maidens are to be secluded from the world because they follow the erring doctrines of a popular preaching friar, they must enlarge the nunneries and receive their inmates on slighter composition. Our privileges have been often defended against the Pope himself, by our good monarchs of yore; and when he pretended to interfere with the temporal government of the kingdom, there wanted not a Scottish Parliament, who told him his duty in a letter that should have been written in letters of gold. I have seen the epistle myself, and, though I could not read it, the very sight of the seals of the right reverend prelates, and noble and true barons, which hung at it, made my heart leap for joy. Thou shouldst not have kept this secret, my child; but it is no time to tax thee with thy fault. Go down, get me some food. I will mount instantly, and go to our Lord Provost, and have his advice, and, as I trust, his protection, and that of other true-hearted Scottish nobles, who will not see a true man trodden down for an idle word.'

'Alas, my father!' said Catharine, 'it was even this impetuosity which I dreaded. I knew if I made my plaint to you there would soon be fire and feud, as if religion, though sent to us by the Father of peace, were fit only to be the mother of discord;—and hence I could now—even now—give up the world, and retire with my sorrow among the sisters of Elcho, would you but let me be the sacrifice. Only, father—comfort poor Henry, when we are parted for ever—and do not—do not let him think of me too harshly—say Catharine will never vex him more by her remonstrances, but that she will never forget him in her prayers.'

'The girl hath a tongue that would make a Saracen weep,' said her father, his own eyes sympathizing with those of his daughter. 'But I will not yield way to this combination between the nun and the priest, to rob me of my only child.—Away with you, girl, and let me don my clothes; and prepare yourself to obey me in what I may have to recommend for your safety. Get a few clothes together, and what valuables thou hast—also, take the keys of my iron box, which poor Henry Smith gave me, and divide what gold you find into two portions—put the

one into a purse for thyself, and the other into the quilted girdle which I made on purpose to wear on journeys. Thus both shall be provided, in case fate should sunder us; in which event, God send the whirlwind may take the withered leaf, and spare the green one!—Let them make ready my horse instantly, and the white jennet that I bought for thee but a day since, hoping to see thee ride to Saint John's Kirk, with maids and matrons, as blithe a bride as ever crossed the holy threshold. But it skills not talking—Away, and remember that the saints help those who are willing to help themselves. Not a word in answer—begone, I say—no wilfulness now. The pilot, in calm weather, will let a sea-boy trifle with the rudder; but, by my soul, when winds howl, and waves arise, he stands by the helm himself.—Away; no reply.'

Catharine left the room to execute, as well as she might, the commands of her father, who, gentle in disposition, and devotedly attached to his child, suffered her often, as it seemed, to guide and rule both herself and him; yet who, as she knew, was wont to claim filial obedience, and exercise parental authority, with sufficient strictness, when the occasion seemed to require an enforcement of domestic discipline.

While the fair Catharine was engaged in executing her father's behests, and the good old Glover was hastily attiring himself, as one who was about to take a journey, a horse's tramp was heard in the narrow street. The horseman was wrapped in his riding-cloak, having the cape of it drawn up, as if to hide the under part of his face, while his bonnet was pulled over his brows, and a broad plume obscured his upper features. He sprung from the saddle, and Dorothy had scarce time to reply to his inquiries that the Glover was in his bedroom, ere the stranger had ascended the stair and entered the sleeping apartment. Simon, astonished and alarmed, and disposed to see in this early visitant an apparitor or sumner, come to attach him and his daughter, was much relieved, when, as the stranger doffed the bonnet, and threw the skirt of the mantle from his face, he recognised the knightly Provost of the Fair City, a visit from whom, at any time, was a favour of no ordinary degree; but, being made at such an hour, had something marvellous, and, connected with the circumstances of the times, even alarming.

'Sir Patrick Charteris!' said the Glover—'this high honour done to your poor beadsman'——

'Hush!' said the knight, 'there is no time for idle civilities. I came hither, because a man is, on trying occasions, his own safest page, and I can remain no longer than to bid thee fly, good Glover, since warrants are to be granted this day in council for the arrest of thy daughter and thee, under charge of heresy; and delay will cost you both your liberty for certain, and perhaps your lives.'

'I have heard something of such a matter,' said the Glover, 'and was this instant setting forth to Kinfauns, to plead my innocence of this scandalous charge, to ask your lordship's counsel, and to implore your protection.'

'Thy innocence, friend Simon, will avail thee but little before prejudiced judges; my advice is, in one word, to fly, and wait for happier times. As for my protection, we must tarry till the tide turns ere it will in any sort avail thee. But if thou canst lie concealed for a few days or weeks, I have little doubt that the churchmen, who, by siding with the Duke of Albany in court intrigue, and by alleging the decay of the purity of Catholic doctrine as the sole cause of the present national misfortunes, have, at least for the present hour, an irresistible authority over the King, will receive a check. In the meanwhile, however, know that King Robert hath not only given way to this general warrant for inquisition after heresy, but hath confirmed the Pope's nomination of Henry Wardlaw, to be Archbishop of Saint Andrews, and Primate of Scotland,* thus yielding to Rome those freedoms and immunities of the Scottish Church, which his ancestors, from the time of Malcolm Canmore, have so boldly defended. His brave fathers would have rather subscribed a covenant with the devil, than yielded in such a matter to the pretensions of Rome.'

'Alas, and what remedy?'

'None, old man, save in some sudden court change,' said Sir Patrick. 'The King is but like a mirror, which, having no light itself, reflects back with equal readiness any which is placed near to it for the time. Now, although the Douglas is banded with Albany, yet the Earl is unfavourable to the high claims of those domineering priests, having quarrelled with them about the exactions which his retinue hath raised on the Abbot of Arbroath. He will come back again with a high hand, for report says the Earl of March hath fled before him. When he returns we shall have a changed world, for his presence will control Albany; especially as many nobles, and I myself, as I tell you in confidence, are resolved to league with him to defend the general right. Thy exile, therefore, will end with his return to our court. Thou hast but to seek thee some temporary hiding-place.'

'For that, my lord,' said the Glover, 'I can be at no loss, since I have just title to the protection of the Highland chief, Gilchrist MacIan, Chief of the Clan Quhele.'

'Nay, if thou canst take hold of his mantle thou needs no help of any one else—neither Lowland churchman nor layman finds a free course of justice beyond the Highland frontier.'

'But then my child, noble sir—my Catharine?' said the Glover.

'Let her go with thee, man. The graddan cake will keep her white teeth in order, the goat's whey will make the blood spring to her cheek again, which these alarms have banished;

* Mastere Henry of Wardlaw,
That like til Vertue was to draw,
Chantour that time of Glasgu,
Commendit of alkyn Vertew,
The Pape had in affectioun,
Baith for his fame and his resoun.
* * * *
Sua by this resoun speciale
Of the threttinth Benet Pape,
This Master Henry was Bischape
Of Sanct Andrewis with honoure.
Of Canon he was then Doctour.
WYNTOUN, B. ix. chap. 23.

and even the Fair Maiden of Perth may sleep soft enough on a bed of Highland bracken.'

'It is not from such idle respects, my lord, that I hesitate,' said the Glover. 'Catharine is the daughter of a plain burgher, and knows no nicety of food or lodging. But the son of MacIan hath been for many years a guest in my house, and I am obliged to say, that I have observed him looking at my daughter—who is as good as a betrothed bride—in a manner that, though I cared not for it in this lodging in Curfew Street, would give me some fear of consequences in a Highland glen, where I have no friend, and Conachar many.'

The knightly Provost replied by a long whistle.—'Whew! whew!—Nay, in that case, I advise thee to send her to the nunnery at Elcho, where the Abbess, if I forget not, is some relation of yours. Indeed, she said so herself; adding, that she loved her kinswoman well, together with all that belongs to thee, Simon.'

'Truly, my lord, I do believe that the Abbess hath so much regard for me, that she would willingly receive the trust of my daughter, and my whole goods and gear into her sisterhood—Marry, her affection is something of a tenacious character, and would be loath to unloose its hold, either upon the wench or her tocher.'

'Whew! whew!' again whistled the Knight of Kinfauns; 'by the Thane's Cross, man, but this is an ill-favoured pirn to wind. Yet it shall never be said the fairest maid in the Fair City was cooped up in a convent, like a kain-hen in a cavey, and she about to be married to the bold burgess Henry Wynd. That tale shall not be told while I wear belt and spurs, and am called Provost of Perth.'

'But what remede, my lord?' asked the Glover.

'We must all take our share of the risk. Come, get you and your daughter presently to horse. You shall ride with me, and we'll see who dare gloom at you. The summons is not yet served on thee, and if they send an apparitor to Kinfauns, without a warrant under the King's own hand, I make mine avow, by the Red Rover's soul! that he shall eat his writ, both wax and wether-skin. To horse, to horse! and,' addressing Catharine, as she entered at the moment, 'you too, my pretty maid,—

> To horse, and fear not for your quarters;
> They thrive in law that trust in Charters.'

In a minute or two the father and daughter were on horseback, both keeping an arrow's flight before the Provost, by his direction, that they might not seem to be of the same company. They passed the eastern gate in some haste, and rode forward roundly until they were out of sight. Sir Patrick followed leisurely; but when he was lost to the view of the warders, he spurred his mettled horse and soon came up with the Glover and Catharine, when a conversation ensued which throws light upon some previous passages of this history.

CHAPTER XXVI.

> Hail, land of bowmen! seed of those who scorn'd
> To stoop the neck to wide imperial Rome—
> O dearest half of Albion sea-wall'd!
>
> ALBANIA (1737).

'I HAVE been devising a mode,' said the well-meaning Provost, 'by which I may make you both secure for a week or two from the malice of your enemies, when I have little doubt I may see a changed world at court. But that I may the better judge what is to be done, tell me frankly, Simon, the nature of your connection with Gilchrist MacIan, which leads you to repose such implicit confidence in him. You are a close observer of the rules of the city, and are aware of the severe penalties which they denounce against such burghers as have covine and alliance with the Highland clans.'

'True, my lord; but it is also known to you, that our craft, working in skins of cattle, stags, and every other description of hides, have a privilege, and are allowed to transact with those Highlanders, as with the men who can most readily supply us with the means of conducting our trade, to the great profit of the burgh. Thus it hath chanced with me to have great dealings with these men; and I can take it on my salvation, that you nowhere find more just and honourable traffickers, or by whom a man may more easily make an honest penny. I have made, in my day, several distant journeys into the far Highlands, upon the faith of their chiefs; nor did I ever meet with a people more true to their word, when you can once prevail upon them to plight it in your behalf. And as for the Highland Chief, Gilchrist MacIan, saving that he is hasty in homicide and fire-raising towards those with whom he hath deadly feud, I have nowhere seen a man who walketh a more just and upright path.'

'It is more than ever I heard before,' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'Yet I have known something of the Highland runagates too.'

'They show another favour, and a very different one, to their friends than to their enemies, as your lordship shall understand,' said the Glover. 'However, be that as it may, it chanced me to serve Gilchrist MacIan in a high matter. It is now about eighteen years since, that it chanced, the Clan Quhele and Clan Chattan being at feud, as indeed they are seldom at peace, the former sustained such a defeat as well-nigh extirpated the family of their chief, MacIan. Seven of his sons were slain in battle, and after it, himself put to flight, and his castle taken and given to the flames. His wife, then near the time of giving birth to an infant, fled into the forest, attended by one faithful servant, and his daughter. Here, in sorrow and care enough, she gave birth to a boy, and as the misery of the mother's condition rendered her little able to suckle the infant, he was nursed with the milk of a doe, which the forester, who attended her, contrived to take alive in a snare. It was not many months afterwards, that, in a second encounter of these fierce clans, MacIan defeated his enemies in his turn, and regained possession of the

district which he had lost. It was with unexpected rapture that he found his wife and child were in existence, having never expected to see more of them than the bleached bones, from which the wolves and wild-cats had eaten the flesh.

'But a strong and prevailing prejudice, such as is often entertained by these wild people, prevented their Chief from enjoying the full happiness arising from having thus regained his only son in safety. An ancient prophecy was current among them, that the power of the tribe should fall by means of a boy born under a bush of holly, and suckled by a white doe. The circumstance, unfortunately for the Chief, tallied exactly with the birth of the only child which remained to him, and it was demanded of him by the elders of the clan, that the boy should be either put to death, or at least removed from the dominions of the tribe, and brought up in obscurity. Gilchrist MacIan was obliged to consent, and, having made choice of the latter proposal, the child, under the name of Conachar, was brought up in my family, with the purpose, as was at first intended, of concealing from him all knowledge who or what he was, or of his pretensions to authority over a numerous and warlike people. But, as years rolled on, the elders of the tribe, who had exerted so much authority, were removed by death, or rendered incapable of interfering in the public affairs by age; while, on the other hand, the influence of Gilchrist MacIan was increased by his successful struggles against the Clan Chattan, in which he restored the equality betwixt the two contending confederacies, which had existed before the calamitous defeat of which I told your honour. Feeling himself thus firmly seated, he naturally became desirous to bring home his only son to his bosom and family; and for that purpose caused me to send the young Conachar, as he was called, more than once to the Highlands. He was a youth expressly made, by his form and gallantry of bearing, to gain a father's heart. At length, I suppose the lad either guessed the secret of his birth, or something of it was communicated to him; and the disgust which the paughty Hieland varlet had always shown for my honest trade, became more manifest; so that I dared not so much as lay my staff over his costard, for fear of receiving a stab with a dirk, as an answer in Gaelic to a Saxon remark. It was then that I wished to be well rid of him, the rather that he showed so much devotion to Catharine, who, forsooth, set herself up to wash the Ethiopian, and teach a wild Hielandman mercy and morals. She knows herself how it ended.'

'Nay, my father,' said Catharine, 'it was surely but a point of charity to snatch the brand from the burning.'

'But a small point of wisdom,' said her father, 'to risk the burning of your own fingers for such an end.—What says my lord to the matter?'

'My lord would not offend the Fair Maid of Perth,' said Sir Patrick; 'and he knows well the purity and truth of her mind. And yet I must needs say that, had this nursling of the doe been shrivelled, haggard, cross-made, and red-haired, like some Highlanders I have known, I question if the Fair Maiden of Perth would have bestowed so much zeal upon his conversion; and if Catharine had been as aged, wrinkled, and bent by years as the old woman that opened the door to me this morning, I would wager my gold spurs against a pair of Highland brogues, that this wild roebuck would never have listened to a second lecture.—You laugh, Glover, and Catharine blushes a blush of anger. Let it pass, it is the way of the world.'

'The way in which the men of the world esteem their neighbours, my lord,' answered Catharine, with some spirit.

'Nay, fair saint, forgive a jest,' said the knight; 'and thou, Simon, tell us how this tale ended — with Conachar's escape to the Highlands, I suppose?'

'With his return thither,' said the Glover. 'There was, for some two or three years, a fellow about Perth, a sort of messenger, who came and went under divers pretences, but was in fact the means of communication between Gilchrist MacIan and his son, young Conachar, or, as he is now called, Hector. From this gillie I learned, in general, that the banishment of the Dault an Neigh Dheil, or foster-child of the White Doe, was again brought under consideration of the tribe. His foster-father, Torquil of the Oak, the old forester, appeared with eight sons, the finest men of the clan, and demanded that the doom of banishment should be revoked. He spoke with the greater authority, as he was himself Taishatar, or a Seer, and supposed to have communication with the invisible world. He affirmed that he had performed a magical ceremony, termed *Tine-Egan*,* by which he evoked a fiend, from whom he extorted a confession that Conachar, now called Eachin, or Hector MacIan, was the only man in the approaching combat between the two hostile clans who should come off without blood or blemish. Hence Torquil of the Oak argued that the presence of the fated person was necessary to insure the victory. "So much I am possessed of this," said the forester, "that unless Eachin fight in his place in the ranks of the Clan Quhele, neither I, his foster-father, nor any of my eight sons, will lift a weapon in the quarrel."

'This speech was received with much alarm; for the defection of nine men, the stoutest of their tribe, would be a serious blow, more especially if the combat, as begins to be rumoured, should be decided by a small number from each side. The ancient superstition concerning the foster-son of the White Doe was counterbalanced by a new and later prejudice, and the father took the opportunity of presenting to the clan his long-hidden son, whose youthful, but handsome and animated countenance, haughty carriage, and active limbs, excited the admiration of the clansmen, who joyfully received him as the heir and descendant of their Chief, notwithstanding the ominous presage attending his birth and nurture.

* *Tine-Egan*, or *Neidfyre*, *i.e.* forced fire. All the fires in the house being extinguished, two men produced a flame of potent virtue by the friction of wood. This charm was used, within the memory of living persons, in the Hebrides, in cases of murrain among cattle.

'From this tale, my lord,' continued Simon Glover, 'your lordship may easily conceive why I myself should be secure of a good reception among the Clan Quhele; and you may also have reason to judge that it would be very rash in me to carry Catharine thither. And this, noble lord, is the heaviest of my troubles.'

'We shall lighten the load, then,' said Sir Patrick; 'and, good Glover, I will take risk for thee and this damsel. My alliance with the Douglas gives me some interest with Marjory, Duchess of Rothsay, his daughter, the neglected wife of our wilful prince. Rely on it, good Glover, that in her retinue thy daughter will be as secure as in a fenced castle. The Duchess keeps house now at Falkland, a castle which the Duke of Albany, to whom it belongs, has lent to her for her accommodation. I cannot promise you pleasure, fair maiden; for the Duchess Marjory of Rothsay is unfortunate, and therefore splenetic, haughty, and overbearing; conscious of the want of attractive qualities, therefore jealous of those women who possess them. But she is firm in faith, and noble in spirit, and would fling pope or prelate into the ditch of her castle, who should come to arrest any one under her protection. You will therefore have absolute safety, though you may lack comfort.'

'I have no title to more,' said Catharine; 'and deeply do I feel the kindness that is willing to secure me such honourable protection. If she be haughty, I will remember she is a Douglas, and hath right, as being such, to entertain as much pride as may become a mortal —if she be fretful, I will recollect that she is unfortunate—and if she be unreasonably captious, I will not forget that she is my protectress. Heed no longer for me, my lord, when you have placed me under the noble lady's charge.—But my poor father, to be exposed amongst these wild and dangerous people!'

'Think not of that, Catharine,' said the Glover; 'I am as familiar with brogues and bracken as if I had worn them myself. I have only to fear that the decisive battle may be fought before I can leave this country; and if the Clan Quhele lose the combat, I may suffer by the ruin of my protectors.'

'We must have that cared for,' said Sir Patrick; 'rely on my looking out for your safety. —But which party will carry the day, think you?'

'Frankly, my Lord Provost, I believe the Clan Chattan will have the worse; these nine children of the forest form a third nearly of the band surrounding the Chief of Clan Quhele, and are redoubted champions.'

'And your apprentice, will he stand to it, thinkest thou?'

'He is as hot as fire, Sir Patrick,' answered the Glover; 'but he is also as unstable as water. Nevertheless, if he is spared, he seems likely to be one day a brave man.'

'But, as now, he has some of the White Doe's milk still lurking about his liver, ha, Simon?'

'He has little experience, my lord,' said the Glover; 'and I need not tell an honoured warrior like yourself, that danger must be familiar to us ere we can dally with it like a mistress.'

This conversation brought them speedily to the Castle of Kinfauns, where, after a short refreshment, it was necessary that the father and the daughter should part, in order to seek their respective places of refuge. It was then first, as she saw that her father's anxiety on her account had drowned all recollections of his friend, that Catharine dropped, as if in a dream, the name of 'Henry Gow.'

'True, most true,' continued her father; 'we must possess him of our purposes.'

'Leave that to me,' said Sir Patrick. 'I will not trust to a messenger, nor will I send a letter, because, if I could write one, I think he could not read it. He will suffer anxiety in the meanwhile, but I will ride to Perth to-morrow by times, and acquaint him with your designs.'

The time of separation now approached. It was a bitter moment; but the manly character of the old burgher, and the devout resignation of Catharine to the will of Providence, made it lighter than might have been expected. The good knight hurried the departure of the burgess, but in the kindest manner; and even went so far as to offer him some gold pieces in loan, which might, where specie was so scarce, be considered as the *ne plus ultra* of regard. The Glover, however, assured him he was amply provided, and departed on his journey in a north-westerly direction. The hospitable protection of Sir Patrick Charteris was no less manifested towards his fair guest. She was placed under the charge of a duenna, who managed the good knight's household, and was compelled to remain several days in Kinfauns, owing to the obstacles and delays interposed by a Tay boatman, named Kitt Henshaw, to whose charge she was to be committed, and whom the Provost highly trusted.

Thus were severed the child and parent in a moment of great danger and difficulty, much augmented by circumstances of which they were then ignorant, and which seemed greatly to diminish any chance of safety that remained for them.

CHAPTER XXVII.

'This Austin humbly did.'—'Did he?' quoth he.
'Austin may do the same again for me.'
POPE'S *Prologue to Canterbury Tales from Chaucer.*

THE course of our story will be best pursued by attending that of Simon Glover. It is not our purpose to indicate the exact local boundaries of the two contending clans, especially since they are not clearly pointed out by the historians who have transmitted accounts of this memorable feud. It is sufficient to say that the territory of the Clan Chattan extended far and wide, comprehending Caithness and Sutherland, and having for their paramount chief the powerful earl of the latter shire, thence called *Mohr ar chat.** In this general sense, the Keiths, the

* *i.e.* The Great Cat. The county of Caithness is supposed to have its name from Teutonic settlers of the race of the *Catti*, and heraldry has not neglected so fair an occasion for that species of painted punning in which she used to delight. *Touch not the cat but a glove*, is the motto of Mackintosh, alluding to his crest, which, as with most of the now scattered septs of the old Clan Chattan, is the Mountain Cat.

Sinclairs, the Guns, and other families and clans of great power, were included in the confederacy. These, however, were not engaged in the present quarrel, which was limited to that part of the Clan Chattan occupying the extensive mountainous districts of Perthshire and Inverness-shire, which form a large portion of what is called the north-eastern Highlands. It is well known that two large septs, unquestionably known to belong to the Clan Chattan, the MacPhersons and the MacIntoshes, dispute to this day which of their chieftains was at the head of this Badenoch branch of the great confederacy, and both have of later times assumed the title of Captain of Clan Chattan. *Non nostrum est*—But, at all events, Badenoch must have been the centre of the confederacy, so far as involved in the feud of which we treat.

Of the rival league of Clan Quhele we have a still less distinct account, for reasons which will appear in the sequel. Some authors have identified them with the numerous and powerful sept of MacKay. If this is done on good authority, which is to be doubted, the MacKays must have shifted their settlements greatly since the reign of Robert III., since they are now to be found (as a clan) in the extreme northern parts of Scotland, in the counties of Ross and Sutherland.* We cannot, therefore, be so clear as we would wish in the geography of the story. Suffice it that, directing his course in a north-westerly direction, the Glover travelled for a day's journey in the direction of the Breadalbane country, from which he hoped to reach the castle where Gilchrist MacIan, the Captain of the Clan Quhele, and the father of his pupil Conachar, usually held his residence, with a barbarous pomp of attendance and ceremonial suited to his lofty pretensions.

We need not stop to describe the toil and terrors of such a journey, where the path was to be traced among wastes and mountains, now ascending precipitous ravines, now plunging into inextricable bogs, and often intersected with large brooks, and even rivers. But all these perils Simon Glover had before encountered, in quest of honest gain; and it was not to be supposed that he shunned or feared them where liberty, and life itself, were at stake.

The danger from the warlike and uncivilised inhabitants of these wilds would have appeared to another at least as formidable as the perils of the journey. But Simon's knowledge of the manners and language of the people assured him on this point also. An appeal to the hospitality of the wildest Gael was never unsuccessful; and the kerne, that in other circumstances would have taken a man's life for the silver button of his cloak, would deprive himself of a meal to relieve the traveller who implored hospitality at the door of his bothy. The art of travelling in the Highlands was to appear as confident and defenceless as possible; and accordingly the Glover carried no arms whatever, journeyed without the least appearance of precaution, and took good care to exhibit nothing which might excite cupidity. Another rule which he deemed it prudent to observe, was to avoid communication with any of the passengers whom he might chance to meet, except in the interchange of the common civilities of salutation, which the Highlanders rarely omit. Few opportunities occurred of exchanging even such passing greetings. The country, always lonely, seemed now entirely forsaken; and even in the little straths or valleys which he had occasion to pass or traverse, the hamlets were deserted, and the inhabitants had betaken themselves to woods and caves. This was easily accounted for, considering the imminent dangers of a feud, which all expected would become one of the most general signals for plunder and ravage that had ever distracted that unhappy country.

Simon began to be alarmed at this state of desolation. He had made a halt since he left Kinfauns, to allow his nag some rest; and now he began to be anxious how he was to pass the night. He had reckoned upon spending it at the cottage of an old acquaintance, called Niel Booshalloch (or the Cow-herd), because he had charge of numerous herds of cattle belonging to the Captain of Clan Quhele, for which purpose he had a settlement on the banks of the Tay, not far from the spot where it leaves the lake of the same name. From this his old host and friend, with whom he had transacted many bargains for hides and furs, the old Glover hoped to learn the present state of the country, the prospect of peace or war, and the best measures to be taken for his own safety. It will be remembered that the news of the indentures of battle entered into for diminishing the extent of the feud, had only been communicated to King Robert the day before the Glover left Perth, and did not become public till some time afterwards.

'If Niel Booshalloch hath left his dwelling like the rest of them, I shall be finely holped up,' thought Simon, 'since I want not only the advantage of his good advice, but also his interest with Gilchrist MacIan; and, moreover, a night's quarters and a supper.'

Thus reflecting, he reached the top of a swelling green hill, and saw the splendid vision of Loch Tay lying beneath him, an immense plate of polished silver, its dark heathy mountains and leafless thickets of oak serving as an arabesque frame to a magnificent mirror.

Indifferent to natural beauty at any time, Simon Glover was now particularly so; and the only part of the splendid landscape on which he turned his eye was the angle or loop of meadow land, where the river Tay, rushing in full-swollen dignity from its parent lake, and wheeling around a beautiful valley of about a mile in breadth, begins his broad course to the south-eastward, like a conqueror and a legislator, to subdue and to enrich remote districts. Upon the sequestered spot, which is so beautifully situated between lake, mountain, and river, arose afterwards the feudal castle of The Ballough,† which in our time has been succeeded

* Their territory, commonly called, after the chief of the MacKays, *Lord Reay's* country, has lately passed into the possession of the noble family of Stafford-Sutherland.

† *Balloch* is Gaelic for the discharge of a lake into a river [also a pass.]

by the splendid palace of the Earls of Breadalbane.

But the Campbells, though they had already attained very great power in Argyleshire, had not yet extended themselves so far eastward as Loch Tay, the banks of which were, either by right, or by mere occupancy, possessed for the present by the Clan Quhele, whose choicest herds were fattened on the margin of the lake. In this valley, therefore, between the river and the lake, amid extensive forests of oak-wood, hazel, rowan-tree, and larches, arose the humble cottage of Niel Booshalloch, a village Eumæus,* whose hospitable chimneys were seen to smoke plentifully, to the great encouragement of Simon Glover, who might otherwise have been obliged to spend the night in the open air, to his no small discomfort.

He reached the door of the cottage, whistled, shouted, and made his approach known. There was a baying of hounds and collies, and presently the master of the hut came forth. There was much care on his brow, and he seemed surprised at the sight of Simon Glover, though the herdsman covered both as well as he might; for nothing in that region could be reckoned more uncivil, than for the landlord to suffer anything to escape him, in look or gesture, which might induce the visitor to think that his arrival was an unpleasing, or even an unexpected incident. The traveller's horse was conducted to a stable, which was almost too low to receive him, and the Glover himself was led into the mansion of the Booshalloch, where, according to the custom of the country, bread and cheese were placed before the wayfarer while more solid food was preparing. Simon, who understood all their habits, took no notice of the obvious marks of sadness on the brow of his entertainer, and on those of the family, until he had eaten somewhat for form's sake; after which he asked the general question, Was there any news in the country?

'Bad news as ever were told,' said the herdsman; 'our father is no more.'

'How?' said Simon, greatly alarmed; 'is the Captain of the Clan Quhele dead?'

'The Captain of the Clan Quhele never dies,' answered the Booshalloch; 'but Gilchrist MacIan died twenty hours since, and his son, Eachin MacIan, is now Captain.'

'What, Eachin — that is, Conachar — my apprentice?'

'As little of that subject as you list, brother Simon,' said the herdsman. 'It is to be remembered, friend, that your craft, which doth very well for a living in the douce city of Perth, is something too mechanical to be much esteemed at the foot of Ben Lawers, and on the banks of Loch Tay. We have not a Gaelic word by which we can even name a maker of gloves.'

'It would be strange if you had, friend Niel,' said Simon dryly, 'having so few gloves to wear. I think there be none in the whole Clan Quhele, save those which I myself gave to Gilchrist MacIan, whom God assoilzie, who esteemed them a choice propine. Most deeply do I regret his death, for I was coming to him on express business.'

'You had better turn the nag's head southward with morning light,' said the herdsman. 'The funeral is instantly to take place, and it must be with short ceremony; for there is a battle to be fought by the Clan Quhele and the Clan Chattan, thirty champions on a side, as soon as Palm Sunday next, and we have brief time either to lament the dead or honour the living.'

'Yet are my affairs so pressing, that I must needs see the young Chief, were it but for a quarter of an hour,' said the Glover.

'Hark thee, friend,' replied his host, 'I think thy business must be either to gather money or to make traffic. Now, if the Chief owe thee anything for upbringing or otherwise, ask him not to pay it when all the treasures of the tribe are called in for making gallant preparation of arms and equipment for their combatants, that we may meet these proud hill-cats in a fashion to show ourselves their superiors. But if thou comest to practise commerce with us, thy time is still worse chosen. Thou knowest that thou art already envied of many of our tribe, for having had the fosterage of the young Chief, which is a thing usually given to the best of the clan.'

'But, Saint Mary, man!' exclaimed the Glover, 'men should remember the office was not conferred on me as a favour which I courted, but that it was accepted by me on importunity and entreaty, to my no small prejudice. This Conachar, or Hector of yours, or whatever you call him, has destroyed me doe-skins to the amount of many pound Scots.'

'There again, now,' said the Booshalloch, 'you have spoken a word to cost your life;—any allusion to skins or hides, or especially to deer and does, may incur no less a forfeit. The Chief is young, and jealous of his rank—none knows the reason better than thou, friend Glover. He will naturally wish that everything concerning the opposition to his succession, and having reference to his exile, should be totally forgotten; and he will not hold him in affection who shall recall the recollection of his people, or force back his own, upon what they must both remember with pain. Think how, at such a moment, they will look on the old Glover of Perth, to whom the Chief was so long apprentice!—Come, come, old friend, you have erred in this. You are in over great haste to worship the rising sun, while his beams are yet level with the horizon. Come thou when he has climbed higher in the heavens, and thou shalt have thy share of the warmth of his noonday height.'

'Niel Booshalloch,' said the Glover, 'we have been old friends, as thou say'st; and, as I think thee a true one, I will speak to thee freely, though what I say might be perilous if spoken to others of thy clan. Thou think'st I come hither to make my own profit of thy young Chief, and it is natural thou shouldst think so. But I would not, at my years, quit my own chimney-corner in Curfew Street, to bask me in the beams of the brightest sun that ever shone upon Highland heather. The very truth is, I come hither in extremity—my foes have the advantage of me, and have laid things to my charge whereof I am incapable, even in

* [The swineherd of the Greek hero Odysseus.]

thought. Nevertheless, doom is like to go forth against me, and there is no remedy but that I must up and fly, or remain and perish. I come to your young Chief, as one who had refuge with me in his distress; who ate of my bread and drank of my cup. I ask of him refuge, which, as I trust, I shall need but a short time.'

'That makes a different case,' replied the herdsman. 'So different, that if you came at midnight to the gate of MacIan, having the King of Scotland's head in your hand, and a thousand men in pursuit for the avenging of his blood, I could not think it for his honour to refuse you protection. And for your innocence or guilt it concerns not the case,—or rather, he ought the more to shelter you if guilty, seeing your necessity and his risk are both in that case the greater. I must straightway to him, that no hasty tongue tell him of your arriving hither without saying the cause.'

'A pity of your trouble,' said the Glover; 'but where lies the Chief?'

'He is quartered about ten miles hence, busied with the affairs of the funeral, and with preparations for the combat—the dead to the grave, and the living to battle.'

'It is a long way, and will take you all night to go and come,' said the Glover; 'and I am very sure that Conachar, when he knows it is I who'——

'Forget Conachar,' said the herdsman, placing his finger on his lips. 'And as for the ten miles, they are but a Highland leap, when one bears a message between his friend and his chief.'

So saying, and committing the traveller to the charge of his eldest son and his daughter, the active herdsman left his house two hours before midnight, to which he returned long before sunrise. He did not disturb his wearied guest, but when the old man had arisen in the morning, he acquainted him that the funeral of the late chieftain was to take place the same day, and that, although Eachin MacIan could not invite a Saxon to the funeral, he would be glad to receive him at the entertainment which was to follow.

'His will must be obeyed,' said the Glover, half smiling at the change of relation between himself and his late apprentice. 'The man is the master now, and I trust he will remember that, when matters were otherwise between us, I did not use my authority ungraciously.'

'Troutsho, friend!' exclaimed the Booshalloch, 'the less of that you say the better. You will find yourself a right welcome guest to Eachin, and the deil a man dares stir you within his bounds. But fare you well, for I must go, as beseems me, to the burial of the best Chief the clan ever had, and the wisest Captain that ever cocked the sweet gale (bog-myrtle) in his bonnet. Farewell to you for a while; and if you will go to the top of the Tom-an-Lonach behind the house, you will see a gallant sight, and hear such a coronach as will reach the top of Ben Lawers. A boat will wait for you, three hours hence, at a wee bit creek about half-a-mile westward from the head of the Tay.'

With these words he took his departure, followed by his three sons, to man the boat in which he was to join the rest of the mourners, and two daughters, whose voices were wanted to join in the Lament, which was chanted, or rather screamed, on such occasions of general affliction.

Simon Glover, finding himself alone, resorted to the stable to look after his nag, which, he found, had been well served with graddan, or bread made of scorched barley. Of this kindness he was fully sensible, knowing that, probably, the family had little of this delicacy left to themselves, until the next harvest should bring them a scanty supply. In animal food they were well provided, and the lake found them abundance of fish for their Lenten diet, which they did not observe very strictly; but bread was a delicacy very scanty in the Highlands. The bogs afforded a soft species of hay, none of the best, to be sure; but Scottish horses, like their riders, were then accustomed to hard fare. Gauntlet, for this was the name of the palfrey, had his stall crammed full of dried fern for litter, and was otherwise as well provided for as Highland hospitality could contrive.

Simon Glover being thus left to his own painful reflections, nothing better remained, after having looked to the comforts of the dumb companion of his journey, than to follow the herdsman's advice, and, ascending towards the top of an eminence called Tom-an-Lonach, or the Knoll of Yew-trees, after a walk of half-an-hour he reached the summit, and could look down on the broad expanse of the lake, of which the height commanded a noble view. A few aged and scattered yew-trees, of great size, still vindicated for the beautiful green hill the name attached to it. But a far greater number had fallen a sacrifice to the general demand for bow-staves in that warlike age, the bow being a weapon much used by the mountaineers, though those which they employed, as well as their arrows, were, in shape and form, and especially in efficacy, far inferior to the archery of merry England. The dark and shattered individual yews which remained were like the veterans of a broken host, occupying in disorder some post of advantage, with the stern purpose of resisting to the last. Behind this eminence, but detached from it, arose a higher hill, partly covered with copsewood, partly opening into glades of pasture, where the cattle strayed, finding, at this season of the year, a scanty sustenance among the spring-heads and marshy places, where the fresh grass began first to arise.

The opposite or northern shore of the lake presented a far more Alpine prospect than that upon which the Glover was stationed. Woods and thickets ran up the sides of the mountains, and disappeared among the sinuosities formed by the winding ravines which separated them from each other; but far above these specimens of a tolerable natural soil, arose the swart and bare mountains themselves, in the dark grey desolation proper to the season.

Some were peaked, some broad-crested, some rocky and precipitous, others of a tamer outline; and the clan of Titans seemed to be commanded by their appropriate chieftains—the frowning mountain of Ben Lawers, and the still more lofty eminence of Ben Mohr, arising high above the rest, whose peaks retain a dazzling helmet

of snow far into the summer season, and sometimes during the whole year. Yet the borders of this wild and sylvan region, where the mountains descended upon the lake, intimated, even at that early period, many traces of human habitation. Hamlets were seen, especially on the northern margin of the lake, half hid among the little glens that poured their tributary streams into Loch Tay, which, like many earthly things, made a fair show at a distance, but, when more closely approached, were disgustful and repulsive, from their squalid want of the conveniences which attend even Indian wigwams. They were inhabited by a race who neither cultivated the earth nor cared for the enjoyments which industry procures. The women, although otherwise treated with affection, and even delicacy of respect, discharged all the absolutely necessary domestic labour. The men, excepting some reluctant use of an ill-formed plough, or more frequently a spade, grudgingly gone through, as a task infinitely beneath them, took no other employment than the charge of the herds of black cattle, in which their wealth consisted. At all other times, they hunted, fished, or marauded, during the brief intervals of peace, by way of pastime; plundering with bolder licence, and fighting with embittered animosity, in time of war, which, public or private, upon a broader or more restricted scale, formed the proper business of their lives, and the only one which they esteemed worthy of them.

The magnificent bosom of the lake itself was a scene to gaze on with delight. Its noble breadth, with its termination in a full and beautiful run, was rendered yet more picturesque by one of those islets which are often happily situated in the Scottish lakes.* The ruins upon that isle, now almost shapeless, being overgrown with wood, rose, at the time we speak of, into the towers and pinnacles of a priory, where slumbered the remains of Sibilla, daughter of Henry I. of England, and consort of Alexander the First of Scotland. This holy place had been deemed of dignity sufficient to be the deposit of the remains of the Captain of the Clan Quhele, at least till times when the removal of the danger, now so imminently pressing, should permit of his body being conveyed to a distinguished convent in the north, where he was destined ultimately to repose with all his ancestry.

A number of boats pushed off from various points of the near and more distant shore, many displaying sable banners, and others having their several pipers in the bow, who from time to time poured forth a few notes of a shrill, plaintive, and wailing character, and intimated to the Glover that the ceremony was about to take place. These sounds of lamentation were but the tuning, as it were, of the instruments, compared with the general wail which was speedily to be raised.

A distant sound was heard from far up the lake, even as it seemed from the remote and distant glens, out of which the Dochart and the Lochy pour their streams into Loch Tay. It was in a wild, inaccessible spot, where the Campbells at a subsequent period founded their strong fortress of Finlayrigg, that the redoubted commander of the Clan Quhele drew his last breath; and, to give due pomp to his funeral, his corpse was now to be brought down the loch to the island assigned for his temporary place of rest. The funeral fleet, led by the chieftain's barge, from which a huge black banner was displayed, had made more than two-thirds of its voyage ere it was visible from the eminence on which Simon Glover stood to overlook the ceremony. The instant the distant wail of the coronach was heard proceeding from the attendants on the funeral barge, all the subordinate sounds of lamentation were hushed at once, as the raven ceases to croak and the hawk to whistle, whenever the scream of the eagle is heard. The boats, which had floated hither and thither upon the lake, like a flock of water-fowl dispersing themselves on its surface, now drew together with an appearance of order, that the funeral flotilla might pass onward, and that they themselves might fall into their proper places. In the meanwhile the piercing din of the war-pipes became louder and louder, and the cry from the numberless boats which followed that from which the black banner of the chief was displayed, rose in wild unison up to the Toman-Lonach, from which the Glover viewed the spectacle. The galley which headed the procession bore on its poop a species of scaffold, upon which, arrayed in white linen, and with the face bare, was displayed the corpse of the deceased chieftain. His son, and the nearest relatives, filled the vessel, while a great number of boats, of every description that could be assembled, either on Loch Tay itself, or brought by land carriage from Loch Earn and otherwise, followed in the rear, some of them of very frail materials. There were even curraghs, composed of ox-hides stretched over hoops of willow, in the manner of the ancient British; and some committed themselves to rafts, formed for the occasion from the readiest materials that occurred, and united in such a precarious manner as to render it probable that, before the accomplishment of the voyage, some of the clansmen of the deceased might be sent to attend their chieftain in the world of spirits.

When the principal flotilla came in sight of the smaller group of boats collected towards the foot of the lake, and bearing off from the little island, they hailed each other with a shout so loud and general, and terminating in a cadence so wildly prolonged, that not only the deer started from their glens for miles around, and sought the distant recesses of the mountains, but even the domestic cattle, accustomed to the voice of man, felt the full panic which the human shout strikes into the wilder tribes, and like them fled from their pasture into morasses and dingles.

Summoned forth from their convent by those sounds, the monks who inhabited the little islet began to issue from their lowly portal, with cross and banner, and as much of ecclesiastical state as they had the means of displaying; their bells at the same time, of which the edifice possessed three, pealing the death-toll over the long lake, which came to the ears of the now silent multitude, mingled with the solemn chant of the Catholic

* Note R. Lake Islands.

Church, raised by the monks in their procession. Various ceremonies were gone through, while the kindred of the deceased carried the body ashore, and, placing it on a bank long consecrated to the purpose, made the Deasil * around the departed. When the corpse was uplifted to be borne into the church, another united yell burst from the assembled multitude, in which the deep shout of warriors, and the shrill wail of females, joined their notes with the tremulous voice of age, and the babbling cry of childhood. The coronach was again, and for the last time, shrieked, as the body was carried into the interior of the church, where only the nearest relatives of the deceased, and the most distinguished of the leaders of the clan, were permitted to enter.† The last yell of woe was so terribly loud, and answered by so many hundred echoes, that the Glover instinctively raised his hands to his ears to shut out, or deaden at least, a sound so piercing. He kept this attitude, while the hawks, owls, and other birds, scared by the wild scream, had begun to settle in their retreats, when, as he withdrew his hands, a voice close by him said,—

'Think you this, Simon Glover, the hymn of penitence and praise, with which it becomes poor forlorn man, cast out from his tenement of clay, to be wafted into the presence of his Maker?'

The Glover turned, and in the old man, with a long white beard, who stood close beside him, had no difficulty, from the clear mild eye, and the benevolent cast of features, to recognise the Carthusian monk, Father Clement, no longer wearing his monastic habiliments, but wrapped in a frieze mantle, and having a Highland cap on his head.

It may be recollected that the Glover regarded this man with a combined feeling of respect and dislike—respect, which his judgment could not deny to the monk's person and character, and dislike, which arose from Father Clement's peculiar doctrines being the cause of his daughter's exile and his own distress. It was not, therefore, with sentiments of unmixed satisfaction that he returned the greetings of the father, and replied to the reiterated question, What he thought of the funeral rites, which were discharged in so wild a manner?—'I know not, my good father; but these men do their duty to their deceased Chief according to the fashion of their ancestors; they mean to express their regret for their friend's loss, and their prayers to Heaven in his behalf; and that which is done of goodwill must, to my thinking, be accepted favourably. Had it been otherwise, methinks they had ere now been enlightened to do better.'

'Thou art deceived,' answered the monk. 'God has sent his light amongst us all, though in various proportions; but man wilfully shuts his eyes and prefers darkness. This benighted people mingle with the ritual of the Roman Church the old heathen ceremonies of their own fathers, and thus unite with the abominations of a Church corrupted by wealth and power, the cruel and bloody ritual of savage Paynims.'

'Father,' said Simon abruptly, 'methinks your presence were more useful in yonder chapel, aiding your brethren in the discharge of their clerical duties, than in troubling and unsettling the belief of an humble though ignorant Christian, like myself.'

'And wherefore say, good brother, that I would unfix thy principles of belief?' answered Clement. 'So Heaven deal with me, as, were my life-blood necessary to cement the mind of any man to the holy religion he professeth, it should be freely poured out for the purpose.'

'Your speech is fair, father, I grant you,' said the Glover; 'but if I am to judge the doctrine by the fruits, Heaven has punished me by the hand of the Church, for having hearkened thereto. Ere I heard you, my confessor was little moved, though I might have owned to have told a merry tale upon the ale-bench, even if a friar or a nun were the subject. If at a time I had called Father Hubert a better hunter of hares than of souls, I confessed me to the Vicar Vinesauf, who laughed and made me pay a reckoning for penance—or if I had said that the Vicar Vinesauf was more constant to his cup than to his breviary, I confessed me to Father Hubert, and a new hawking-glove made all well again; and thus I, my conscience, and Mother Church lived together on terms of peace, friendship, and mutual forbearance. But since I have listened to you, Father Clement, this goodly union is broken to pieces, and nothing is thundered in my ear but purgatory in the next world, and fire and faggot in this. Therefore avoid you, Father Clement, or speak to those who can understand your doctrine. I have no heart to be a martyr; I have never in my whole life had courage enough so much as to snuff a candle with my fingers; and, to speak the truth, I am minded to go back to Perth, sue out my pardon in the spiritual court, carry my faggot to the gallows'-foot, in token of recantation, and purchase myself once more the name of a good Catholic, were it at the price of all the worldly wealth that remains to me.'

'You are angry, my dearest brother,' said Clement; 'and repent you on the pinch of a little worldly danger, and a little worldly loss, for the good thoughts which you once entertained.'

'You speak at ease, Father Clement, since I think you have long forsworn the wealth and goods of the world, and are prepared to yield up your life, when it is demanded, in exchange for the doctrine you preach and believe. You are as ready to put on your pitched shirt and brimstone headgear, as a naked man is to go to his bed, and it would seem you have not much more reluctance to the ceremony. But I still wear that which clings to me. My wealth is still my own, and I thank Heaven it is a decent pittance whereon to live—my life, too, is that of a hale old man of sixty, who is in no haste to bring it to a close—and if I were poor as Job, and on the edge of the grave, must I not still cling to my daughter, whom your doctrines have already cost so dear?'

'Thy daughter, friend Simon,' said the Car-

* A very ancient custom, which consists in going three times round the body of a dead or living person, imploring blessings upon him. The Deasil must be performed sunways, that is, by moving from right to left. If misfortune is imprecated, the party moves withershins (German, WIDERSINN), that is, *against the sun*, from left to right.

† Note S. Highland Funeral Ceremonies.

thusian, 'may be truly called an angel upon earth.'

'Ay; and by listening to your doctrines, father, she is now like to be called on to be an angel in heaven, and to be transported thither in a chariot of fire.'

'Nay, my good brother,' said Clement, 'desist, I pray you, to speak of what you little understand. Since it is wasting time to show thee the light that thou chafest against, yet listen to that which I have to say touching thy daughter, whose temporal felicity, though I weigh it not even for an instant in the scale against that which is spiritual, is nevertheless, in its order, as dear to Clement Blair as to her own father.'

The tears stood in the old man's eyes as he spoke, and Simon Glover was in some degree mollified as he again addressed him.

'One would think thee, Father Clement, the kindest and most amiable of men; how comes it, then, that thy steps are haunted by general ill-will wherever thou chancest to turn them? I could lay my life thou hast contrived already to offend yonder half-score of poor friars in their water-girdled cage, and that you have been prohibited from attendance on the funeral?'

'Even so, my son,' said the Carthusian, 'and I doubt whether their malice will suffer me to remain in this country. I did but speak a few sentences about the superstition and folly of frequenting Saint Fillan's Church, to detect theft by means of his bell—of bathing mad patients in his pool, to cure their infirmity of mind—and lo! the persecutors have cast me forth of their communion, as they will speedily cast me out of this life.'

'Lo you there now,' said the Glover, 'see what it is for a man that cannot take a warning!—Well, Father Clement, men will not cast me forth unless it were as a companion of yours. I pray you, therefore, tell me what you have to say of my daughter, and let us be less neighbours than we have been.'

'This, then, brother Simon, I have to acquaint you with. This young Chief, who is swollen with contemplation of his own power and glory, loves one thing better than it all, and that is thy daughter.'

'He, Conachar!' exclaimed Simon. 'My runagate apprentice look up to my daughter!'

'Alas!' said Clement, 'how close sits our worldly pride, even as ivy clings to the wall, and cannot be separated!—Look *up* to thy daughter, good Simon? Alas, no! The Captain of Clan Quhele, great as he is, and greater as he soon expects to be, looks *down* to the daughter of the Perth burgess, and considers himself demeaned in doing so. But, to use his own profane expression, Catharine is dearer to him than life here, and heaven hereafter—he cannot live without her.'

'Then he may die, if he lists,' said Simon Glover, 'for she is betrothed to an honest burgess of Perth; and I would not break my word to make my daughter bride to the Prince of Scotland.'

'I thought it would be your answer,' replied the monk; 'I would, worthy friend, thou couldst carry into thy spiritual concerns some part of that daring and resolved spirit with which thou canst direct thy temporal affairs.'

'Hush thee—hush, Father Clement!' answered the Glover; 'when thou fallest into that vein of argument, thy words savour of blazing tar, and that is a scent I like not. As to Catharine, I must manage as I can, so as not to displease the young dignitary; but well is it for me that she is far beyond his reach.'

'She must then be distant indeed,' said the Carthusian. 'And now, brother Simon, since you think it perilous to own me and my opinions, I must walk alone with my own doctrines, and the dangers they draw on me. But should your eye, less blinded than it now is by worldly hopes and fears, ever turn a glance back on him who soon may be snatched from you, remember that by nought, save a deep sense of the truth and importance of the doctrine which he taught, could Clement Blair have learned to encounter, nay, to provoke, the animosity of the powerful and inveterate, to alarm the fears of the jealous and timid, to walk in the world as he belonged not to it, and to be accounted mad of men, that he might, if possible, win souls to God. Heaven be my witness, that I would comply in all lawful things to conciliate the love and sympathy of my fellow-creatures! It is no light thing to be shunned by the worthy as an infected patient; to be persecuted by the Pharisees of the day as an unbelieving heretic; to be regarded with horror at once and contempt by the multitude, who consider me as a madman, who may be expected to turn mischievous. But were all those evils multiplied an hundred-fold, the fire within must not be stifled, the voice which says within me—Speak, must receive obedience. Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel, even should I at length preach it from amidst the pile of flames!'

So spoke this bold witness; one of those whom Heaven raised up from time to time, to preserve amidst the most ignorant ages, and to carry down to those which succeed them, a manifestation of unadulterated Christianity, from the time of the apostles to the age when, favoured by the invention of printing, the Reformation broke out in full splendour. The selfish policy of the Glover was exposed in his own eyes; and he felt himself contemptible as he saw the Carthusian turn from him in all the hallowedness of resignation. He was even conscious of a momentary inclination to follow the example of the preacher's philanthropy and disinterested zeal; but it glanced like a flash of lightning through a dark vault, where there lies nothing to catch the blaze; and he slowly descended the hill, in a direction different from that of the Carthusian, forgetting him and his doctrines, and buried in anxious thoughts about his child's fate and his own.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> What want these outlaws conquerors should have,
> But History's purchased page to call them great,
> A wider space, an ornamented grave?
> Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.
> BYRON.

THE funeral obsequies being over, the same flotilla which had proceeded in solemn and sad array down the lake, prepared to return with

displayed banners, and every demonstration of mirth and joy; for there was but brief time to celebrate festivals, when the awful conflict betwixt the Clan Quhele and their most formidable rivals so nearly approached. It had been agreed, therefore, that the funeral feast should be blended with that usually given at the inauguration of the young chief.

Some objections were made to this arrangement, as containing an evil omen. But, on the other hand, it had a species of recommendation, from the habits and feelings of the Highlanders, who, to this day, are wont to mingle a degree of solemn mirth with their mourning, and something resembling melancholy with their mirth. The usual aversion to speak or think of those who have been beloved and lost, is less known to this grave and enthusiastic race than it is to others. You hear not only the young mention (as is everywhere usual) the merits and the character of parents, who have, in the course of nature, predeceased them; but the widowed partner speaks, in ordinary conversation, of the lost spouse, and, what is still stranger, the parents allude frequently to the beauty or valour of the child whom they have interred. The Scottish Highlanders appear to regard the separation of friends by death, as something less absolute and complete than it is generally esteemed in other countries, and converse of the dear connections who have sought the grave before them, as if they had gone upon a long journey, in which they themselves must soon follow. The funeral feast, therefore, being a general custom throughout Scotland, was not, in the opinion of those who were to share it, unseemingly mingled, on the present occasion, with the festivities which hailed the succession to the chieftainship.

The barge which had lately borne the dead to the grave, now conveyed the young MacIan to his new command; and the minstrels sent forth their gayest notes to gratulate Eachin's succession, as they had lately sounded their most doleful dirges when carrying Gilchrist to his grave. From the attendant flotilla rang notes of triumph and jubilee, instead of those yells of lamentation which had so lately disturbed the echoes of Loch Tay; and a thousand voices hailed the youthful chieftain as he stood on the poop, armed at all points, in the flower of early manhood, beauty, and activity, on the very spot where his father's corpse had so lately been extended, and surrounded by triumphant friends, as that had been by desolate mourners. One boat kept closest of the flotilla to the honoured galley. Torquil of the Oak, a grizzled giant, was steersman; and his eight sons, each exceeding the ordinary stature of mankind, pulled the oars. Like some powerful and favourite wolf-hound, unloosed from his couples, and frolicking around a liberal master, the boat of the foster-brethren passed the chieftain's barge, now on one side, and now on another, and even rowed around it, as if in extravagance of joy; while, at the same time, with the jealous vigilance of the animal we have compared it to, they made it dangerous for any other of the flotilla to approach so near as themselves, from the risk of being run down by their impetuous and reckless manœuvres. Raised to an eminent rank in the clan by the succession of their foster-brother to the command of the Clan Quhele, this was the tumultuous and almost terrible mode in which they testified their peculiar share in their chief's triumph.

Far behind, and with different feelings, on the part of one at least of the company, came the small boat, in which, manned by the Booshalloch and one of his sons, Simon Glover was a passenger.

'If we are bound for the head of the lake,' said Simon to his friend, 'we shall hardly be there for hours.'

But as he spoke, the crew of the boat of the foster-brethren, or Leichtach,* on a signal from the chief's galley, lay on their oars until the Booshalloch's boat came up, and, throwing on board a rope of hides, which Neil made fast to the head of his skiff, they stretched to their oars once more; and, notwithstanding they had the small boat in tow, swept through the lake with almost the same rapidity as before. The skiff was tugged on with a velocity which seemed to hazard the pulling her under water, or the separation of her head from her other timbers.

Simon Glover saw with anxiety the reckless fury of their course, and the bows of the boat occasionally brought within an inch or two of the level of the water; and though his friend Neil Booshalloch assured him it was all done in special honour, he heartily wished his voyage might have a safe termination. It had so, and much sooner than he apprehended; for the place of festivity was not four miles distant from the sepulchral island, being chosen to suit the chieftain's course, which lay to the south-east, as soon as the banquet should be concluded.

A bay on the southern side of Loch Tay presented a beautiful beach of sparkling sand, on which the boats might land with ease, and a dry meadow, covered with turf, verdant considering the season, behind and around which rose high banks, fringed with copsewood, and displaying the lavish preparations which had been made for the entertainment.

The Highlanders, well known for ready hatchetmen, had constructed a long arbour or sylvan banqueting-room, capable of receiving two hundred men, while a number of smaller huts around seemed intended for sleeping apartments. The uprights, the couples, and roof-tree of the temporary hall were composed of mountain pine, still covered with its bark. The frame-work of the sides was of planks or spars of the same material, closely interwoven with the leafy boughs of the fir and other evergreens, which the neighbouring woods afforded, while the hills had furnished plenty of heath to form the roof. Within this sylvan palace the most important personages present were invited to hold high festival. Others of less note were to feast in various long sheds, constructed with less care; and tables of sod, or rough planks, placed in the open air, were allotted to the numberless multitude. At a distance were to be seen piles of glowing charcoal or blazing wood, around which countless cooks toiled, bustled, and fretted, like so many demons working in their native element. Pits, wrought in the hill-side, and lined with

* *i.e.* Body-guard.

heated stones, served as ovens for stewing immense quantities of beef, mutton, and venison—wooden spits supported sheep and goats, which were roasted entire; others were cut into joints, and seethed in cauldrons made of the animals' own skins, sewed hastily together, and filled with water; while huge quantities of pike, trout, salmon, and char were broiled with more ceremony on glowing embers. The Glover had seen many a Highland banquet, but never one the preparations for which were on such a scale of barbarous profusion.

He had little time, however, to admire the scene around him; for, as soon as they landed on the beach, the Booshalloch observed, with some embarrassment, that as they had not been bidden to the table of the dais, to which he seemed to have expected an invitation, they had best secure a place in one of the inferior bothies or booths; and was leading the way in that direction, when he was stopped by one of the body-guards, appearing to act as master of ceremonies, who whispered something in his ear.

'I thought so,' said the herdsman, much relieved; 'I thought neither the stranger, nor the man that has my charge, would be left out at the high table.'

They were conducted accordingly into the ample lodge, within which were long ranges of tables already mostly occupied by the guests, while those who acted as domestics were placing upon them the abundant though rude materials of the festival. The young chief, although he certainly saw the Glover and the herdsman enter, did not address any personal salute to either, and their places were assigned them in a distant corner, far beneath the salt (a huge piece of antique silver-plate), the only article of value that the table displayed, and which was regarded by the clan as a species of palladium, only produced and used on the most solemn occasions, such as the present.

The Booshalloch, somewhat discontented, muttered to Simon as he took his place—'These are changed days, friend. His father, rest his soul, would have spoken to us both; but these are bad manners which he has learned among you Sassenachs in the Low Country.'

To this remark the Glover did not think it necessary to reply; instead of which he adverted to the evergreens, and particularly to the skins and other ornaments with which the interior of the bower was decorated. The most remarkable part of these ornaments was a number of Highland shirts of mail, with steel bonnets, battle-axes, and two-handed swords to match, which hung around the upper part of the room, together with targets highly and richly embossed. Each mail-shirt was hung over a well-dressed stag's hide, which at once displayed the armour to advantage, and saved it from suffering by damp.

'These,' whispered the Booshalloch, 'are the arms of the chosen champions of the Clan Quhele. They are twenty-nine in number, as you see, Eachin himself being the thirtieth, who wears his armour to-day, else had there been thirty. And he has not got such a good hauberk, after all, as he should wear on Palm Sunday. These nine suits of harness, of such large size, are for the Leichtach, from whom so much is expected.'

'And these goodly deer-hides,' said Simon, the spirit of his profession awakening at the sight of the goods in which he traded—'think you the Chief will be disposed to chaffer for them?—they are in demand for the doublets which knights wear under their armour.'

'Did I not pray you,' said Niel Booshalloch, 'to say nothing on that subject?'

'It is the mail-shirts I speak of,' said Simon—'may I ask if any of them were made by our celebrated Perth armourer, called Henry of the Wynd?'

'Thou art more unlucky than before,' said Niel; 'that man's name is to Eachin's temper like a whirlwind upon the lake; yet no man knows for what cause.'

'I can guess,' thought our Glover, but gave no utterance to the thought; and, having twice lighted on unpleasant subjects of conversation, he prepared to apply himself, like those around him, to his food, without starting another topic.

We have said as much of the preparations as may lead the reader to conclude that the festival, in respect of the quality of the food, was of the most rude description; consisting chiefly of huge joints of meat, which were consumed with little respect to the fasting season, although several of the friars of the island convent graced and hallowed the board by their presence. The platters were of wood, and so were the hooped cogues or cups, out of which the guests quaffed their liquor, as also the broth or juice of the meat, which was held a delicacy. There were also various preparations of milk which were highly esteemed, and were eaten out of similar vessels. Bread was the scarcest article at the banquet, but the Glover and his patron Niel were served with two small loaves expressly for their own use. In eating, as indeed was then the case all over Britain, the guests used their knives called skenes, or the large poniards named dirks, without troubling themselves by the reflection that they might occasionally have served different or more fatal purposes.

At the upper end of the table stood a vacant seat, elevated a step or two above the floor. It was covered with a canopy of holly boughs and ivy, and there rested against it a sheathed sword and a folded banner. This had been the seat of the deceased chieftain, and was left vacant in honour of him. Eachin occupied a lower chair on the right hand of the place of honour.

The reader would be greatly mistaken who should follow out this description, by supposing that the guests behaved like a herd of hungry wolves, rushing upon a feast rarely offered to them. On the contrary, the Clan Quhele conducted themselves with that species of courteous reserve and attention to the wants of others, which is often found in primitive nations, especially such as are always in arms; because a general observance of the rules of courtesy is necessary to prevent quarrels, bloodshed, and death. The guests took the places assigned them by Torquil of the Oak, who, acting as Marischal *Taeh, i.e.* sewer of the mess, touched with a white wand, without speaking a word, the place where each was to sit. Thus placed in order, the company

patiently awaited for the portion assigned them, which was distributed among them by the Leichtach;—the bravest men, or more distinguished warriors of the tribe, being accommodated with a double mess, emphatically called *bieyfir*, or the portion of a man. When the sewers themselves had seen every one served, they resumed their places at the festival, and were each served with one of these larger messes of food. Water was placed within each man's reach, and a handful of soft moss served the purposes of a table-napkin, so that, as at an Eastern banquet, the hands were washed as often as the mess was changed. For amusement, the bard recited the praises of the deceased chief, and expressed the clan's confidence in the blossoming virtues of his successor. The seanachie recited the genealogy of the tribe, which they traced to the race of the Dalriads; the harpers played within, while the war-pipes cheered the multitude without. The conversation among the guests was grave, subdued, and civil—no jest was attempted beyond the bounds of a very gentle pleasantry, calculated only to excite a passing smile. There were no raised voices, no contentious arguments; and Simon Glover had heard a hundred times more noise at a guild-feast in Perth, than was made on this occasion by two hundred wild mountaineers.

Even the liquor itself did not seem to raise the festive party above the same tone of decorous gravity. It was of various kinds—wine appeared in very small quantities, and was served out only to the principal guests, among which honoured number Simon Glover was again included. The wine and the two wheaten loaves were, indeed, the only marks of notice which he received during the feast; but Niel Booshalloch, jealous of his master's reputation for hospitality, failed not to enlarge on them as proofs of high distinction. Distilled liquors, since so generally used in the Highlands, were then comparatively unknown. The usquebaugh was circulated in small quantities, and was highly flavoured with a decoction of saffron and other herbs, so as to resemble a medicinal potion rather than a festive cordial. Cider and mead were seen at the entertainment; but ale, brewed in great quantities for the purpose, and flowing round without restriction, was the liquor generally used, and that was drunk with a moderation much less known among the more modern Highlanders. A cup to the memory of the deceased chieftain was the first pledge solemnly proclaimed after the banquet was finished; and a low murmur of benedictions was heard from the company, while the monks alone, uplifting their united voices, sung *Requiem eternam dona.* An unusual silence followed, as if something extraordinary was expected, when Eachin arose, with a bold and manly yet modest grace, and ascended the vacant seat or throne, saying with dignity and firmness—

'This seat and my father's inheritance I claim as my right—so prosper me God and Saint Barr!'

'How will you rule your father's children?' said an old man, the uncle of the deceased.

'I will defend them with my father's sword, and distribute justice to them under my father's banner.'

The old man, with a trembling hand, unsheathed the ponderous weapon, and, holding it by the blade, offered the hilt to the young chieftain's grasp; at the same time Torquil of the Oak unfurled the pennon of the tribe, and swung it repeatedly over Eachin's head, who, with singular grace and dexterity, brandished the huge claymore as in its defence. The guests raised a yelling shout, to testify their acceptance of the patriarchal chief who claimed their allegiance, nor was there any who, in the graceful and agile youth before them, was disposed to recollect the subject of sinister vaticinations. As he stood in glittering mail, resting on the long sword, and acknowledging by gracious gestures the acclamations which rent the air within, without, and around, Simon Glover was tempted to doubt whether this majestic figure was that of the same lad whom he had often treated with little ceremony, and began to have some apprehension of the consequences of having done so. A general burst of minstrelsy succeeded to the acclamations, and rock and greenwood rang to harp and pipes, as lately to shout and yell of woe.

It would be tedious to pursue the progress of the inaugural feast, or detail the pledges that were quaffed to former heroes of the clan, and above all to the twenty-nine brave gallowglasses who were to fight in the approaching conflict, under the eye and leading of their young chief. The bards, assuming, in old times, the prophetic character combined with their own, ventured to assure them of the most distinguished victory, and to predict the fury with which the Blue Falcon, the emblem of the Clan Quhele, should rend to pieces the Mountain Cat, the well-known badge of the Clan Chattan.

It was approaching sunset, when a bowl, called the grace-cup, made of oak, hooped with silver, was handed round the table as the signal of dispersion, although it was left free to any who chose a longer carouse to retreat to any of the outer bothies. As for Simon Glover, the Booshalloch conducted him to a small hut, contrived, it would seem, for the use of a single individual, where a bed of heath and moss was arranged as well as the season would permit, and an ample supply of such delicacies as the late feast afforded, showed that all care had been taken for the inhabitant's accommodation.

'Do not leave this hut,' said the Booshalloch, taking leave of his friend and *protégé*; 'this is your place of rest. But apartments are lost on such a night of confusion, and if the badger leaves his hole the tod* will creep into it.'

To Simon Glover this arrangement was by no means disagreeable. He had been wearied by the noise of the day, and felt desirous of repose. After eating, therefore, a morsel, which his appetite scarce required, and drinking a cup of wine to expel the cold, he muttered his evening prayer, wrapped himself in his cloak, and lay down on a couch which old acquaintance had made familiar and easy to him. The hum and murmur, and even the occasional shouts, of some of the festive multitude who continued revelling without, did not long interrupt his repose; and in about ten minutes he was as fast asleep as if he had lain in his own bed in Curfew Street.

* Tod, *Scottice* for fox.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Still harping on my daughter.
HAMLET.

Two hours before the black-cock crew, Simon Glover was wakened by a well-known voice, which called him by name.

'What, Conachar!' he replied, as he started from sleep, 'is the morning so far advanced?' and raising his eyes, the person of whom he was dreaming stood before him; and at the same moment the events of yesterday rushing on his recollection, he saw with surprise that the vision retained the form which sleep had assigned it, and it was not the mail-clad Highland chief, with claymore in hand, as he had seen him the preceding night, but Conachar of Curfew Street, in his humble apprentice's garb, holding in his hand a switch of oak. An apparition would not more have surprised our Perth burgher. As he gazed with wonder, the youth turned upon him a piece of lighted bog-wood which he carried in a lantern, and to his waking exclamation replied,—

'Even so, father Simon; it is Conachar, come to renew our old acquaintance, when our intercourse will attract least notice.'

So saying, he sat down on a trestle which answered the purpose of a chair, and, placing the lantern beside him, proceeded in the most friendly tone,—

'I have tasted of thy good cheer many a day, father Simon—I trust thou hast found no lack in my family?'

'None whatever, Eachin MacIan,' answered the Glover,—for the simplicity of the Celtic language and manners rejects all honorary titles; 'it was even too good for this fasting season, and much too good for me, since I must be ashamed to think how hard you fared in Curfew Street.'

'Even too well, to use your own word,' said Conachar, 'for the deserts of an idle apprentice, and for the wants of a young Highlander. But yesterday, if there was, as I trust, enough of food, found you not, good Glover, some lack of courteous welcome? Excuse it not,—I know you did so. But I am young in authority with my people, and I must not too early draw their attention to the period of my residence in the Lowlands, which, however, I can never forget.'

'I understand the cause entirely,' said Simon; 'and therefore it is unwillingly, and as it were by force, that I have made so early a visit hither.'

'Hush, father, hush! It is well you are come to see some of my Highland splendour while it yet sparkles — Return after Palm Sunday, and who knows whom or what you may find in the territories we now possess! The Wild-Cat may have made his lodge where the banqueting bower of MacIan now stands.'

The young chief was silent, and pressed the top of the rod to his lips, as if to guard against uttering more.

'There is no fear of that, Eachin,' said Simon, in that vague way in which lukewarm comforters endeavour to turn the reflections of their friends from the consideration of inevitable danger.

'There *is* fear, and there is peril of utter ruin,' answered Eachin; 'and there is positive certainty of great loss. I marvel my father consented to this wily proposal of Albany. I would MacGillie Chattanach would agree with me, and then, instead of wasting our best blood against each other, we would go down together to Strathmore, and kill and take possession. I would rule at Perth, and he at Dundee, and all the Great Strath should be our own to the banks of the Firth of Tay. Such is the policy I have caught from your old grey head, father Simon, when holding a trencher at thy back, and listening to thy evening talk with Bailie Craigdallie.'

'The tongue is well called an unruly member,' thought the Glover. 'Here have I been holding a candle to the devil, to show him the way to mischief.'

But he only said aloud, 'These plans come too late.'

'Too late, indeed!' answered Eachin. 'The indentures of battle are signed by our marks and seals; the burning hate of the Clan Quhele and Clan Chattan is blown up to an inextinguishable flame by mutual insults and boasts. Yes, the time is passed by.—But to thine own affairs, father Glover. It is religion that has brought thee hither, as I learn from Niel Booshalloch. Surely, my experience of thy prudence did not lead me to suspect thee of any quarrel with Mother Church. As for my old acquaintance, Father Clement, he is one of those who hunt after the crown of martyrdom, and think a stake, surrounded with blazing fagots, better worth embracing than a willing bride. He is a very knight-errant in defence of his religious notions, and does battle wherever he comes. He hath already a quarrel with the monks of Sibil's Isle yonder, about some point of doctrine.—Hast seen him?'

'I have,' answered Simon; 'but we spoke little together, the time being pressing.'

'He may have said that there is a third person—one more likely, I think, to be a true fugitive for religion, than either you, a shrewd citizen, or he, a wrangling preacher — who would be right heartily welcome to share our protection?—Thou art dull, man, and wilt not guess my meaning—thy daughter Catharine?'

These last words the young chief spoke in English; and he continued the conversation in that language, as if apprehensive of being overheard; and indeed, as if under the sense of some involuntary hesitation.

'My daughter Catharine,' said the Glover, remembering what the Carthusian had told him, 'is well and safe.'

'But where, or with whom?' said the young chief. 'And wherefore came she not with you? Think you the Clan Quhele have no cailliachs* as active as old Dorothy, whose hand has warmed my haffits† before now, to wait upon the daughter of their Chieftain's master?'

'Again I thank you,' said the Glover, 'and doubt neither your power nor your will to protect my daughter, as well as myself. But an honourable lady, the friend of Sir Patrick

* Old women. † *i.e.* Boxed my ears.

Charteris, hath offered her a safe place of refuge, without the risk of a toilsome journey through a desolate and distracted country.'

'O ay,—Sir Patrick Charteris,' said Eachin, in a more reserved and distant tone—'he must be preferred to all men, without doubt; he is your friend, I think?'

Simon Glover longed to punish this affectation of a boy, who had been scolded four times a day for running into the street to see Sir Patrick Charteris ride past; but he checked his spirit of repartee, and simply said,—

'Sir Patrick Charteris has been provost of Perth for seven years; and it is likely is so still, since the magistrates are elected, not in Lent, but at Saint Martinmas.'

'Ah, father Glover,' said the youth, in his kinder and more familiar mode of address, 'you are so used to see the sumptuous shows and pageants of Perth, that you would but little relish our barbarous festival in comparison. What didst thou think of our ceremonial of yesterday?'

'It was noble and touching,' said the Glover; 'and to me, who knew your father, most especially so. When you rested on the sword, and looked around you, methought I saw mine old friend Gilchrist MacIan arisen from the dead, and renewed in years and in strength.'

'I played my part there boldly, I trust; and showed little of that paltry apprentice boy, whom you used to—use just as he deserved.'

'Eachin resembles Conachar,' said the Glover, 'no more than a salmon resembles a par, though men say they are the same fish in a different state; or than a butterfly resembles a grub.'

'Thinkest thou that while I was taking upon me the power which all women love, I would have been myself an object for a maiden's eye to rest upon? To speak plain, what would Catharine have thought of me in the ceremonial?'

'We approach the shallows now,' thought Simon Glover; 'and, without nice pilotage, we drive right on shore.'

'Most women like show, Eachin; but I think my daughter Catharine be an exception. She would rejoice in the good fortune of her household friend and playmate; but she would not value the splendid MacIan, Captain of Clan Quhele, more than the orphan Conachar.'

'She is ever generous and disinterested,' replied the young chief. 'But yourself, father, have seen the world for many more years than she has done, and can better form a judgment what power and wealth do for those who enjoy them. Think, and speak sincerely, what would be your own thoughts, if you saw your Catharine standing under yonder canopy, with the command over a hundred hills, and the devoted obedience of ten thousand vassals; and as the price of these advantages, her hand in that of the man who loves her the best in the world?'

'Meaning in your own, Conachar?' said Simon.

'Ay, Conachar call me—I love the name, since it was by that I have been known to Catharine.'

'Sincerely, then,' said the Glover, endeavouring to give the least offensive turn to his reply, 'my inmost thought would be the earnest wish that Catharine and I were safe in our humble booth in Curfew Street, with Dorothy for our only vassal.'

'And with poor Conachar also, I trust? You would not leave him to pine away in solitary grandeur?'

'I would not,' answered the Glover, 'wish so ill to the Clan Quhele, mine ancient friends, as to deprive them, at the moment of emergency, of a brave young Chief, and that Chief of the fame which he is about to acquire at their head in the approaching conflict.'

Eachin bit his lip, to suppress his irritated feelings, as he replied, — 'Words — words, — empty words, father Simon. You fear the Clan Quhele more than you love them, and you suppose their indignation would be formidable, should their Chief marry the daughter of a burgess of Perth.'

'And if I do fear such an issue, Hector MacIan, have I not reason? How have ill-assorted marriages had issue in the House of MacCallanmore, in that of the powerful MacLeans, nay, of the Lords of the Isles themselves? What has ever come of them but divorce and exheredation — sometimes worse fate — to the ambitious intruder? You could not marry my child before a priest, and you could only wed her with your left hand; and I'—he checked the strain of impetuosity which the subject inspired, and concluded, — 'And I am an honest, though humble burgher of Perth, who would rather my child were the lawful and undoubted spouse of a citizen in my own rank, than the licensed concubine of a monarch.'

'I will wed Catharine before the priest and before the world,—before the altar and before the black stones of Iona,' said the impetuous young man. 'She is the love of my youth, and there is not a tie in religion or honour, but I will bind myself by them! I have sounded my people. If we do but win this combat,—and, with the hope of gaining Catharine, we SHALL win it—my heart tells me so—I shall be so much lord over their affections, that were I to take a bride from the almshouse, so it was my pleasure, they would hail her as if she were a daughter of MacCallanmore.—But you reject my suit?' said Eachin sternly.

'You put words of offence in my mouth,' said the old man, 'and may next punish me for them, since I am wholly in your power. But, with my consent, my daughter shall never wed, save in her own degree. Her heart would break amid the constant wars and scenes of bloodshed which connect themselves with your lot. If you really love her, and recollect her dread of strife and combat, you would not wish her to be subjected to the train of military horrors in which you, like your father, must needs be inevitably and eternally engaged. Choose a bride amongst the daughters of the mountain-chiefs, my son, or fiery Lowland nobles. You are fair, young, rich, high-born, and powerful, and will not woo in vain. You will readily find one who will rejoice in your conquests, and cheer you under defeat. To Catharine, the one

would be as frightful as the other. A warrior must wear a steel gauntlet—a glove of kid-skin would be torn to pieces in an hour.'

A dark cloud passed over the face of the young chief, lately animated with so much fire.

'Farewell,' he said, 'the only hope which could have lighted me to fame or victory!'—He remained for a space silent, and intensely thoughtful, with downcast eyes, a lowering brow, and folded arms. At length he raised his hands, and said, 'Father,—for such you have been to me,—I am about to tell you a secret. Reason and Pride both advise me to be silent, but Fate urges me, and must be obeyed. I am about to lodge in you the deepest and dearest secret that man ever confided to man. But beware—end this conference how it will—beware how you ever breathe a syllable of what I am now to trust to you; for know that, were you to do so in the most remote corner of Scotland, I have ears to hear it even there, and a hand and poniard to reach a traitor's bosom.—I am—but the word will not out!'

'Do not speak it then,' said the prudent Glover; 'a secret is no longer safe when it crosses the lips of him who owns it; and I desire not a confidence so dangerous as you menace me with.'

'Ay, but I must speak, and you must hear,' said the youth. 'In this age of battle, father, you have yourself been a combatant?'

'Once only,' replied Simon, 'when the Southron assaulted the Fair City. I was summoned to take my part in the defence, as my tenure required, like that of other craftsmen, who are bound to keep watch and ward.'

'And how felt you upon that matter?' inquired the young chief.

'What can that import to the present business?' said Simon, in some surprise.

'Much, else I had not asked the question,' answered Eachin, in the tone of haughtiness which from time to time he assumed.

'An old man is easily brought to speak of olden times,' said Simon, not unwilling, on an instant's reflection, to lead the conversation away from the subject of his daughter, 'and I must needs confess, my feelings were much short of the high, cheerful confidence, nay, the pleasure, with which I have seen other men go to battle. My life and profession were peaceful; and though I have not wanted the spirit of a man, when the time demanded it, yet I have seldom slept worse than the night before that onslaught. My ideas were harrowed by the tales we were told (nothing short of the truth) about the Saxon archers; how they drew shafts of a cloth-yard length, and used bows a third longer than ours. When I fell into a broken slumber, if but a straw in the mattress pricked my side, I started and waked, thinking an English arrow was quivering in my body. In the morning, as I began for very weariness to sink into some repose, I was waked by the tolling of the common bell, which called us burghers to the walls; I never heard its sound peal so like a passing knell before or since.'

'Go on—what further chanced?' demanded Eachin.

'I did on my harness,' said Simon, such as it was—took my mother's blessing, a high-spirited woman, who spoke of my father's actions for the honour of the Fair Town. This heartened me, and I felt still bolder when I found myself ranked among the other crafts, all bowmen, for thou knowest the Perth citizens have good skill in archery. We were dispersed on the walls, several knights and squires in armour of proof being mingled amongst us, who kept a bold countenance, confident, perhaps, in their harness, and informed us, for our encouragement, that they would cut down with their swords and axes any of those who should attempt to quit their post. I was kindly assured of this myself by the old kempe of Kinfauns, as he was called, this good Sir Patrick's father, then our Provost. He was a grandson of the Red Rover, Tom of Longueville, and a likely man to keep his word, which he addressed to me in especial, because a night of much discomfort may have made me look paler than usual; and, besides, I was but a lad.'

'And did his exhortation add to your fear, or your resolution?' said Eachin, who seemed very attentive.

'To my resolution,' answered Simon; 'for I think nothing can make a man so bold to face one danger at some distance in his front, as the knowledge of another close behind him, to push him forward. Well—I mounted the walls in tolerable heart, and was placed with others on the Spey Tower, being accounted a good bowman. But a very cold fit seized me as I saw the English, in great order, with their archers in front, and their men-at-arms behind, marching forward to the attack in strong columns, three in number. They came on steadily, and some of us would fain have shot at them; but it was strictly forbidden, and we were obliged to remain motionless, sheltering ourselves behind the battlement as we best might. As the Southron formed their long ranks into lines, each man occupying his place as by magic, and preparing to cover themselves by large shields, called pavesses, which they planted before them, I again felt a strange breathlessness, and some desire to go home for a glass of distilled waters. But as I looked aside, I saw the worthy kempe of Kinfauns bending a large crossbow, and I thought it pity he should waste the bolt on a true-hearted Scotsman, when so many English were in presence; so I e'en stayed where I was, being in a comfortable angle, formed by two battlements. The English then strode forward, and drew their bowstrings,—not to the breast as your Highland kerne do, but to the ear,—and sent off their volleys of swallow-tails before we could call on Saint Andrew. I winked when I saw them haul up their tackle, and I believe I started as the shafts began to rattle against the parapet. But looking round me, and seeing none hurt but John Squallit, the town-crier, whose jaws were pierced through with a cloth-yard shaft, I took heart of grace, and shot in my turn with good will and good aim. A little man I shot at, who had just peeped out from behind his target, dropped with a shaft through his shoulder. The Provost cried,—"Well stitched, Simon Glover!"—"Saint John for his own town,

my fellow-craftsmen!"—shouted I,—though I was then but an apprentice. And if you will believe me, in the rest of the skirmish, which was ended by the foes drawing off, I drew bow-string and loosed shaft as calmly as if I had been shooting at butts instead of men's breasts. I gained some credit, and I have ever afterwards thought that, in case of necessity (for with me it had never been matter of choice), I should not have lost it again.—And this is all I can tell of warlike experience in battle. Other dangers I have had, which I have endeavoured to avoid like a wise man, or, when they were inevitable, I have faced them like a true one. Upon other terms a man cannot live or hold up his head in Scotland.'

'I understand your tale,' said Eachin; 'but I shall find it difficult to make you credit mine, knowing the race of which I am descended, and especially that I am the son of him whom we have this day laid in the tomb—well that he lies where he will never learn what you are now to hear! Look, my father—the light which I bear grows short and pale, a few minutes will extinguish it—but before it expires, the hideous tale will be told.—Father, I am—a COWARD!—It is said at last, and the secret of my disgrace is in keeping of another!'

The young man sank back in a species of syncope, produced by the agony of his mind as he made the fatal communication. The Glover, moved as well by fear as by compassion, applied himself to recall him to life, and succeeded in doing so, but not in restoring him to composure. He hid his face with his hands, and his tears flowed plentifully and bitterly.

'For Our Lady's sake, be composed,' said the old man, 'and recall the vile word! I know you better than yourself—you are NO coward, but only too young and inexperienced, ay, and somewhat too quick of fancy, to have the steady valour of a bearded man. I would hear no other man say that of you, Conachar, without giving him the lie—You are no coward—I have seen high sparks of spirit fly from you even on slight enough provocation.'

'High sparks of pride and passion!' said the unfortunate youth; 'but when saw you them supported by the resolution that should have backed them? the sparks you speak of fell on my dastardly heart as on a piece of ice which could catch fire from nothing—if my offended pride urged me to strike, my weakness of mind prompted me the next moment to fly.'

'Want of habit,' said Simon; 'it is by clambering over walls that youths learn to scale precipices. Begin with slight feuds—exercise daily the arms of your country in tourney with your followers.'

'And what leisure is there for this?' exclaimed the young chief, starting as if something horrid had occurred to his imagination. 'How many days are there betwixt this hour and Palm Sunday, and what is to chance then?—A list enclosed, from which no man can stir, more than the poor bear who is chained to his stake. Sixty living men, the best and fiercest (one alone excepted!) which Albyn can send down from her mountains, all athirst for each other's blood, while a king and his nobles, and shouting thousands besides, attend, as at a theatre, to encourage their demoniac fury! Blows clang, and blood flows, thicker, faster, redder,—they rush on each other like madmen—they tear each other like wild beasts—the wounded are trodden to death amid the feet of their companions! Blood ebbs, arms become weak—but there must be no parley, no truce, no interruption, while any of the maimed wretches remain alive! Here is no crouching behind battlements, no fighting with missile weapons,—all is hand to hand, till hands can no longer be raised to maintain the ghastly conflict!—If such a field is so horrible in idea, what think you it will be in reality?'

The Glover remained silent.

'I say again, what think you?'

'I can only pity you, Conachar,' said Simon. 'It is hard to be the descendant of a lofty line—the son of a noble father—the leader by birth of a gallant array—and yet to want, or think you want (for still I trust the fault lies much in a quick fancy, that over-estimates danger),—to want that dogged quality, which is possessed by every game-cock that is worth a handful of corn, every hound that is worth a mess of offal. But how chanced it that, with such a consciousness of inability to fight in this battle, you proffered even now to share your chiefdom with my daughter? Your power must depend on your fighting this combat, and in that Catharine cannot help you.'

'You mistake, old man,' replied Eachin; 'were Catharine to look kindly on the earnest love I bear her, it would carry me against the front of the enemies with the mettle of a war-horse. Overwhelming as my sense of weakness is, the feeling that Catharine looked on would give me strength. Say yet—O, say yet—she shall be mine if we gain the combat, and not the *Gow Chrom* himself, whose heart is of a piece with his anvil, ever went to battle so light as I shall do! One strong passion is conquered by another.'

'This is folly, Conachar. Cannot the recollections of your interest, your honour, your kindred, do as much to stir your courage, as the thoughts of a brent-browed lass? Fie upon you, man!'

'You tell me but what I have told myself—but it is in vain,' replied Eachin with a sigh. 'It is only whilst the timid stag is paired with the doe that he is desperate and dangerous. Be it from constitution—be it, as our Highland cailliachs will say, from the milk of the White Doe—be it from my peaceful education, and the experience of your strict restraint—be it, as you think, from an overheated fancy, which paints danger yet more dangerous and ghastly than it is in reality, I cannot tell. But I know my failing, and—yes, it must be said!—so sorely dread that I cannot conquer it, that, could I have your consent to my wishes on such terms, I would even here make a pause, renounce the rank I have assumed, and retire into humble life.'

'What, turn glover at last, Conachar?' said Simon; 'this beats the legend of Saint Crispin. Nay, nay, your hand was not framed for that; you shall spoil me no more doe-skins.'

'Jest not,' said Eachin, 'I am serious. If I cannot labour, I will bring wealth enough to

live without it. They will proclaim me recreant with horn and war-pipe—Let them do so—Catharine will love me the better that I have preferred the paths of peace to those of bloodshed, and Father Clement shall teach us to pity and forgive the world, which will load us with reproaches that wound not. I shall be the happiest of men—Catharine will enjoy all that unbounded affection can confer upon her, and will be freed from apprehension of the sights and sounds of horror, which your ill-assorted match would have prepared for her; and you, father Glover, shall occupy your chimney-corner, the happiest and most honoured man that ever'——

'Hold, Eachin—I prithee hold,' said the Glover; 'the fir light, with which this discourse must terminate, burns very low, and I would speak a word in my turn, and plain dealing is best. Though it may vex, or perhaps enrage you, let me end these visions by saying at once—Catharine can never be yours. A glove is the emblem of faith, and a man of my craft should therefore less than any other break his own. Catharine's hand is promised—promised to a man whom you may hate, but whom you must honour—to Henry the Armourer. The match is fitting by degree, agreeable to their mutual wishes, and I have given my promise. It is best to be plain at once—resent my refusal as you will—I am wholly in your power—But nothing shall make me break my word.'

The Glover spoke thus decidedly, because he was aware from experience that the very irritable disposition of his former apprentice yielded in most cases to stern and decided resolution. Yet, recollecting where he was, it was with some feelings of fear that he saw the dying flame leap up, and spread a flash of light on the vision of Eachin, which seemed pale as the grave, while his eye rolled like that of a maniac in his fever fit. The light instantly sunk down and died, and Simon felt a momentary terror, lest he should have to dispute for his life with the youth, whom he knew to be capable of violent actions when highly excited, however short a period his nature could support the measures which his passion commenced. He was relieved by the voice of Eachin, who muttered in a hoarse and altered tone,—

'Let what we have spoken this night rest in silence for ever—If thou bring'st it to light, thou wert better dig thine own grave.'

Thus speaking, the door of the hut opened, admitting a gleam of moonshine. The form of the retiring chief crossed it for an instant, the hurdle was then closed, and the shieling left in darkness.

Simon Glover felt relieved when a conversation fraught with offence and danger was thus peaceably terminated. But he remained deeply affected by the condition of Hector MacIan, whom he had himself bred up.

'The poor child,' said he, 'to be called up to a place of eminence, only to be hurled from it with contempt! What he told me I partly knew, having often remarked that Conachar was more prone to quarrel than to fight. But this overpowering faint-heartedness, which neither shame nor necessity can overcome, I, though no Sir William Wallace, cannot conceive. And to propose himself for a husband to my daughter, as if a bride were to find courage for herself and the bridegroom! No, no—Catharine must wed a man to whom she may say—"Husband, spare your enemy"—not one in whose behalf she must cry—"Generous enemy, spare my husband."'

Tired out with these reflections, the old man at length fell asleep. In the morning, he was awakened by his friend the Booshalloch, who, with something of a blank visage, proposed to him to return to his abode on the meadow at the Ballough. He apologized, that the chief could not see Simon Glover that morning, being busied with things about the expected combat; and that Eachin MacIan thought the residence at the Ballough would be safest for Simon Glover's health, and had given charge that every care should be taken for his protection and accommodation.

Niel Booshalloch dilated on these circumstances, to gloss over the neglect implied in the chief's dismissing his visitor without a particular audience.

'His father knew better,' said the herdsman. 'But where should he have learned manners, poor thing, and bred up among your Perth burghers, who, excepting yourself, neighbour Glover, who speak Gaelic as well as I do, are a race incapable of civility?'

Simon Glover, it may be well believed, felt none of the want of respect which his friend resented on his account. On the contrary, he greatly preferred the quiet residence of the good herdsman, to the tumultuous hospitality of the daily festival of the chief, even if there had not just passed an interview with Eachin upon a subject which it would be most painful to revive.

To the Ballough, therefore, he quietly retreated, where, could he have been secure of Catharine's safety, his leisure was spent pleasantly enough. His amusement was sailing on the lake in a little skiff, which a Highland boy managed, while the old man angled. He frequently landed on the little island, where he mused over the tomb of his old friend, Gilchrist MacIan, and made friends with the monks, presenting the prior with gloves of marten's fur, and the superior officers with, each of them, a pair made from the skin of the wild cat. The cutting and stitching of these little presents served to beguile the time after sunset, while the family of the herdsman crowded around, admiring his address, and listening to the tales and songs with which the old man had skill to pass away a heavy evening.

It must be confessed that the cautious Glover avoided the conversation of Father Clement, whom he erroneously considered as rather the author of his misfortunes, than the guiltless sharer of them. 'I will not,' he thought, 'to please his fancies, lose the goodwill of these kind monks, which may be one day useful to me. I have suffered enough by his preachments already, I trow. Little the wiser and much the poorer have they made me. No, no, Catharine and Clement may think as they will; but I will take the first opportunity to sneak back like a

rated hound at the call of his master, submit to a plentiful course of haircloth and whipcord, disburse a lusty mulct, and become whole with the Church again.'

More than a fortnight had passed since the Glover had arrived at Ballough, and he began to wonder that he had not heard news of Catharine or of Henry Wynd, to whom he concluded the Provost had communicated the plan and place of his retreat. He knew the stout Smith dared not come up into the Clan Quhele country, on account of various feuds with the inhabitants, and with Eachin himself, while bearing the name of Conachar; but yet the Glover thought Henry might have found means to send him a message, or a token, by some one of the various couriers who passed and repassed between the court and the headquarters of the Clan Quhele, in order to concert the terms of the impending combat, the march of the parties to Perth, and other particulars requiring previous adjustment. It was now the middle of March, and the fatal Palm Sunday was fast approaching.

Whilst time was thus creeping on, the exiled Glover had not even once set eyes upon his former apprentice. The care that was taken to attend to his wants and convenience in every respect, showed that he was not forgotten; but yet, when he heard the chieftain's horn ringing through the woods, he usually made it a point to choose his walk in a different direction. One morning, however, he found himself unexpectedly in Eachin's close neighbourhood, with scarce leisure to avoid him; and thus it happened.

As Simon strolled pensively through a little sylvan glade, surrounded on either side with tall forest trees, mixed with underwood, a white doe broke from the thicket, closely pursued by two deer greyhounds, one of which griped her haunch, the other her throat, and pulled her down within half a furlong of the Glover, who was something startled at the suddenness of the incident. The near and piercing blast of a horn, and the baying of a slow-hound, made Simon aware that the hunters were close behind, and on the trace of the deer. Hallooing and the sound of men running through the copse, were heard close at hand. A moment's recollection would have satisfied Simon that his best way was to stand fast, or retire slowly, and leave it to Eachin to acknowledge his presence or not, as he should see cause. But his desire of shunning the young man had grown into a kind of instinct, and, in the alarm of finding him so near, Simon hid himself in a bush of hazels mixed with holly, which altogether concealed him. He had hardly done so, ere Eachin, rosy with exercise, dashed from the thicket into the open glade, accompanied by his foster-father, Torquil of the Oak. The latter, with equal strength and address, turned the struggling hind on her back, and, holding her forefeet in his right hand, while he knelt on her body, offered his skene with the left to the young chief, that he might cut the animal's throat.

'It may not be, Torquil; do thine office, and take the assay thyself. I must not kill the likeness of my foster-mother.'

This was spoken with a melancholy smile, while a tear at the same time stood in the speaker's eye. Torquil stared at his young chief for an instant, then drew his sharp wood-knife across the creature's throat, with a cut so swift and steady, that the weapon reached the backbone. Then rising on his feet, and again fixing a long piercing look on his chief, he said, —'As much as I have done to that hind, would I do to any living man whose ears could have heard my *dault* (foster-son) so much as name a white doe, and couple the word with Hector's name!'

If Simon had no reason before to keep himself concealed, this speech of Torquil furnished him with a pressing one.

'It cannot be concealed, father Torquil,' said Eachin; 'it will all out to the broad day.'

'What will out? what will to broad day?' asked Torquil, in surprise.

'It is the fatal secret,' thought Simon; 'and now, if this huge privy counsellor cannot keep silence, I shall be made answerable, I suppose, for Eachin's disgrace having been blown abroad.'

Thinking thus anxiously, he availed himself, at the same time, of his position to see as much as he could of what passed between the afflicted chieftain and his confidant, impelled by that spirit of curiosity which prompts us in the most momentous as well as the most trivial occasions of life, and which is sometimes found to exist in company with great personal fear.

As Torquil listened to what Eachin communicated, the young man sank into his arms, and, supporting himself on his shoulder, concluded his confession by a whisper into his ear. Torquil seemed to listen with such amazement as to make him incapable of crediting his ears. As if to be certain that it was Eachin who spoke, he gradually roused the youth from his reclining posture, and, holding him up in some measure by a grasp on his shoulder, fixed on him an eye that seemed enlarged, and at the same time turned to stone, by the marvels he listened to. And so wild waxed the old man's visage after he had heard the murmured communication, that Simon Glover apprehended he would cast the youth from him as a dishonoured thing, in which case he might have lighted among the very copse in which he lay concealed, and occasioned his discovery in a manner equally painful and dangerous. But the passions of Torquil, who entertained for his foster-child even a double portion of that passionate fondness which always attends that connection in the Highlands, took a different turn.

'I believe it not,' he exclaimed; 'it is false of thy father's child;—false of thy mother's son;—falsest of MY *dault!* I offer my gage to heaven and hell, and will maintain the combat with him that shall call it true! Thou hast been spell-bound by an evil eye, my darling, and the fainting which you call cowardice is the work of magic. I remember the bat that struck the torch out on the hour that thou wert born,—that hour of grief and of joy. Cheer up, my beloved! Thou shalt with me to Iona, and the good Saint Columbus, with the whole choir of blessed saints and angels, who ever favoured thy race, shall take from thee the heart of the White Doe, and return that which they have stolen from thee.'

Eachin listened, with a look as if he would fain have believed the words of the comforter.

'But, Torquil,' he said, 'supposing this might avail us, the fatal day approaches, and if I go to the lists, I dread me we shall be shamed.'

'It cannot be—it shall not!' said Torquil,—'Hell shall not prevail so far—we will steep thy sword in holy water, place vervain, Saint John's-wort, and rowan-tree in thy crest. We will surround thee, I and thy eight brethren—thou shalt be safe as in a castle.'

Again the youth helplessly muttered something, which, from the dejected tone in which it was spoken, Simon could not understand, while Torquil's deep tones in reply fell full and distinct upon his ear.

'Yes, there may be a chance of withdrawing thee from the conflict. Thou art the youngest who is to draw blade. Now, hear me, and thou shalt know what it is to have a foster-father's love, and how far it exceeds the love even of kinsmen. The youngest on the indenture of the Clan Chattan is Ferquhard Day. His father slew mine, and the red blood is seething hot between us—I looked to Palm Sunday as the term that should cool it—But mark!—Thou wouldst have thought that the blood in the veins of this Ferquhard Day and in mine would not have mingled, had they been put into the same vessel, yet hath he cast the eyes of his love upon my only daughter Eva—the fairest of our maidens. Think with what feelings I heard the news. It was as if a wolf from the skirts of Ferragon had said, "Give me thy child in wedlock, Torquil." My child thought not thus; she loves Ferquhard, and weeps away her colour and strength in dread of the approaching battle. Let her give him but a sign of favour, and well I know he will forget kith and kin, forsake the field, and fly with her to the desert.'

'He, the youngest of the champions of Clan Chattan, being absent, I, the youngest of the Clan Quhele, may be excused from combat,' said Eachin, blushing at the mean chance of safety thus opened to him.'

'See now, my Chief,' said Torquil, 'and judge my thoughts towards thee—others might give thee their own lives and that of their sons—I sacrifice to thee the honour of my house.'

'My friend, my father,' repeated the chief, folding Torquil to his bosom, 'what a base wretch am I that have a spirit dastardly enough to avail myself of your sacrifice!'

'Speak not of that—Greenwoods have ears. Let us back to the camp, and send our gillies for the venison.—Back, dogs, and follow at heel.'

The slow-hound, or lyme-dog, luckily for Simon, had drenched his nose in the blood of the deer, else he might have found the Glover's lair in the thicket; but, its more acute properties of scent being lost, it followed tranquilly with the gaze-hounds.

When the hunters were out of sight and hearing, the Glover arose, greatly relieved by their departure, and began to move off in the opposite direction, as fast as his age permitted. His first reflection was on the fidelity of the foster-father.

'The wild mountain heart is faithful and true. Yonder man is more like the giants in romaunts, than a man of mould like ourselves; and yet Christians might take an example from him for his lealty. A simple contrivance this, though, to finger a man from off their enemies' chequer, as if there would not be twenty of the Wild-Cats ready to supply his place.'

Thus thought the Glover, not aware that the strictest proclamations were issued, prohibiting any of the two contending clans, their friends, allies, and dependents, from coming within fifty miles of Perth, during a week before and a week after the combat, which regulation was to be enforced by armed men.

So soon as our friend Simon arrived at the habitation of the herdsman, he found other news awaiting him. They were brought by Father Clement, who came in a pilgrim's cloak, or dalmatic, ready to commence his return to the southward, and desirous to take leave of his companion in exile, or to accept him as a travelling companion.

'But what,' said the citizen, 'has so suddenly induced you to return within the reach of danger?'

'Have you not heard,' said Father Clement, 'that, March and his English allies having retired into England before the Earl of Douglas, the good Earl has applied himself to redress the evils of the commonwealth, and hath written to the court letters, desiring that the warrant for the High Court of Commission against Heresy be withdrawn, as a trouble to men's consciences—that the nomination of Henry of Wardlaw to be Prelate of Saint Andrews be referred to the Parliament, with sundry other things pleasing to the commons? Now, most of the nobles that are with the King at Perth, and with them Sir Patrick Charteris, your worthy Provost, have declared for the proposals of the Douglas. The Duke of Albany hath agreed to them; whether from goodwill or policy I know not. The good King is easily persuaded to mild and gentle courses. And thus are the jaw-teeth of the oppressors dashed to pieces in their sockets, and the prey snatched from their ravening talons. Will you with me to the Lowlands, or do you abide here a little space?'

Niel Booshalloch saved his friend the trouble of reply.

'He had the Chief's authority,' he said, 'for saying that Simon Glover should abide until the champions went down to the battle.' In this answer the citizen saw something not quite consistent with his own perfect freedom of volition; but he cared little for it at the time, as it furnished a good apology for not travelling along with the clergyman.

'An exemplary man,' he said to his friend, Niel Booshalloch, as soon as Father Clement had taken leave, 'a great scholar and a great saint. It is a pity almost he is no longer in danger to be burned, as his sermon at the stake would convert thousands. O, Niel Booshalloch! Father Clement's pile would be a sweet-savouring sacrifice, and a beacon to all devout Christians. But what would the burning of a borrel ignorant burgess like me serve? Men offer not up old glove-leather for incense, nor are beacons fed with undressed hides, I trow! Sooth to speak, I have too little learning and too much fear to get

credit by the affair, and therefore I should, in our homely phrase, have both the scathe and the scorn.'

'True for you,' answered the herdsman.

CHAPTER XXX.

We must return to the characters of our dramatic narrative whom we left at Perth, when we accompanied the Glover and his fair daughter to Kinfauns, and from that hospitable mansion traced the course of Simon to Loch Tay; and the prince, as the highest personage, claims our immediate attention.

This rash and inconsiderate young man endured with some impatience his sequestered residence with the Lord High Constable, with whose company, otherwise in every respect satisfactory, he became dissatisfied, from no other reason than that he held in some degree the character of his warder. Incensed against his uncle, and displeased with his father, he longed, not unnaturally, for the society of Sir John Ramorny, on whom he had been so long accustomed to throw himself for amusement, and, though he would have resented the imputation as an insult, for guidance and direction. He therefore sent him a summons to attend him, providing his health permitted; and directed him to come by water to a little pavilion in the High Constable's garden, which, like that of Sir John's own lodgings, ran down to the Tay. In renewing an intimacy so dangerous, Rothsay only remembered that he had been Sir John Ramorny's munificent friend; while Sir John, on receiving the invitation, only recollected, on his part, the capricious insults he had sustained from his patron, the loss of his hand, and the lightness with which he had treated the subject, and the readiness with which Rothsay had abandoned his cause in the matter of the Bonnet-maker's slaughter. He laughed bitterly when he read the prince's billet.

'Eviot,' he said, 'man a stout boat with six trusty men,—trusty men, mark me,—lose not a moment; and bid Dwining instantly come hither.—Heaven smiles on us, my trusty friend,' he said to the mediciner. 'I was but beating my brains how to get access to this fickle boy, and here he sends to invite me.'

'Hem!—I see the matter very clearly,' said Dwining. 'Heaven smiles on some untoward consequences—he! he! he!'

'No matter, the trap is ready, and it is baited, too, my friend, with what would lure the boy from a sanctuary, though a troop with drawn weapons waited him in the churchyard. Yet it is scarce necessary. His own weariness of himself would have done the job. Get thy matters ready—thou goest with us. Write to him, as I cannot, that we come instantly to attend his commands, and do it clerkly. He reads well, and that he owes to me.'

'He will be your valiancy's debtor for more knowledge before he dies—he! he! he! But is your bargain sure with the Duke of Albany?'

'Enough to gratify my ambition, thy avarice, and the revenge of both. Aboard, aboard, and speedily; let Eviot throw in a few flasks of the choicest wine, and some cold baked meats.'

'But your arm, my lord, Sir John? Does it not pain you?'

'The throbbing of my heart silences the pain of my wound. It beats as it would burst my bosom.'

'Heaven forbid!' said Dwining, adding in a low voice, 'It would be a strange sight if it should. I should like to dissect it, save that its stony case would spoil my best instruments.'

In a few minutes they were in the boat, while a speedy messenger carried the note to the prince.

Rothsay was seated with the Constable, after their noontide repast. He was sullen and silent; and the earl had just asked whether it was his pleasure that the table should be cleared, when a note, delivered to the prince, changed at once his aspect.

'As you will,' he said. 'I go to the pavilion in the garden,—always with permission of my Lord Constable,—to receive my late master of the horse.'

'My lord?' said Lord Errol.

'Ay, my lord; must I ask permission twice?'

'No, surely, my lord,' answered the Constable; 'but has your Royal Highness recollected that Sir John Ramorny'——

'Has not the plague, I hope!' replied the Duke of Rothsay. 'Come, Errol, you would play the surly turnkey; but it is not in your nature,—farewell for half-an-hour.'

'A new folly!' said Errol, as the prince, flinging open a lattice of the ground parlour in which they sat, stepped out into the garden. 'A new folly, to call back that villain to his counsels. But he is infatuated.'

The prince, in the meantime, looked back, and said hastily,—

'Your lordship's good housekeeping will afford us a flask or two of wine, and a slight collation in the pavilion. I love the *al fresco* of the river.'

The Constable bowed, and gave the necessary orders; so that Sir John found the materials of good cheer ready displayed, when, landing from his barge, he entered the pavilion.

'It grieves my heart to see your Highness under restraint,' said Ramorny, with a well-executed appearance of sympathy.

'That grief of thine will grieve mine,' said the prince. 'I am sure here has Errol, and a right true-hearted lord he is, so tired me with grave looks, and something like grave lessons, that he has driven me back to thee, thou reprobate, from whom, as I expect nothing good, I may perhaps obtain something entertaining.—Yet, ere we say more, it was foul work, that upon the Fastern's Even, Ramorny. I well hope thou gavest not aim to it?'

'On my honour, my lord, a simple mistake of the brute Bonthron. I did but hint to him that a dry beating would be due to the fellow by whom I had lost a hand; and, lo you, my knave makes a double mistake. He takes one man for another, and instead of the baton he uses the axe.'

'It is well that it went no farther. Small matter for the Bonnet-maker; but I had never forgiven you had the armourer fallen. There

is not his match in Britain.—But I hope they hanged the villain high enough?'

'If thirty feet might serve,' replied Ramorny.

'Pah! no more of him,' said Rothsay; 'his wretched name makes the good wine taste of blood. — And what are the news in Perth, Ramorny?—How stands it with the bona robas and the galliards?'

'Little galliardise stirring, my lord,' answered the knight. 'All eyes are turned to the motions of the Black Douglas, who comes with five thousand chosen men to put us all to rights, as if he were bound for another Otterburn. It is said he is to be Lieutenant again. It is certain many have declared for his faction.'

'It is time, then, my feet were free,' said Rothsay, 'otherwise I may find a worse warder than Errol.'

'Ah, my lord! were you once away from this place, you might make as bold a head as Douglas.'

'Ramorny,' said the prince gravely, 'I have but a confused remembrance of your once having proposed something horrible to me. Beware of such counsel. I would be free—I would have my person at my own disposal; but I will never levy arms against my father, nor those it pleases him to trust.'

'It was only for your Royal Highness's personal freedom that I was presuming to speak,' answered Ramorny. 'Were I in your Grace's place, I would get me into that good boat which hovers on the Tay, and drop quietly down to Fife, where you have many friends, and make free to take possession of Falkland. It is a royal castle; and though the King has bestowed it in gift on your uncle, yet surely—even if the grant were not subject to challenge—your Grace might make free with the residence of so near a relative?'

'He hath made free with mine,' said the duke; 'as the Stewartry of Renfrew can tell. But stay, Ramorny—hold—Did I not hear Errol say that the Lady Marjory Douglas, whom they call Duchess of Rothsay, is at Falkland? I would neither dwell with that lady, nor insult her by dislodging her.'

'The lady was there, my lord,' replied Ramorny, 'but I have sure advice that she is gone to meet her father.'

'Ha! to animate the Douglas against me? or perhaps, to beg him to spare me, providing I come on my knees to her bed, as pilgrims say the Emirs and Amirals, upon whom a Saracen Soldan bestows a daughter in marriage, are bound to do?—Ramorny, I will act by the Douglas's own saying, "It is better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak."* I will keep both foot and hand from fetters.'

'No place fitter than Falkland,' replied Ramorny. 'I have enough of good yeomen to keep the place; and should your Highness wish to leave it, a brief ride reaches the sea in three directions.'

'You speak well. But we shall die of gloom yonder. Neither mirth, music, nor maidens—Ha!' said the heedless prince.

'Pardon me, noble Duke; but though the Lady Marjory Douglas be departed, like an errant dame in romance, to implore succour of her doughty sire, there is, I may say, a lovelier, I am sure a younger maiden, either presently at Falkland, or who will soon be on the road thither. Your Highness has not forgotten the Fair Maid of Perth?'

'Forget the prettiest wench in Scotland!—No—any more than thou hast forgotten the hand that thou hadst in the Curfew Street onslaught on Saint Valentine's Eve.'

'The hand that I *had?*—Your Highness would say the hand that I lost. As certain as I shall never regain it, Catharine Glover is, or will soon be, at Falkland. I will not flatter your Highness by saying she expects to meet you—in truth, she proposes to place herself under the protection of the Lady Marjory.'

'The little traitress,' said the prince—'she too to turn against me? She deserves punishment, Ramorny.'

'I trust your Grace will make her penance a gentle one,' replied the knight.

'Faith, I would have been her father-confessor long ago, but I have ever found her coy.'

'Opportunity was lacking, my lord,' replied Ramorny; 'and time presses even now.'

'Nay, I am but too apt for a frolic; but my father'——.

'He is personally safe,' said Ramorny, 'and as much at freedom as ever he can be; while your Highness'——

'Must brook fetters, conjugal or literal—I know it — Yonder comes Douglas with his daughter in his hand, as haughty and as harsh-featured as himself, bating touches of age.'

'And at Falkland sits in solitude the fairest wench in Scotland,' said Ramorny. 'Here is penance and restraint; yonder is joy and freedom.'

'Thou hast prevailed, most sage counsellor,' replied Rothsay; 'but mark you, it shall be the last of my frolics.'

'I trust so,' replied Ramorny; 'for, when at liberty, you may make a good accommodation with your royal father.'

'I will write to him, Ramorny — Get the writing materials—No, I cannot put my thoughts in words—do thou write.'

'Your Royal Highness forgets,' said Ramorny, pointing to his mutilated arm.

'Ah! that cursed hand of yours. What can we do?'

'So please your Highness,' answered his counsellor, 'if you would use the hand of the mediciner Dwining—he writes like a clerk.'

'Hath he a hint of the circumstances? Is he possessed of them?'

'Fully,' said Ramorny; and, stepping to the window, he called Dwining from the boat.

He entered the presence of the Prince of Scotland, creeping as if he trod upon eggs, with downcast eyes, and a frame that seemed shrunk up by a sense of awe produced by the occasion.

'There, fellow, are writing materials. I will make trial of you—thou knowest the case—place my conduct to my father in a fair light.'

Dwining sat down, and in a few minutes

* Implying, that it was better to keep the forest than shut themselves up in fortified places.

wrote a letter, which he handed to Sir John Ramorny.

'Why, the devil has aided thee, Dwining,' said the knight.—'Listen, my dear lord.—"Respected father and liege sovereign—Know that important considerations induce me to take my departure from this your court, purposing to make my abode at Falkland, both as the seat of my dearest uncle Albany, with whom I know your Majesty would desire me to use all familiarity, and as the residence of one from whom I have been too long estranged, and with whom I haste to exchange vows of the closest affection from henceforward.'

The Duke of Rothsay and Ramorny laughed aloud; and the physician, who had listened to his own scroll as if it were a sentence of death, encouraged by their applause, raised his eyes, uttered faintly his chuckling note of He! he! and was again grave and silent, as if afraid he had transgressed the bounds of reverent respect.

'Admirable!' said the prince—'Admirable! The old man will apply all this to the Duchess, as they call her, of Rothsay.—Dwining, thou shouldst be *a secretis* to his Holiness the Pope, who sometimes, it is said, wants a scribe that can make one word record two meanings. I will subscribe it, and have the praise of the device.'

'And now, my lord,' said Ramorny, sealing the letter, and leaving it behind, 'will you not to boat?'

'Not till my chamberlain attends, with some clothes and necessaries—and you may call my sewer also.'

'My lord,' said Ramorny, 'time presses, and preparation will but excite suspicion. Your officers will follow with the mails to-morrow. For to-night, I trust my poor service may suffice to wait on you at table and chamber.'

'Nay, this time it is thou who forgets,' said the prince, touching the wounded arm with his walking rod. 'Recollect, man, thou canst neither carve a capon nor tie a point—a goodly sewer, or valet of the mouth!'

Ramorny grinned with rage and pain; for his wound, though in a way of healing, was still highly sensitive, and even the pointing a finger towards it made him tremble.

'Will your Highness now be pleased to take boat?'

'Not till I take leave of the Lord Constable. Rothsay must not slip away, like a thief from a prison, from the house of Errol. Summon him hither.'

'My lord Duke,' said Ramorny, 'it may be dangerous to our plan.'

'To the devil with danger, thy plan, and thyself!—I must and will act to Errol as becomes us both.'

The earl entered, agreeably to the prince's summons.

'I gave you this trouble, my lord,' said Rothsay, with the dignified courtesy which he knew so well how to assume, 'to thank you for your hospitality and your good company. I can enjoy them no longer, as pressing affairs call me to Falkland.'

'My lord,' said the Lord High Constable, 'I trust your Grace remembers that you are under ward.'

'How!—under ward? If I am a prisoner, speak plainly—if not, I will take my freedom to depart.'

'I would, my lord, your Highness would request his Majesty's permission for this journey. There will be much displeasure.'

'Mean you displeasure against yourself, my lord, or against me?'

'I have already said your Highness lies in ward here; but if you determine to break it, I have no warrant—God forbid—to put force on your inclinations. I can but entreat your Highness, for your own sake'——

'Of my own interests I am the best judge—Good evening to you, my lord.'

The wilful prince stepped into the boat with Dwining and Ramorny, and, waiting for no other attendance, Eviot pushed off the vessel, which descended the Tay rapidly by the assistance of sail and oar, and of the ebb-tide.

For some space the Duke of Rothsay appeared silent and moody, nor did his companions interrupt his reflections. He raised his head at length, and said, 'My father loves a jest, and when all is over, he will take this frolic at no more serious rate than it deserves—a fit of youth, with which he will deal as he has with others.—Yonder, my masters, shows the old hold of Kinfauns, frowning above the Tay. Now tell me, John Ramorny, how thou hast dealt to get the Fair Maid of Perth out of the hands of yonder bull-headed Provost; for Errol told me it was rumoured that she was under his protection.'

'Truly she was, my lord, with the purpose of being transferred to the patronage of the Duchess—I mean of the Lady Marjory of Douglas. Now, this beetle-headed Provost, who is after all but a piece of blundering valiancy, has, like most such, a retainer of some slyness and cunning, whom he uses in all his dealings, and whose suggestions he generally considers as his own ideas. Whenever I would possess myself of a landward baron, I address myself to such a confidant, who, in the present case, is called Kitt Henshaw, an old skipper upon the Tay, and who, having in his time sailed as far as Campvere,* holds with Sir Patrick Charteris the respect due to one who has seen foreign countries. This his agent I have made my own; and by his means have insinuated various apologies, in order to postpone the departure of Catharine for Falkland.'

'But to what good purpose?'

'I know not if it is wise to tell your Highness, lest you should disapprove of my views.—I meant the officers of the Commission for Inquiry into Heretical Opinions should have found the Fair Maid at Kinfauns,—for our beauty is a peevish, self-willed swerver from the Church,—and, certes, I designed that the knight should have come in for his share of the fines and confiscations that were about to be inflicted. The monks were eager enough to be at him, seeing he hath had frequent disputes with them about the salmon-tithe.'

'But wherefore wouldst thou have ruined the knight's fortunes, and brought the beautiful young woman to the stake, perchance?'

* [A town on the Dutch island of Walcheren; from 1444 to 1795 it was the seat of a Scotch factory or merchant depot.]

'Pshaw, my lord Duke!—monks never burn pretty maidens. An old woman might have been in some danger; and as for my Lord Provost, as they call him, if they had clipped off some of his fat acres, it would have been some atonement for the needless brave he put on me in Saint John's Church.'

'Methinks, John, it was but a base revenge,' said Rothsay.

'Rest ye contented, my lord. He that cannot right himself by the hand, must use his head.—Well, that chance was over by the tender-hearted Douglas's declaring in favour of tender conscience; and then, my lord, old Henshaw found no further objections to carrying the Fair Maid of Perth to Falkland,—not to share the dulness of the Lady Marjory's society, as Sir Patrick Charteris and she herself doth opine, but to keep your Highness from tiring when we return from hunting in the park.'

There was again a long pause, in which the prince seemed to muse deeply. At length he spoke.—'Ramorny, I have a scruple in this matter; but if I name it to thee, the devil of sophistry, with which thou art possessed, will argue it out of me, as it has done many others. This girl is the most beautiful, one excepted, whom I ever saw or knew, and I like her the more that she bears some features of—Elizabeth of Dunbar. But she, I mean Catharine Glover, is contracted, and presently to be wedded, to Henry the armourer, a craftsman unequalled for skill, and a man-at-arms yet unmatched in the barrace. To follow out this intrigue would do a good fellow too much wrong.'

'Your Highness will not expect me to be very solicitous of Henry Smith's interest,' said Ramorny, looking at his wounded arm.

'By Saint Andrew with his shored cross, this disaster of thine is too much harped upon, John Ramorny! Others are content with putting a finger into every man's pie, but thou must thrust in thy whole gory hand. It is done, and cannot be undone—let it be forgotten.'

'Nay, my lord, you allude to it more frequently than I,' answered the knight,—'in derision, it is true; while I—but I can be silent on the subject if I cannot forget it.'

'Well, then, I tell thee that I have scruple about this intrigue. Dost thou remember when we went in a frolic to hear Father Clement preach, or rather to see this fair heretic, that he spoke as touchingly as a minstrel about the rich man taking away the poor man's only ewe-lamb?

'A great matter, indeed,' answered Sir John, 'that this churl's wife's eldest son should be fathered by the Prince of Scotland! How many earls would covet the like fate for their fair countesses? and how many that have had such good luck sleep not a grain the worse for it?'

'And if I might presume to speak,' said the mediciner, 'the ancient laws of Scotland assigned such a privilege to every feudal lord over his female vassals, though lack of spirit and love of money hath made many exchange it for gold.'

'I require no argument to urge me to be kind to a pretty woman; but this Catharine has been ever cold to me,' said the prince.

'Nay, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'if, young, handsome, and a prince, you know not how to make yourself acceptable to a fine woman, it is not for me to say more.'

'And if it were not far too great audacity in me to speak again, I would say,' quoth the leech, 'that all Perth knows that the *Gow Chrom* never was the maiden's choice, but fairly forced upon her by her father. I know for certain that she refused him repeatedly.'

'Nay, if thou canst assure us of that, the case is much altered,' said Rothsay. 'Vulcan was a smith as well as Harry Wynd; he would needs wed Venus, and our chronicles tell us what came of it.'

'Then long may Lady Venus live and be worshipped!' said Sir John Ramorny; 'and success to the gallant knight Mars, who goes a wooing to her goddess-ship!'

The discourse took a gay and idle turn for a few minutes; but the Duke of Rothsay soon dropped it. 'I have left,' he said, 'yonder air of the prison-house behind me, and yet my spirits scarce revive. I feel that drowsy, not unpleasing, yet melancholy mood, that comes over us when exhausted by exercise, or satiated with pleasure. Some music now, stealing on the ear, yet not loud enough to make us lift the eye, were a treat for the gods.'

'Your Grace has but to speak your wishes, and the nymphs of the Tay are as favourable as the fair ones upon the shore.—Hark—it is a lute.'

'A lute!' said the Duke of Rothsay, listening; 'it is, and rarely touched. I should remember that dying fall. Steer towards the boat from whence the music comes.'

'It is old Henshaw,' said Ramorny, 'working up the stream.—How, skipper!'

The boatman answered the hail, and drew up alongside of the prince's barge.

'O ho! my old friend!' said the prince, recognising the figure as well as the appointments of the French glee-woman Louise. 'I think I owe thee something for being the means of thy having a fright, at least, upon Saint Valentine's Day. Into this boat with thee, lute, puppy dog, scrip and all—I will prefer thee to a lady's service, who shall feed thy very cur on capons and canary.'

'I trust your Highness will consider'——said Ramorny.

'I will consider nothing but my pleasure, John. Pray, do thou be so complying as to consider it also.'

'Is it indeed to a lady's service you would promote me?' said the glee-maiden. 'And where does she dwell?'

'At Falkland,' answered the prince.

'O, I have heard of that great lady!' said Louise; 'and will you indeed prefer me to your right royal consort's service?'

'I will, by my honour—whenever I receive her as such—Mark that reservation, John,' said he aside to Ramorny.

The persons who were in the boat caught up the tidings, and, concluding a reconciliation was about to take place betwixt the royal couple, exhorted Louise to profit by her good fortune, and add herself to the Duchess of Rothsay's train.

Several offered her some acknowledgment for the exercise of her talents.

During this moment of delay, Ramorny whispered to Dwining, 'Make in, knave, with some objection. This addition is one too many. Rouse thy wits, while I speak a word with Henshaw.'

'If I might presume to speak,' said Dwining, 'as one who have made my studies both in Spain and Arabia, I would say, my lord, that the sickness has appeared in Edinburgh, and that there may be risk in admitting this young wanderer into your Highness's vicinity.'

'Ah! and what is it to thee,' said Rothsay, 'whether I choose to be poisoned by the pestilence or the pothecary? Must thou too needs thwart my humour?'

While the prince thus silenced the remonstrances of Dwining, Sir John Ramorny had snatched a moment to learn from Henshaw that the removal of the Duchess of Rothsay from Falkland was still kept profoundly secret, and that Catharine Glover would arrive there that evening or the next morning, in expectation of being taken under the noble lady's protection.

The Duke of Rothsay, deeply plunged in thought, received this intimation so coldly, that Ramorny took the liberty of remonstrating. 'This, my lord,' he said, 'is playing the spoiled child of fortune. You wish for liberty—it comes. You wish for beauty—it awaits you, with just so much delay as to render the boon more precious. Even your slightest desires seem a law to the Fates; for you desire music when it seems most distant, and the lute and song are at your hand. These things, so sent, should be enjoyed, else we are but like petted children, who break and throw from them the toys they have wept themselves sick for.'

'To enjoy pleasure, Ramorny,' said the prince, 'a man should have suffered pain, as it requires fasting to gain a good appetite. We who can have all for a wish, little enjoy that all when we have possessed it. Seest thou yonder thick cloud, which is about to burst to rain? It seems to stifle me—the waters look dark and lurid—the shores have lost their beautiful form'——

'My lord, forgive your servant,' said Ramorny. 'You indulge a powerful imagination, as an unskilful horseman permits a fiery steed to rear until he falls back on his master and crushes him. I pray you shake off this lethargy. Shall the glee-maiden make some music?'

'Let her—but it must be melancholy; all mirth would at this moment jar on my ear.'

The maiden sung a melancholy dirge in Norman-French; the words, of which the following is an imitation, were united to a tune as doleful as they are themselves.

1.

Yes, thou mayst sigh,
And look once more at all around,
At stream and bank, and sky and ground;
Thy life its final course has found,
And thou must die.

2.

Yes, lay thee down,
And while thy struggling pulses flutter,
Bid the grey monk his soul-mass mutter,
And the deep bell its death-tone utter—
Thy life is gone.

3.

Be not afraid,
'Tis but a pang, and then a thrill,
A fever fit, and then a chill;
And then an end of human ill,
For thou art dead.

The prince made no observation on the music; and the maiden, at Ramorny's beck, went on from time to time with her minstrel craft, until the evening sunk down into rain, first soft and gentle, at length in great quantities, and accompanied by a cold wind. There was neither cloak nor covering for the prince, and he sullenly rejected that which Ramorny offered.

'It is not for Rothsay to wear your cast garments, Sir John—this melted snow, which I feel pierce me to the very marrow, I am now encountering by your fault. Why did you presume to put off the boat without my servants and apparel?'

Ramorny did not attempt an exculpation; for he knew the prince was in one of those humours, when to enlarge upon a grievance was more pleasing to him than to have his mouth stopped by any reasonable apology. In sullen silence, or amid unsuppressed chiding, the boat arrived at the fishing village of Newburgh. The party landed, and found horses in readiness, which indeed Ramorny had long since provided for the occasion. Their quality underwent the prince's bitter sarcasm, expressed to Ramorny sometimes by direct words, oftener by bitter gibes. At length they were mounted, and rode on through the closing night and the falling rain, the prince leading the way with reckless haste. The glee-maiden, mounted by his express order, attended them; and well for her that, accustomed to severe weather, and exercise both on foot and horseback, she supported as firmly as the men the fatigues of the nocturnal ride. Ramorny was compelled to keep at the prince's rein, being under no small anxiety lest, in his wayward fit, he might ride off from him entirely, and, taking refuge in the house of some loyal baron, escape the snare which was spread for him. He therefore suffered inexpressibly during the ride, both in mind and in body.

At length the forest of Falkland received them, and a glimpse of the moon showed the dark and huge tower, an appendage of royalty itself, though granted for a season to the Duke of Albany. On a signal given the drawbridge fell. Torches glared in the court-yard, menials attended, and the prince, assisted from horseback, was ushered into an apartment, where Ramorny waited on him, together with Dwining, and entreated him to take the leech's advice. The Duke of Rothsay repulsed the proposal, haughtily ordered his bed to be prepared, and, having stood for some time shivering in his dank garments, beside a large blazing fire, he retired to his apartment without taking leave of any one.

'You see the peevish humour of this childish boy, now,' said Ramorny to Dwining; 'can you wonder that a servant who has done so much for him as I have, should be tired of such a master?'

'No, truly,' said Dwining; 'that and the promised Earldom of Lindores would shake any man's fidelity. But shall we commence with

him this evening? He has, if eye and cheek speak true, the foundation of a fever within him, which will make our work easy, while it will seem the effect of nature.'

'It is an opportunity lost,' said Ramorny; 'but we must delay our blow till he has seen this beauty, Catharine Glover. She may be hereafter a witness that she saw him in good health, and master of his own motions, a brief space before—you understand me?'

Dwining nodded assent, and added,

'There is no time lost; for there is little difficulty in blighting a flower, exhausted from having been made to bloom too soon.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
Few earthly things found favour in his sight,
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.
BYRON.

WITH the next morning the humour of the Duke of Rothsay was changed. He complained, indeed, of pain and fever, but they rather seemed to stimulate than to overwhelm him. He was familiar with Ramorny; and though he said nothing on the subject of the preceding night, it was plain he remembered what he desired to obliterate from the memory of his followers—the ill-humour he had then displayed. He was civil to every one, and jested with Ramorny on the subject of Catharine's arrival.

'How surprised will the pretty prude be at seeing herself in a family of men, when she expects to be admitted amongst the hoods and pinners of Dame Marjory's waiting-women! Thou hast not many of the tender sex in thy household, I take it, Ramorny?'

'Faith, none—except the minstrel wench—but a household drudge or two whom we may not dispense with. By the way, she is anxiously inquiring after the mistress your Highness promised to prefer her to.—Shall I dismiss her, to hunt for her new mistress at leisure?'

'By no means; she will serve to amuse Catharine.—And hark you, were it not well to receive that coy jillet with something of a mumming?'

'How mean you, my lord?'

'Thou art dull, man.—We will not disappoint her, since she expects to find the Duchess of Rothsay—I will be Duke and Duchess in my own person.'

'Still I do not comprehend.'

'No one so dull as a wit,' said the prince, 'when he does not hit off the scent at once.—My Duchess, as they call her, has been in as great a hurry to run away from Falkland, as I to come hither. We have both left our apparel behind. There is as much female trumpery in the wardrobe adjoining to my sleeping-room as would equip a whole carnival. Look you, I will play Dame Marjory, disposed on this day-bed here, with a mourning veil and a wreath of willow, to show my forsaken plight; thou, John, wilt look starch and stiff enough for her Galwegian maid of honour, the Countess Hermigild; and Dwining shall present the old Hecate, her nurse,—only she hath more beard on her upper lip than Dwining on his whole face, and skull to boot. He should have the commodity of a beard to set her forth conformably. Get thy kitchen drudges, and what passable pages thou hast with thee, to make my women of the bedroom. Hearest thou?—about it instantly.'

Ramorny hasted into the anteroom, and told Dwining the prince's device.

'Do thou look to humour the fool,' he said; 'I care not how little I see him, knowing what is to be done.'

'Trust all to me,' said the physician, shrugging his shoulders. 'What sort of a butcher is he that can cut the lamb's throat, yet is afraid to hear it bleat?'

'Tush, fear not my constancy.—I cannot forget that he would have cast me into the cloister with as little regard as if he threw away the truncheon of a broken lance. Begone—yet stay—ere you go to arrange this silly pageant, something must be settled to impose on the thick-witted Charteris. He is like enough, should he be left in the belief that the Duchess of Rothsay is still here, and Catharine Glover in attendance on her, to come down with offers of service, and the like, when, as I need scarce tell thee, his presence would be inconvenient. Indeed, this is the more likely, that some folk have given a warmer name to the iron-headed knight's great and tender patronage of this damsel.'

'With that hint, let me alone to deal with him. I will send him such a letter, that, for this month, he shall hold himself as ready for a journey to hell as to Falkland.—Can you tell me the name of the Duchess's confessor?'

'Waltheof, a grey friar.'

'Enough—then here I start.'

In a few minutes, for he was a clerk of rare celerity, Dwining finished a letter, which he placed in Ramorny's hand.

'This is admirable, and would have made thy fortune with Rothsay—I think I should have been too jealous to trust thee in his household, save that his day is closed.'

'Read it aloud,' said Dwining, 'that we may judge if it goes trippingly off;' and Ramorny read as follows:—'By command of our high and mighty Princess Marjory, Duchess of Rothsay, and so forth, we, Waltheof, unworthy brother of the order of Saint Francis, do thee, Sir Patrick Charteris, Knight of Kinfauns, to know, that her Highness marvels much at the temerity with which you have sent to her presence a woman, of whose fame she can judge but lightly, seeing she hath made her abode, without any necessity, for more than a week in thine own castle, without company of any other female, saving menials; of which foul cohabitation the savour is gone up through Fife, Angus, and Perthshire. Nevertheless, her Highness, considering the case as one of human frailty, hath not caused this wanton one to be scourged with nettles, or otherwise to dree penance; but as two good brethren of the convent of Lindores, the Fathers Thickscull and Dundermore, have been summoned up to the Highlands upon an especial call,

her Highness hath committed to their care this maiden Catharine, with charge to convey her to her father, whom she states to be residing beside Loch Tay, under whose protection she will find a situation more fitting her qualities and habits than the Castle of Falkland, while her Highness the Duchess of Rothsay abides there. She hath charged the said reverend brothers so to deal with the young woman, as may give her a sense of the sin of incontinence, and she commendeth thee to confession and penitence. — Signed, Waltheof, by command of an high and mighty Princess'—and so forth.

When he had finished, 'Excellent—excellent!' Ramorny exclaimed. 'This unexpected rebuff will drive Charteris mad! He hath been long making a sort of homage to this lady, and to find himself suspected of incontinence, when he was expecting the full credit of a charitable action, will altogether confound him; and, as thou say'st, it will be long enough ere he come hither to look after the damsel, or do honour to the dame.—But away to thy pageant, while I prepare that which shall close the pageant for ever.'

It was an hour before noon, when Catharine, escorted by old Henshaw and a groom of the Knight of Kinfauns, arrived before the lordly tower of Falkland. The broad banner which was displayed from it bore the arms of Rothsay, the servants who appeared wore the colours of the prince's household, all confirming the general belief that the duchess still resided there. Catharine's heart throbbed, for she had heard that the duchess had the pride as well as the high courage of the house of Douglas, and felt uncertain touching the reception she was to experience. On entering the castle, she observed that the train was smaller than she had expected, but, as the duchess lived in close retirement, she was little surprised at this. In a species of anteroom she was met by a little old woman, who seemed bent double with age, and supported herself upon an ebony staff.

'Truly thou art welcome, fair daughter,' said she, saluting Catharine, 'and, as I may say, to an afflicted house; and I trust' (once more saluting her) 'thou wilt be a consolation to my precious and right royal daughter the Duchess. Sit thee down, my child, till I see whether my lady be at leisure to receive thee. Ah, my child, thou art very lovely indeed, if Our Lady hath given to thee a soul to match with so fair a body.'

With that the counterfeit old woman crept into the next apartment, where she found Rothsay in the masquerading habit he had prepared, and Ramorny, who had evaded taking part in the pageant, in his ordinary attire.

'Thou art a precious rascal, Sir Doctor,' said the prince; 'by my honour, I think thou couldst find in thy heart to play out the whole play thyself, lover's part and all.'

'If it were to save your Highness trouble,' said the leech, with his usual subdued laugh.

'No, no,' said Rothsay, 'I'll never need thy help, man;—and tell me now, how look I, thus disposed on the couch—languishing and ladylike, ha?'

'Something too fine-complexioned and soft-featured for the Lady Marjory of Douglas, if I may presume to say so,' said the leech.

'Away, villain, and marshal in this fair frost-piece—fear not she will complain of my effeminacy—and thou, Ramorny, away also.'

As the knight left the apartment by one door, the fictitious old woman ushered in Catharine Glover by another. The room had been carefully darkened to twilight, so that Catharine saw the apparently female figure stretched on the couch without the least suspicion.

'Is that the maiden?' asked Rothsay, in a voice naturally sweet, and now carefully modulated to a whispering tone—'Let her approach, Griselda, and kiss our hand.'

The supposed nurse led the trembling maiden forward to the side of the couch, and signed to her to kneel. Catharine did so, and kissed with much devotion and simplicity the gloved hand which the counterfeit duchess extended to her.

'Be not afraid,' said the same musical voice; 'in me you only see a melancholy example of the vanity of human greatness—happy those, my child, whose rank places them beneath the storms of state.'

While he spoke, he put his arms around Catharine's neck and drew her towards him, as if to salute her in token of welcome. But the kiss was bestowed with an earnestness which so much overacted the part of the fair patroness, that Catharine, concluding the duchess had lost her senses, screamed aloud.

'Peace, fool! it is I—David of Rothsay.'

Catharine looked around her—the nurse was gone, and the duke tearing off his veil, she saw herself in the power of a daring young libertine.

'Now be present with me, Heaven!' she said; 'and thou wilt, if I forsake not myself.'

As this resolution darted through her mind, she repressed her disposition to scream, and, as far as she might, strove to conceal her fear.

'The jest hath been played,' she said, with as much firmness as she could assume; 'may I entreat that your Highness will now unhand me?' for he still kept hold of her arm.

'Nay, my pretty captive, struggle not—why should you fear?'

'I do not struggle, my lord. As you are pleased to detain me, I will not, by striving, provoke you to use me ill, and give pain to yourself, when you have time to think.'

'Why, thou traitress, thou hast held me captive for months,' said the prince; 'and wilt thou not let me hold thee for a moment?'

'This were gallantry, my lord, were it in the streets of Perth, where I might listen or escape as I listed—it is tyranny here.'

'And if I did let thee go, whither wouldst thou fly?' said Rothsay. 'The bridges are up—the portcullis down—and the men who follow me are strangely deaf to a peevish maiden's squalls. Be kind, therefore, and you shall know what it is to oblige a prince.'

'Unloose me, then, my lord, and hear me appeal from thyself to thyself—from Rothsay to the Prince of Scotland.—I am the daughter of an humble but honest citizen. I am, I may well-nigh say, the spouse of a brave and honest man. If I have given your Highness any encouragement for what you have done, it has

been unintentional. Thus forewarned, I entreat you to forego your power over me, and suffer me to depart. Your Highness can obtain nothing from me, save by means equally unworthy of knighthood or manhood.'

'You are bold, Catharine,' said the prince, 'but neither as a knight nor a man can I avoid accepting a defiance. I must teach you the risk of such challenges.'

While he spoke, he attempted to throw his arms again around her; but she eluded his grasp, and proceeded in the same tone of firm decision.

'My strength, my lord, is as great to defend myself in an honourable strife, as yours can be to assail me with a most dishonourable purpose. Do not shame yourself and me by putting it to the combat. You may stun me with blows, or you may call aid to overpower me; but, otherwise, you will fail of your purpose.'

'What a brute you would make me!' said the prince. 'The force I would use is no more than excuses women in yielding to their own weakness.'

He sat down in some emotion.

'Then keep it,' said Catharine, 'for those women who desire such an excuse. My resistance is that of the most determined mind, which love of honour and fear of shame ever inspired. Alas! my lord, could you succeed, you would but break every bond between me and life—between yourself and honour. I have been trained fraudulently here, by what decoys I know not; but were I to go dishonoured hence, it would be to denounce the destroyer of my happiness to every quarter of Europe. I would take the palmer's staff in my hand, and wherever chivalry is honoured, or the word Scotland has been heard, I would proclaim the heir of a hundred kings, the son of the godly Robert Stuart, the heir of the heroic Bruce—a truthless, faithless man, unworthy of the crown he expects, and of the spurs he wears. Every lady in wide Europe would hold your name too foul for her lips—every worthy knight would hold you a baffled, forsworn caitiff, false to the first vow of arms, the protection of woman, and the defence of the feeble.'

Rothsay resumed his seat, and looked at her with a countenance in which resentment was mingled with admiration. 'You forget to whom you speak, maiden. Know, the distinction I have offered you is one for which hundreds, whose trains you are born to bear, would feel gratitude.'

'Once more, my lord,' resumed Catharine, 'keep these favours for those by whom they are prized; or rather reserve your time and your health for other and nobler pursuits—for the defence of your country and the happiness of your subjects. Alas, my lord! how willingly would an exulting people receive you for their chief!—How gladly would they close around you, did you show desire to head them against the oppression of the mighty, the violence of the lawless, the seduction of the vicious, and the tyranny of the hypocrite!'

The Duke of Rothsay, whose virtuous feelings were as easily excited as they were evanescent, was affected by the enthusiasm with which she spoke. 'Forgive me, if I have alarmed you, maiden,' he said; 'thou art too noble-minded to be the toy of passing pleasure, for which my mistake destined thee; and I, even were thy birth worthy of thy noble spirit and transcendent beauty, have no heart to give thee; for by the homage of the heart only should such as thou be wooed. But my hopes have been blighted, Catharine — the only woman I ever loved has been torn from me in the very wantonness of policy, and a wife imposed on me whom I must ever detest, even had she the loveliness and softness which alone can render a woman amiable in my eyes. My health is fading even in early youth; and all that is left for me is to snatch such flowers as the short passage from life to the grave will now present. Look at my hectic cheek—feel, if you will, my intermitting pulse; and pity me, and excuse me, if I, whose rights as a prince and as a man have been trampled upon and usurped, feel occasional indifference towards the rights of others, and indulge a selfish desire to gratify the wish of the passing moment.'

'O, my lord!' exclaimed Catharine, with the enthusiasm which belonged to her character —'I will call you my dear lord,—for dear must the Heir of Bruce be to every child of Scotland,—let me not, I pray, hear you speak thus! Your glorious ancestor endured exile, persecution, the night of famine, and the day of unequal combat, to free his country,—do you practise the like self-denial to free yourself. Tear yourself from those who find their own way to greatness smoothed by feeding your follies. Distrust you dark Ramorny!—You know it not, I am sure—you could not know;—but the wretch who could urge the daughter to courses of shame by threatening the life of the aged father, is capable of all that is vile—all that is treacherous!'

'Did Ramorny do this?' said the prince.

'He did indeed, my lord, and he dares not deny it.'

'It shall be looked to,' answered the Duke of Rothsay. 'I have ceased to love him; but he has suffered much for my sake, and I must see his services honourably requited.'

'*His* services!—O, my lord, if chronicles speak true, such services brought Troy to ruins, and gave the infidels possession of Spain.'

'Hush, maiden; speak within compass, I pray you,' said the prince, rising up. 'Our conference ends here.'

'Yet one word, my lord Duke of Rothsay,' said Catharine, with animation, while her beautiful countenance resembled that of an admonitory angel—'I cannot tell what impels me to speak thus boldly; but the fire burns within me, and will break out. Leave this castle without an hour's delay! the air is unwholesome for you. Dismiss this Ramorny before the day is ten minutes older; his company is most dangerous.'

'What reason have you for saying this?'

'None in especial,' answered Catharine, abashed at her own eagerness,—'none, perhaps, excepting my fears for your safety.'

'To vague fears the Heir of Bruce must not listen.—What ho! who waits without?'

Ramorny entered, and bowed low to the duke and to the maiden, whom, perhaps, he considered as likely to be preferred to the post of favourite sultana, and therefore entitled to a courteous obeisance.

'Ramorny,' said the prince, 'is there in the household any female of reputation, who is fit to wait on this young woman, till we can send her where she may desire to go?'

'I fear,' replied Ramorny, 'if it displease not your Highness to hear the truth, your household is indifferently provided in that way; and that, to speak the very verity, the glee-maiden is the most decorous amongst us.'

'Let her wait upon this young person, then, since better may not be. And take patience, maiden, for a few hours.'

Catharine retired.

'So, my lord,—part you so soon from the Fair Maid of Perth? This is indeed the very wantonness of victory.'

'There is neither victory nor defeat in the case,' returned the prince dryly. 'The girl loves me not; nor do I love her well enough to torment myself concerning her scruples.'

'The chaste Malcolm the Maiden revived in one of his descendants!' said Ramorny.

'Favour me, sir, by a truce to your wit, or by choosing a different subject for its career. It is noon, I believe, and you will oblige me by commanding them to serve up dinner.'

Ramorny left the room, but Rothsay thought he discovered a smile upon his countenance; and to be the subject of this man's satire, gave him no ordinary degree of pain. He summoned, however, the knight to his table, and even admitted Dwining to the same honour. The conversation was of a lively and dissolute cast, a tone encouraged by the prince, as if designing to counterbalance the gravity of his morals in the morning, which Ramorny, who was read in old chronicles, had the boldness to liken to the continence of Scipio.

The banquet, notwithstanding the duke's indifferent health, was protracted in idle wantonness far beyond the rules of temperance; and, whether owing simply to the strength of the wine which he drank, or the weakness of his constitution, or, as it is probable, because the last wine which he quaffed had been adulterated by Dwining, it so happened that the prince, towards the end of the repast, fell into a lethargic sleep, from which it seemed impossible to rouse him. Sir John Ramorny and Dwining carried him to his chamber, accepting no other assistance than that of another person, whom we will afterwards give name to.

Next morning, it was announced that the prince was taken ill of an infectious disorder; and to prevent its spreading through the household, no one was admitted to wait on him save his late master of horse, the physician Dwining, and the domestic already mentioned; one of whom seemed always to remain in the apartment, while the others observed a degree of precaution respecting their intercourse with the rest of the family, so strict as to maintain the belief that he was dangerously ill of an infectious disorder.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
With good old folks; and let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages, long ago betid;
And, ere thou bid good-night, to quit their grief,
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me.
KING RICHARD II., *Act v. Scene* 1.

FAR different had been the fate of the misguided Heir of Scotland, from that which was publicly given out in the town of Falkland. His ambitious uncle had determined on his death, as the means of removing the first and most formidable barrier betwixt his own family and the throne. James, the younger son of the king, was a mere boy, who might at more leisure be easily set aside. Ramorny's views of aggrandizement, and the resentment which he had latterly entertained against his master, made him a willing agent in young Rothsay's destruction. Dwining's love of gold, and his native malignity of disposition, rendered him equally forward. It had been resolved, with the most calculating cruelty, that all means which might leave behind marks of violence were to be carefully avoided, and the extinction of life suffered to take place of itself, by privation of every kind acting upon a frail and impaired constitution. The Prince of Scotland was not to be murdered, as Ramorny had expressed himself on another occasion,—he was only to cease to exist.

Rothsay's bedchamber in the tower of Falkland was well adapted for the execution of such a horrible project. A small narrow staircase, scarce known to exist, opened from thence by a trap-door to the subterranean dungeons of the castle, through a passage by which the feudal lord was wont to visit, in private, and in disguise, the inhabitants of those miserable regions. By this staircase the villains conveyed the insensible prince to the lowest dungeon of the castle, so deep in the bowels of the earth, that no cries or groans, it was supposed, could possibly be heard, while the strength of its door and fastenings must for a long time have defied force, even if the entrance could have been discovered. Bonthron, who had been saved from the gallows for the purpose, was the willing agent of Ramorny's unparalleled cruelty to his misled and betrayed patron.

This wretch revisited the dungeon at the time when the prince's lethargy began to wear off, and when, awaking to sensation, he felt himself deadly cold, unable to move, and oppressed with fetters, which scarce permitted him to stir from the dank straw on which he was laid. His first idea was, that he was in a fearful dream—his next brought a confused augury of the truth. He called, shouted—yelled at length in frenzy,—but no assistance came, and he was only answered by the vaulted roof of the dungeon. The agent of hell heard these agonizing screams, and deliberately reckoned them against the taunts and reproaches with which Rothsay had expressed his instinctive aversion to him. When, exhausted and hopeless, the unhappy youth remained silent, the savage resolved to present himself before the eyes of his prisoner. The locks were drawn, the chain fell; the prince

raised himself as high as his fetters permitted—a red glare, against which he was fain to shut his eyes, streamed through the vault; and when he opened them again, it was on the ghastly form of one whom he had reason to think dead. He sunk back in horror. 'I am judged and condemned!' he exclaimed; 'and the most abhorred fiend in the infernal regions is sent to torment me!'

'I live, my lord,' said Bonthron; 'and that you may live and enjoy life, be pleased to sit up and eat your victuals.'

'Free me from these irons,' said the prince,—'release me from this dungeon,—and, dog as thou art, thou shalt be the richest man in Scotland.'

'If you would give me the weight of your shackles in gold,' said Bonthron, 'I would rather see the iron on you than have the treasure myself!—But look up—you were wont to love delicate fare—behold how I have catered for you.' The wretch, with fiendish glee, unfolded a piece of raw hide covering the bundle which he bore under his arm, and, passing the light to and fro before it, showed the unhappy prince a bull's head recently hewn from the trunk, and known in Scotland as the certain signal of death. He placed it at the foot of the bed, or rather lair, on which the prince lay—'Be moderate in your food,' he said; 'it is like to be long ere thou get'st another meal.'

'Tell me but one thing, wretch,' said the prince. 'Does Ramorny know of this practice?'

'How else hadst thou been decoyed hither?—Poor woodcock, thou art snared!' answered the murderer.

With these words the door shut, the bolts resounded, and the unhappy prince was left to darkness, solitude, and misery. 'O, my father!—my prophetic father!—The staff I leaned on has indeed proved a spear!'——We will not dwell on the subsequent hours, nay, days, of bodily agony and mental despair.

But it was not the pleasure of Heaven that so great a crime should be perpetrated with impunity.

Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, neglected by the other inmates, who seemed to be engaged with the tidings of the prince's illness, were, however, refused permission to leave the castle, until it should be seen how this alarming disease was to terminate, and whether it was actually an infectious sickness. Forced on each other's society, the two desolate women became companions, if not friends; and the union drew somewhat closer, when Catharine discovered that this was the same female minstrel on whose account Henry Wynd had fallen under her displeasure. She now heard his complete vindication, and listened with ardour to the praises which Louise heaped on her gallant protector. On the other hand, the minstrel, who felt the superiority of Catharine's station and character, willingly dwelt upon a theme which seemed to please her, and recorded her gratitude to the stout Smith in the little song of 'Bold and True,' which was long a favourite in Scotland.

O, Bold and True,
In bonnet blue,
That fear or falsehood never knew;
Whose heart was loyal to his word,
Whose hand was faithful to his sword—
Seek Europe wide from sea to sea,
But bonnie Blue-cap still for me!

I've seen Almain's* proud champions prance—
Have seen the gallant knights of France,
Unrivall'd with the sword and lance—
Have seen the sons of England true
Wield the brown bill, and bend the yew.
Search France the fair, and England free,
But bonnie Blue-cap still for me!

In short, though Louise's disreputable occupation would have been in other circumstances an objection to Catharine's voluntarily frequenting her company, yet, forced together as they now were, she found her an humble and accommodating companion.

They lived in this manner for four or five days, and, in order to avoid as much as possible the gaze, and perhaps the incivility, of the menials in the offices, they prepared their food in their own apartment. In the absolutely necessary intercourse with domestics, Louise, more accustomed to expedients, bolder by habit, and desirous to please Catharine, willingly took on herself the trouble of getting from the pantler the materials of their slender meal, and of arranging it with the dexterity of her country.

The glee-woman had been abroad for this purpose upon the sixth day, a little before noon; and the desire of fresh air, or the hope to find some salad or pot-herbs, or at least an early flower or two, with which to deck their board, had carried her into the small garden appertaining to the castle. She re-entered her apartment in the tower with a countenance pale as ashes, and a frame which trembled like an aspen-leaf. Her terror instantly extended herself to Catharine, who could hardly find words to ask what new misfortune had occurred.

'Is the Duke of Rothsay dead?'

'Worse! they are starving him alive.'

'Madness, woman!'

'No, no, no, no!' said Louise, speaking under her breath, and huddling her words so thick upon each other, that Catharine could hardly catch the sense. 'I was seeking for flowers to dress your pottage, because you said you loved them yesterday—my poor little dog, thrusting himself into a thicket of yew and holly bushes that grow out of some old ruins close to the castle-wall, came back whining and howling. I crept forward to see what might be the cause—and O! I heard a groaning as of one in extreme pain, but so faint, that it seemed to arise out of the very depth of the earth. At length, I found it proceeded from a small rent in the wall, covered with ivy; and when I laid my ear close to the opening, I could hear the prince's voice distinctly say,—"It cannot now last long;" and then it sunk away in something like a prayer.'

'Gracious Heaven!—did you speak to him?'

'I said, "Is it you, my lord?" and the answer was, "Who mocks me with that title?"—I asked him if I could help him, and he answered with a voice I shall never forget,—"Food!—food!—I die of famine!" So I came hither to tell you.—What is to be done!—Shall we alarm the house?'

* [Almain or Allemagne, *i.e.* Germany.]

'Alas! that were more likely to destroy than to aid him,' said Catharine.

'And what then shall we do?' said Louise.

'I know not yet,' said Catharine, prompt and bold on occasions of moment, though yielding to her companion in ingenuity of resource on ordinary occasions. 'I know not yet—but something we will do—the blood of Bruce shall not die unaided.'

So saying, she seized the small cruise which contained their soup, and the meat of which it was made, wrapped some thin cakes which she had baked into the fold of her plaid, and, beckoning her companion to follow with a vessel of milk, also part of their provisions, she hastened towards the garden.

'So, our fair vestal is stirring abroad?' said the only man she met, who was one of the menials; but Catharine passed on without notice or reply, and gained the little garden without further interruption.

Louise indicated to her a heap of ruins, which, covered with underwood, was close to the castle wall. It had probably been originally a projection from the building; and the small fissure, which communicated with the dungeon, contrived for air, had terminated within it. But the aperture had been a little enlarged by decay, and admitted a dim ray of light to its recesses, although it could not be observed by those who visited the place with torchlight aids.

'Here is dead silence,' said Catharine, after she had listened attentively for a moment.—'Heaven and earth, he is gone!'

'We must risk something,' said her companion, and ran her fingers over the strings of her guitar.

A sigh was the only answer from the depth of the dungeon. Catharine then ventured to speak. 'I am here, my lord—I am here, with food and drink.'

'Ha! Ramorny?—The jest comes too late—I am dying,' was the answer.

His brain is turned, and no wonder, thought Catharine; but whilst there is life, there may be hope.

'It is I, my lord, Catharine Glover—I have food, if I could pass it safely to you.'

'Heaven bless thee, maiden! I thought the pain was over, but it glows again within me at the name of food.'

'The food is here, but how, ah, how can I pass it to you? the chink is so narrow, the wall is so thick! Yet there is a remedy—I have it. Quick, Louise; cut me a willow bough, the tallest you can find.'

The glee-maiden obeyed, and by means of a cleft in the top of the wand, Catharine transmitted several morsels of the soft cakes, soaked in broth, which served at once for food and for drink.

The unfortunate young man ate little, and with difficulty, but prayed for a thousand blessings on the head of his comforter. 'I had destined thee to be the slave of my vices,' he said, 'and yet thou triest to become the preserver of my life! But away, and save thyself.'

'I will return with food as I shall see opportunity,' said Catharine, just as the glee-maiden plucked her sleeve, and desired her to be silent, and stand close.

Both couched among the ruins, and they heard the voices of Ramorny and the mediciner in close conversation.

'He is stronger than I thought,' said the former, in a low croaking tone. 'How long held out Dalwolsy, when the Knight of Liddesdale prisoned him in his castle of Hermitage?'

'For a fortnight,' answered Dwining; 'but he was a strong man, and had some assistance by grain which fell from a granary above his prison-house.'*

'Were it not better end the matter more speedily? The Black Douglas comes this way. He is not in Albany's secret. He will demand to see the prince, and all *must* be over ere he comes.'

They passed on in their dark and fatal conversation.

'Now gain we the tower,' said Catharine to her companion, when she saw they had left the garden. 'I had a plan of escape for myself—I will turn it into one of rescue for the prince. The dey-woman enters the castle about vesper time, and usually leaves her cloak in the passage as she goes into the pantler's office with the milk. Take thou the cloak, muffle thyself close, and pass the warder boldly; he is usually drunken at that hour, and thou wilt go, as the dey-woman, unchallenged through gate and along bridge, if thou bear thyself with confidence. Then away to meet the Black Douglas; he is our nearest and only aid.'

'But,' said Louise, 'is he not that terrible lord who threatened me with shame and punishment?'

'Believe it,' said Catharine, 'such as thou or I never dwelt an hour in the Douglas's memory, either for good or evil. Tell him that his son-in-law, the Prince of Scotland, dies—treacherously famished—in Falkland Castle, and thou wilt merit not pardon only, but reward.'

'I care not for reward,' said Louise; 'the deed will reward itself. But methinks to stay is more dangerous than to go—let me stay, then, and nourish the unhappy prince, and do you depart to bring help. If they kill me before you return, I leave you my poor lute, and pray you to be kind to my poor Charlot.'

'No, Louise,' replied Catharine, 'you are a more privileged and experienced wanderer than I—do you go—and if you find me dead on your return, as may well chance, give my poor father this ring, and a lock of my hair, and say, Catharine died in endeavouring to save the blood of Bruce. And give this other lock to Henry; say, Catharine thought of him to the last; and that if he has judged her too scrupulous touching the blood of others, he will then know it was not because she valued her own.'

They sobbed in each other's arms; and the intervening hours till evening were spent in endeavouring to devise some better mode of supplying the captive with nourishment, and in

* Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, having irritated William Douglas, Lord of Galloway, by obtaining the sheriffship of Teviotdale, which the haughty baron considered due to himself, was surprised in Hawick, while exercising his office, and confined in Hermitage Castle until he died of famine, in June, A.D. 1342. Godscroft (p. 75) mentions the circumstance of the grain dropping from the corn-loft.

the construction of a tube composed of hollow reeds, slipping into each other, by which liquids might be conveyed to him. The bell of the village church of Falkland tolled to vespers. The dey,* or farm-woman, entered with her pitchers, to deliver the milk for the family, and to hear and tell the news stirring. She had scarcely entered the kitchen, when the female minstrel, again throwing herself in Catharine's arms, and assuring her of her unalterable fidelity, crept in silence down-stairs, the little dog under her arm. A moment after she was seen by the breathless Catharine, wrapped in the dey-woman's cloak, and walking composedly across the drawbridge.

'So,' said the warder, 'you return early to-night, May Bridget? Small mirth towards in the hall—Ha, wench!—Sick times are sad times!'

'I have forgotten my tallies,' said the ready-witted Frenchwoman, 'and will return in the skimming of a bowie.' †

She went onward, avoiding the village of Falkland, and took a footpath which led through the park. Catharine breathed freely, and blessed God, when she saw her lost in the distance. It was another anxious hour for Catharine, which occurred before the escape of the fugitive was discovered. This happened so soon as the dey-girl, having taken an hour to perform a task which ten minutes might have accomplished, was about to return, and discovered that some one had taken away her grey frieze cloak. A strict search was set on foot; at length the women of the house remembered the glee-maiden, and ventured to suggest her as one not unlikely to exchange an old cloak for a new one. The warder, strictly questioned, averred he saw the dey-woman depart immediately after vespers; and, on this being contradicted by the party herself, he could suggest, as the only alternative, that it must needs have been the devil.

As, however, the glee-woman could not be found, the real circumstances of the case were easily guessed at; and the steward went to inform Sir John Ramorny and Dwining, who were now scarcely ever separate, of the escape of one of their female captives. Everything awakens the suspicions of the guilty. They looked on each other with faces of dismay, and they went together to the humble apartment of Catharine, that they might take her as much as possible by surprise, while they inquired into the facts attending Louise's disappearance.

'Where is your companion, young woman?' said Ramorny, in a tone of austere gravity.

'I have no companion here,' answered Catharine.

'Trifle not,' replied the knight; 'I mean the glee-maiden, who lately dwelt in this chamber with you.'

'She is gone, they tell me,' said Catharine, 'gone about an hour since.'

'And whither?' said Dwining.

'How,' answered Catharine, 'should I know which way a professed wanderer may choose to travel? She was tired, no doubt, of a solitary life, so different from the scenes of feasting and dancing which her trade leads her to frequent. She is gone, and the only wonder is that she should have stayed so long.'

'This, then,' said Ramorny, 'is all you have to tell us?'

'All that I have to tell you, Sir John,' answered Catharine firmly; 'and if the prince himself inquire, I can tell him no more.'

'There is little danger of his again doing you the honour to speak to you in person,' said Ramorny, 'even if Scotland should escape being rendered miserable by the sad event of his decease.'

'Is the Duke of Rothsay so very ill?' asked Catharine.

'No help, save in Heaven,' answered Ramorny, looking upward.

'Then may there yet be help there,' said Catharine, 'if human aid prove unavailing!'

'Amen!' said Ramorny, with the most determined gravity; while Dwining adopted a face fit to echo the feeling, though it seemed to cost him a painful struggle to suppress his sneering, yet soft laugh of triumph, which was peculiarly excited by anything having a religious tendency.

'And it is men—earthly men, and not incarnate devils, who thus appeal to Heaven, while they are devouring by inches the life-blood of their hapless master!' muttered Catharine, as her two baffled inquisitors left the apartment.—'Why sleeps the thunder?—But it will roll ere long, and O, may it be to preserve as well as to punish!'

The hour of dinner alone afforded a space, when, all in the castle being occupied with that meal, Catharine thought she had the best opportunity of venturing to the breach in the wall, with the least chance of being observed. In waiting for the hour, she observed some stir in the castle, which had been silent as the grave ever since the seclusion of the Duke of Rothsay. The portcullis was lowered and raised, and the creaking of the machinery was intermingled with the tramp of horse, as men-at-arms went out and returned with steeds hard-ridden and covered with foam. She observed, too, that such domestics as she casually saw from her window were in arms. All this made her heart throb high, for it augured the approach of rescue; and besides, the bustle left the little garden more lonely than ever. At length the hour of noon arrived; she had taken care to provide, under pretence of her own wishes, which the pantler seemed disposed to indulge, such articles of food as could be the most easily conveyed to the unhappy captive. She whispered to intimate her presence—there was no answer—she spoke louder, still there was silence.

'He sleeps'—she muttered these words half aloud, and with a shuddering which was succeeded by a start and a scream, when a voice replied behind her,—

'Yes, he sleeps—but it is for ever.'

She looked round—Sir John Ramorny stood behind her in complete armour, but the visor of his helmet was up, and displayed a countenance more resembling one about to die than to fight. He spoke with a grave tone, something between

* Hence, perhaps, dairy-woman and dairy.

† *i.e.* A small milk-pail.—One of the sweetest couplets in Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* is—

> To bear the milk-bowie no pain was to me,
> When I at the buchting forgather'd wi' thee,

that of a calm observer of an interesting event, and of one who is an agent and partaker in it.

'Catharine,' he said, 'all is true which I tell you. He is dead—you have done your best for him—you can do no more.'

'I will not—I cannot believe it,' said Catharine. 'Heaven be merciful to me! it would make one doubt of Providence, to think so great a crime has been accomplished.'

'Doubt not of Providence, Catharine, though it has suffered the profligate to fall by his own devices. Follow me—I have that to say which concerns you. I say follow' (for she hesitated), 'unless you prefer being left to the mercies of the brute Bonthron, and the mediciner Henbane Dwining.'

'I will follow you,' said Catharine. 'You cannot do more to me than you are permitted.'

He led the way into the tower, and mounted staircase after staircase, and ladder after ladder.

Catharine's resolution failed her. 'I will follow no farther,' she said. 'Whither would you lead me?—If to my death, I can die here.'

'Only to the battlements of the castle, fool,' said Ramorny, throwing wide a barred door which opened upon the vaulted roof of the castle, where men were bending mangonels, as they called them (military engines, that is, for throwing arrows or stones), getting ready cross-bows, and piling stones together. But the defenders did not exceed twenty in number, and Catharine thought she could observe doubt and irresolution amongst them.

'Catharine,' said Ramorny, 'I must not quit this station, which is necessary for my defence; but I can speak with you here as well as elsewhere.'

'Say on,' answered Catharine—'I am prepared to hear you.'

'You have thrust yourself, Catharine, into a bloody secret. Have you the firmness to keep it?'

'I do not understand you, Sir John,' answered the maiden.

'Look you. I have slain—murdered, if you will—my late master, the Duke of Rothsay. The spark of life which your kindness would have fed was easily smothered. His last words called on his father. You are faint—bear up—you have more to hear. You know the crime, but you know not the provocation. See! this gauntlet is empty—I lost my right hand in his cause; and when I was no longer fit to serve him, I was cast off like a worn-out hound, my loss ridiculed, and a cloister recommended, instead of the halls and palaces in which I had my natural sphere! Think on this—pity and assist me.'

'In what manner can you require my assistance?' said the trembling maiden; 'I can neither repair your loss, nor cancel your crime.'

'Thou canst be silent, Catharine, on what thou hast seen and heard in yonder thicket. It is but a brief oblivion I ask of you, whose word will, I know, be listened to, whether you say such things were or were not. That of your mountebank companion, the foreigner, none will hold to be of a pin-point's value. If you grant me this, I will take your promise for my security, and throw the gate open to those who now approach it. If you will not promise silence, I defend this castle till every one perishes, and I fling you headlong from these battlements. Ay, look at them—it is not a leap to be rashly braved. Seven courses of stairs brought you up hither, with fatigue and shortened breath; but you shall go from the top to the bottom in briefer time than you can breathe a sigh!—Speak the word, fair maid; for you speak to one unwilling to harm you, but determined in his purpose.'

Catharine stood terrified, and without power of answering a man who seemed so desperate; but she was saved the necessity of reply by the approach of Dwining. He spoke with the same humble congés which at all times distinguished his manner, and with his usual suppressed ironical sneer, which gave that manner the lie.

'I do you wrong, noble sir, to intrude on your valiancy when engaged with a fair damsel. But I come to ask a trifling question.'

'Speak, tormentor!' said Ramorny; 'ill news are sport to thee even when they affect thyself, so that they concern others also.'

'Hem!—he, he!—I only desired to know if your knighthood proposed the chivalrous task of defending the castle with your single hand—I crave pardon—I meant your single arm? The question is worth asking; for I am good for little to aid the defence, unless you could prevail on the besiegers to take physic—He! he! he!—and Bonthron is as drunk as ale and strong waters can make him—and you, he, and I, make up the whole garrison who are disposed for resistance.'

'How!—Will the other dogs not fight?' said Ramorny.

'Never saw men who showed less stomach to the work,' answered Dwining, 'never.—But here come a brace of them—*Venit extrema dies.*—He! he! he!'

Eviot and his companion Buncle now approached, with sullen resolution in their faces, like men who had made their minds up to resist that authority which they had so long obeyed.

'How now!' said Ramorny, stepping forward to meet them. 'Wherefore from your posts?—Why have you left the barbican, Eviot?—And you other fellow, did I not charge you to look to the mangonels?'

'We have something to tell you, Sir John Ramorny,' answered Eviot. 'We will not fight in this quarrel.'

'How!—my own squires control me?' exclaimed Ramorny.

'We were your squires and pages, my lord, while you were master of the Duke of Rothsay's household—It is bruited about that the Duke no longer lives—we desire to know the truth.'

'What traitor dares spread such falsehoods?' said Ramorny.

'All who have gone out to skirt the forest, my lord, and I myself among others, bring back the same news. The minstrel woman who left the castle yesterday has spread the report everywhere, that the Duke of Rothsay is murdered, or at death's door. The Douglas comes on us with a strong force'——

'And you, cowards, take advantage of an idle

report to forsake your master?' said Ramorny indignantly.

'My lord,' said Eviot, 'let Buncle and myself see the Duke of Rothsay, and receive his personal orders for defence of this castle, and if we do not fight to the death in that quarrel, I will consent to be hanged on its highest turret. But if he be gone by natural disease, we will yield up the castle to the Earl of Douglas, who is, they say, the King's Lieutenant—Or if,—which Heaven forfend!—the noble prince has had foul play, we will not involve ourselves in the guilt of using arms in defence of the murderers, be they who they will.'

'Eviot,' said Ramorny, raising his mutilated arm, 'had not that glove been empty, thou hadst not lived to utter two words of this insolence.'

'It is as it is,' answered Eviot, 'and we do but our duty. I have followed you long, my lord, but here I draw bridle.'

'Farewell, then, and a curse light on all of you!' exclaimed the incensed baron. 'Let my horse be brought forth!'

'Our valiancy is about to run away,' said the mediciner, who had crept close to Catharine's side before she was aware. 'Catharine, thou art a superstitious fool, like most women; nevertheless thou hast some mind, and I speak to thee as one of more understanding than the buffaloes which are herding about us. These haughty barons who over-stride the world, what are they in the day of adversity?—chaff before the wind. Let their sledge-hammer hands, or their column-resembling legs, have injury, and bah!—the men-at-arms are gone—heart and courage is nothing to them, lith and limb everything—give them animal strength, what are they better than furious bulls?—take that away, and your hero of chivalry lies grovelling like the brute when he is hamstrung. Not so the sage; while a grain of sense remains in a crushed or mutilated frame, his mind shall be strong as ever. Catharine, this morning I was practising your death; but methinks I now rejoice that you may survive, to tell how the poor mediciner, the pill-gilder, the mortar pounder, the poison-vender, met his fate, in company with the gallant Knight of Ramorny, Baron in possession, and Earl of Lindores in expectation.—God save his lordship!'

'Old man,' said Catharine, 'if thou be indeed so near the day of thy deserved doom, other thoughts were far wholesomer than the vain-glorious ravings of a vain philosophy.—Ask to see a holy man'——

'Yes,' said Dwining scornfully, 'refer myself to a greasy monk, who does not—he! he! he!—understand the barbarous Latin he repeats by rote. Such would be a fitting counsellor to one who has studied both in Spain and Arabia! No, Catharine, I will choose a confessor that is pleasant to look upon, and you shall be honoured with the office.—Now, look yonder at his valiancy—his eyebrow drops with moisture, his lip trembles with agony; for his valiancy—he! he! he!—is pleading for his life with his late domestics, and has not eloquence enough to persuade them to let him slip. See how the fibres of his face work as he implores the ungrateful brutes, whom he has heaped with obligations, to permit him to get such a start for his life as the hare has from the greyhounds when men course her fairly. Look also at the sullen, downcast, dogged faces, with which, fluctuating between fear and shame, the domestic traitors deny their lord this poor chance for his life. These things thought themselves the superior of a man like me! and you, foolish wench, think so meanly of your Deity, as to suppose wretches like them are the work of Omnipotence!'

'No! man of evil, no!' said Catharine warmly; 'the God I worship created these men with the attributes to know and adore him, to guard and defend their fellow-creatures, to practise holiness and virtue. Their own vices, and the temptations of the Evil One, have made them such as they now are. O, take the lesson home to thine own heart of adamant! Heaven made thee wiser than thy fellows, gave thee eyes to look into the secrets of nature, a sagacious heart, and a skilful hand; but thy pride has poisoned all these fair gifts, and made an ungodly atheist of one who might have been a Christian sage!'

'Atheist, sayst thou?' answered Dwining; 'perhaps I have doubts on that matter—but they will be soon solved. Yonder comes one who will send me, as he has done thousands, to the place where all mysteries shall be cleared.'

Catharine followed the mediciner's eye up one of the forest glades, and beheld it occupied by a body of horsemen advancing at full gallop. In the midst was a pennon displayed, which, though its bearings were not visible to Catharine, was by a murmur around acknowledged as that of the Black Douglas. They halted within arrow-shot of the castle, and a herald with two trumpets advanced up to the main portal, where, after a loud flourish, he demanded admittance for the high and dreaded Archibald, Earl of Douglas, Lord Lieutenant of the King, and acting for the time with the plenary authority of his Majesty; commanding, at the same time, that the inmates of the castle should lay down their arms, all under penalty of high treason.

'You hear?' said Eviot to Ramorny, who stood sullen and undecided. 'Will you give orders to render the castle, or must I'——

'No, villain!' interrupted the knight, 'to the last I will command you. Open the gates, drop the bridge, and render the castle to the Douglas.'

'Now, that's what may be called a gallant exertion of free will,' said Dwining. 'Just as if the pieces of brass, that were screaming a minute since, should pretend to call those notes their own, which are breathed through them by a frowsy trumpeter.'

'Wretched man!' said Catharine, 'either be silent, or turn thy thoughts to the eternity on the brink of which thou art standing.'

'And what is that to thee?' answered Dwining. 'Thou canst not, wench, help hearing what I say to thee, and thou wilt tell it again, for thy sex cannot help that either. Perth and all Scotland shall know what a man they have lost in Henbane Dwining!'

The clash of armour now announced that the new-comers had dismounted and entered the castle, and were in the act of disarming the small garrison. Earl Douglas himself appeared on the battlements, with a few of his followers, and signed to them to take Ramorny and Dwining

into custody. Others dragged from some nook the stupefied Bonthron.

'It was to these three that the custody of the prince was solely committed during his alleged illness?' said the Douglas, prosecuting an inquiry which he had commenced in the hall of the castle.

'No other saw him, my lord,' said Eviot, 'though I offered my services.'

'Conduct us to the Duke's apartment, and bring the prisoners with us.—Also, there should be a female in the castle, if she hath not been murdered or spirited away,—the companion of the glee-maiden, who brought the first alarm.'

'She is here, my lord,' said Eviot, bringing Catharine forward.

Her beauty and her agitation made some impression even upon the impassible earl.

'Fear nothing, maiden,' he said; 'thou hast deserved both praise and reward. Tell to me, as thou wouldst confess to Heaven, the things thou hast witnessed in this castle.'

Few words served Catharine to unfold the dreadful story.

'It agrees,' said the Douglas, 'with the tale of the glee-maiden, from point to point.—Now, show us the prince's apartment.'

They passed to the room which the unhappy Duke of Rothsay had been supposed to inhabit; but the key was not to be found, and the earl could only obtain entrance by forcing the door. On entering, the wasted and squalid remains of the unhappy prince were discovered, flung on the bed as if in haste. The intention of the murderers had apparently been to arrange the dead body so as to resemble a timely parted corpse, but they had been disconcerted by the alarm occasioned by the escape of Louise. Douglas looked on the body of the misguided youth, whose wild passions and caprices had brought him to this fatal and premature catastrophe—

'I had wrongs to be redressed,' he said; 'but to see such a sight as this banishes all remembrance of injury!'

'He! he!—It should have been arranged,' said Dwining, 'more to your omnipotence's pleasure; but you came suddenly on us, and hasty masters make slovenly service.'

Douglas seemed not to hear what his prisoner said, so closely did he examine the wan and wasted features and stiffened limbs of the dead body before him. Catharine, overcome by sickness and fainting, at length obtained permission to retire from the dreadful scene, and, through confusion of every description, found her way to her former apartment, where she was locked in the arms of Louise, who had returned in the interval.

The investigations of Douglas proceeded. The dying hand of the prince was found to be clenched upon a lock of hair, resembling in colour and texture the coal-black bristles of Bonthron. Thus, though famine had begun the work, it would seem that Rothsay's death had been finally accomplished by violence. The private stair to the dungeon, the keys of which were found at the subaltern assassin's belt,—the situation of the vault, its communication with the external air by the fissure in the walls, and the wretched lair of straw, with the fetters which remained there,—fully confirmed the story of Catharine and of the glee-woman.

'We will not hesitate an instant,' said the Douglas to his near kinsman, the Lord Balveny, as soon as they returned from the dungeon. 'Away with the murderers! hang them over the battlements.'

'But, my lord, some trial may be fitting,' answered Balveny.

'To what purpose?' answered Douglas. 'I have taken them red-hand;* my authority will stretch to instant execution. Yet stay—have we not some Jedwood men in our troop?'

'Plenty of Turnbulls, Rutherfords, Ainslies, and so forth,' said Balveny.

'Call me an inquest of these together; they are all good men and true, saving a little shifting for their living. Do you see to the execution of these felons, while I hold a court in the great hall, and we'll try whether the jury or the provost-marshal do their work first; we will have Jedwood justice,—hang in haste, and try at leisure.'

'Yet stay, my lord,' said Ramorny; 'you may rue your haste.—Will you grant me a word out of earshot?'

'Not for worlds,' said Douglas; 'speak out what thou hast to say before all that are here present.'

'Know all, then,' said Ramorny aloud, 'that this noble Earl had letters from the Duke of Albany and myself, sent him by the hand of yon cowardly deserter Buncle,—let him deny it if he dare,—counselling the removal of the Duke for a space from court, and his seclusion in this castle of Falkland.'

'But not a word,' replied Douglas, sternly smiling, 'of his being flung into a dungeon—famished—strangled.—Away with the wretches, Balveny; they pollute God's air too long.'

The prisoners were dragged off to the battlements. But while the means of execution were in the act of being prepared, the apothecary expressed so ardent a desire to see Catharine once more, and, as he said, for the good of his soul, that the maiden, in hopes his obduracy might have undergone some change, even at the last hour, consented again to go to the battlements, and face a scene which her heart recoiled from. A single glance showed her Bonthron, sunk in total and drunken insensibility; Ramorny, stripped of his armour, endeavouring in vain to conceal fear, while he spoke with a priest, whose good offices he had solicited; and Dwining, the same humble, obsequious-looking, crouching individual she had always known him. He held in his hand a little silver pen, with which he had been writing on a scrap of parchment.

'Catharine,' he said—'he! he! he!—I wish to speak to thee on the nature of my religious faith.'

'If such be thy intention, why lose time with me?—Speak with this good father.'

'The good father,' said Dwining, 'is—he! he!—already a worshipper of the deity whom I have served. I therefore prefer to give the altar of mine idol a new worshipper in thee, Catharine. This scrap of parchment will tell thee how to make your way into my chapel, where I have

* Note T. Red-hand.

worshipped so often in safety. I leave the images which it contains to thee as a legacy, simply because I hate and contemn thee something less than any of the absurd wretches whom I have hitherto been obliged to call fellow-creatures. And now away!—or remain and see if the end of the quacksalver belies his life.'

'Our Lady forbid!' said Catharine.

'Nay,' said the mediciner, 'I have but a single word to say, and yonder nobleman's valiancy may hear it if he will.'

Lord Balveny approached, with some curiosity; for the undaunted resolution of a man who never wielded sword or bore armour, and was in person a poor dwindled dwarf, had to him an air of something resembling sorcery.

'You see this trifling implement,' said the criminal, showing the silver pen. 'By means of this I can escape the power even of the Black Douglas.'

'Give him no ink nor paper,' said Balveny hastily; 'he will draw a spell.'

'Not so, please your wisdom and valiancy—he! he! he!'—said Dwining, with his usual chuckle, as he unscrewed the top of the pen, within which was a piece of sponge, or some such substance, no bigger than a pea. 'Now, mark this'—— said the prisoner, and drew it between his lips. The effect was instantaneous. He lay a dead corpse before them, the contemptuous sneer still on his countenance.

Catharine shrieked and fled, seeking, by a hasty descent, an escape from a sight so appalling. Lord Balveny was for a moment stupefied, and then exclaimed, 'This may be glamour! hang him over the battlements, quick or dead. If his foul spirit hath only withdrawn for a space, it shall return to a body with a dislocated neck.'

His commands were obeyed. Ramorny and Bonthron were then ordered for execution. The last was hanged before he seemed quite to comprehend what was designed to be done with him. Ramorny, pale as death, yet with the same spirit of pride which had occasioned his ruin, pleaded his knighthood, and demanded the privilege of dying by decapitation by the sword, and not by the noose.

'The Douglas never alters his doom,' said Balveny. 'But thou shalt have all thy rights.—Send the cook hither with a cleaver.' The menial whom he called appeared at his summons. 'What shakest thou for, fellow?' said Balveny; 'here, strike me this man's gilt spurs from his heels with thy cleaver—And now, John Ramorny, thou art no longer a knight, but a knave—To the halter with him, provost-marshal! hang him betwixt his companions, and higher than them if it may be.'

In a quarter of an hour afterwards, Balveny descended to tell the Douglas that the criminals were executed.

'Then there is no further use in the trial,' said the earl. 'How say you, good men of inquest, were these men guilty of high treason—ay or no?'

'Guilty,' exclaimed the obsequious inquest, with edifying unanimity; 'we need no further evidence.'

'Sound trumpets, and to horse then, with our own train only; and let each man keep silence on what has chanced here, until the proceedings shall be laid before the King, which cannot conveniently be till the battle of Palm Sunday shall be fought and ended. Select our attendants, and tell each man who either goes with us or remains behind, that he who prates dies.'

In a few minutes the Douglas was on horseback, with the followers selected to attend his person. Expresses were sent to his daughter, the widowed Duchess of Rothsay, directing her to take her course to Perth, by the shores of Lochleven, without approaching Falkland, and committing to her charge Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, as persons whose safety he tendered.

As they rode through the forest, they looked back, and beheld the three bodies hanging, like specks darkening the walls of the old castle.

'The hand is punished,' said Douglas; 'but who shall arraign the head by whose direction the act was done?'

'You mean the Duke of Albany?' said Balveny.

'I do, kinsman; and were I to listen to the dictates of my heart, I would charge him with the deed, which I am certain he has authorized. But there is no proof of it beyond strong suspicion, and Albany has attached to himself the numerous friends of the House of Stuart, to whom, indeed, the imbecility of the King, and the ill-regulated habits of Rothsay, left no other choice of a leader. Were I, therefore, to break the band which I have so lately formed with Albany, the consequence must be civil war, an event ruinous to poor Scotland, while threatened by invasion from the activity of the Percy, backed by the treachery of March. No, Balveny—the punishment of Albany must rest with Heaven, which, in its own good time, will execute judgment on him and on his house.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The hour is nigh: now hearts beat high;
Each sword is sharpen'd well:
And who dares die, who stoops to fly,
To-morrow's light shall tell.

SIR EDWALD.

WE are now to recall to our reader's recollection, that Simon Glover and his fair daughter had been hurried from their residence without having time to announce to Henry Smith, either their departure or the alarming cause of it. When, therefore, the lover appeared in Curfew Street on the morning of their flight, instead of the hearty welcome of the honest burgher, and the April reception, half joy, half censure, which he had been promised on the part of his lovely daughter, he received only the astounding intelligence that her father and she had set off early, on the summons of a stranger, who had kept himself carefully muffled from observation. To this, Dorothy, whose talents for forestalling evil, and communicating her views of it, are known to the reader, chose to add, that she had no doubt her master and young mistress were bound for the

Highlands, to avoid a visit which had been made since their departure, by two or three apparitors, who, in the name of a Commission appointed by the king, had searched the house, put seals upon such places as were supposed to contain papers, and left citations for father and daughter to appear before the Court of Commission on a day certain, under pain of outlawry. All these alarming particulars Dorothy took care to state in the gloomiest colours, and the only consolation which she afforded the alarmed lover was, that her master had charged her to tell him to reside quietly at Perth, and that he should soon hear news of them. This checked the Smith's first resolve, which was to follow them instantly to the Highlands, and partake the fate which they might encounter.

But when he recollected his repeated feuds with divers of the Clan Quhele, and particularly his personal quarrel with Conachar, who was now raised to be a high chief, he could not but think, on reflection, that his intrusion on their place of retirement was more likely to disturb the safety which they might otherwise enjoy there, than be of any service to them. He was well acquainted with Simon's habitual intimacy with the Chief of the Clan Quhele, and justly augured that the Glover would obtain protection, which his own arrival might be likely to disturb, while his personal prowess could little avail him in a quarrel with a whole tribe of vindictive mountaineers. At the same time, his heart throbbed with indignation, when he thought of Catharine being within the absolute power of young Conachar, whose rivalry he could not doubt, and who had now so many means of urging his suit. What if the young chief should make the safety of the father depend on the favour of the daughter? He distrusted not Catharine's affections; but then her mode of thinking was so disinterested, and her attachment to her father so tender, that, if the love she bore her suitor was weighed against his security, or perhaps his life, it was matter of deep and awful doubt whether it might not be found light in the balance. Tormented by thoughts on which we need not dwell, he resolved nevertheless to remain at home, stifle his anxiety as he might, and await the promised intelligence from the old man. It came, but it did not relieve his concern.

Sir Patrick Charteris had not forgotten his promise to communicate to the Smith the plans of the fugitives. But amid the bustle occasioned by the movement of troops, he could not himself convey the intelligence. He therefore entrusted to his agent, Kitt Henshaw, the task of making it known. But this worthy person, as the reader knows, was in the interest of Ramorny, whose business it was to conceal from every one, but especially from a lover so active and daring as Henry, the real place of Catharine's residence. Henshaw therefore announced to the anxious Smith that his friend the Glover was secure in the Highlands; and though he affected to be more reserved on the subject of Catharine, he said little to contradict the belief that she as well as Simon shared the protection of the Clan Quhele. But he reiterated, in the name of Sir Patrick, assurances that father and daughter were both well, and that Henry would best consult his own interest and their safety, by remaining quiet, and waiting the course of events.

With an agonized heart, therefore, Henry Gow determined to remain quiet till he had more certain intelligence, and employed himself in finishing a shirt of mail, which he intended should be the best tempered, and the most finely polished, that his skilful hands had ever executed. This exercise of his craft pleased him better than any other occupation which he could have adopted, and served as an apology for secluding himself in his workshop, and shunning society, where the idle reports which were daily circulated served only to perplex and disturb him. He resolved to trust in the warm regard of Simon, the faith of his daughter, and the friendship of the Provost, who, having so highly commended his valour in the combat with Bonthron, would never, he thought, desert him at this extremity of his fortunes. Time, however, passed on day by day; and it was not till Palm Sunday was near approaching that Sir Patrick Charteris, having entered the city to make some arrangements for the ensuing combat, bethought himself of making a visit to the Smith of the Wynd.

He entered his workshop with an air of sympathy unusual to him, and which made Henry instantly augur that he brought bad news. The Smith caught the alarm, and the uplifted hammer was arrested in its descent upon the heated iron, while the agitated arm that wielded it, strong before as that of a giant, became so powerless, that it was with difficulty Henry was able to place the weapon on the ground, instead of dropping it from his hand.

'My poor Henry,' said Sir Patrick, 'I bring you but cold news—they are uncertain, however; and if true, they are such as a brave man like you should not take too deeply to heart.'

'In God's name, my lord,' said Henry, 'I trust you bring no evil news of Simon Glover or his daughter?'

'Touching themselves,' said Sir Patrick, 'no; they are safe and well. But as to thee, Henry, my tidings are more cold. Kitt Henshaw has, I think, apprised thee that I had endeavoured to provide Catharine Glover with a safe protection in the house of an honourable lady, the Duchess of Rothsay. But she hath declined the charge; and Catharine hath been sent to her father in the Highlands. What is worst is to come. Thou mayst have heard that Gilchrist MacIan is dead, and that his son Eachin, who was known in Perth, as the apprentice of old Simon, by the name of Conachar, is now the Chief of Clan Quhele; and I heard from one of my domestics that there is a strong rumour among the MacIans, that the young Chief seeks the hand of Catharine in marriage. My domestic learned this (as a secret, however) while in the Breadalbane country, on some arrangements touching the ensuing combat. The thing is uncertain; but, Henry, it wears a face of likelihood.'

'Did your lordship's servant see Simon Glover and his daughter?' said Henry, struggling for breath, and coughing, to conceal from the Provost the excess of his agitation.

'He did not,' said Sir Patrick; 'the Highlanders seemed jealous, and refused to permit him to speak to the old man, and he feared to alarm them by asking to see Catharine. Besides, he talks no Gaelic, nor had his informer much English, so there may be some mistake in the matter. Nevertheless, there *is* such a report, and I thought it best to tell it you. But you may be well assured that the wedding cannot go on till the affair of Palm Sunday be over; and I advise you to take no step till we learn the circumstances of the matter, for certainty is most desirable, even when it is painful.—Go you to the Council-house,' he added, after a pause, 'to speak about the preparations for the lists in the North Inch? You will be welcome there.'

'No, my good lord.'

'Well, Smith, I judge, by your brief answer, that you are discomposed with this matter; but, after all, women are weathercocks, that is the truth on't. Solomon and others have proved it before you.'

And so Sir Patrick Charteris retired, fully convinced he had discharged the office of a comforter in the most satisfactory manner.

With very different impressions did the unfortunate lover regard the tidings, and listen to the consoling commentary.

'The Provost,' he said bitterly to himself, 'is an excellent man; marry, he holds his knighthood so high, that if he speaks nonsense, a poor man must hold it sense, as he must praise dead ale if it be handed to him in his lordship's silver flagon. How would all this sound in another situation? Suppose I were rolling down the steep descent of the Corrichie Dhu, and before I came to the edge of the rock, comes my Lord Provost, and cries, "Henry, there is a deep precipice, and I grieve to say you are in the fair way of rolling over it. But be not downcast, for Heaven may send a stone or a bush to stop your progress. However, I thought it would be comfort to you to know the worst, which you will be presently aware of. I do not know how many hundred feet deep the precipice descends, but you may form a judgment when you are at the bottom, for certainty is certainty. And hark ye, when come you to take a game at bowls?" And this gossip is to serve instead of any friendly attempt to save the poor wight's neck! When I think of this, I could go mad, seize my hammer, and break and destroy all around me. But I will be calm; and if this Highland kite, who calls himself a falcon, should stoop at my turtle-dove, he shall know whether a burgess of Perth can draw a bow or not.'

It was now the Thursday before the fated Palm Sunday, and the champions on either side were expected to arrive the next day, that they might have the interval of Saturday to rest, refresh themselves, and prepare for the combat. Two or three of each of the contending parties were detached to receive directions about the encampment of their little band, and such other instructions as might be necessary to the proper ordering of the field. Henry was not, therefore, surprised at seeing a tall and powerful Highlander peering anxiously about the wynd in which he lived, in the manner in which the natives of a wild country examine the curiosities of one that is more civilised. The Smith's heart rose against the man, on account of his country, to which our Perth burgher bore a natural prejudice, and more especially as he observed the individual wear the plaid peculiar to the Clan Quhele. The sprig of oak leaves, worked in silk, intimated also that the individual was one of those personal guards of young Eachin, upon whose exertions in the future battle so much reliance was placed by those of their clan.

Having observed so much, Henry withdrew into his smithy, for the sight of the man raised his passion; and knowing that the Highlander came plighted to a solemn combat, and could not be the subject of any inferior quarrel, he was resolved at least to avoid friendly intercourse with him. In a few minutes, however, the door of the smithy flew open, and, fluttering in his tartans, which greatly magnified his actual size, the Gael entered, with the haughty step of a man conscious of a personal dignity superior to anything which he is likely to meet with. He stood looking around him, and seemed to expect to be received with courtesy, and regarded with wonder. But Henry had no sort of inclination to indulge his vanity, and kept hammering away at a breastplate, which was lying upon his anvil, as if he were not aware of his visitor's presence.

'You are the *Gow Chrom?*' (the bandy-legged Smith), said the Highlander.

'Those that wish to be crook-backed call me so,' answered Henry.

'No offence meant,' said the Highlander; 'but her own self comes to buy an armour.'

'Her own self's bare shanks may trot hence with her,' answered Henry,—'I have none to sell.'

'If it was not within two days of Palm Sunday, herself would make you sing another song,' retorted the Gael.

'And being the day it is,' said Henry, with the same contemptuous indifference, 'I pray you to stand out of my light.'

'You are an uncivil person; but her own self is *fir nan ord** too; and she knows the smith is fiery when the iron is hot.'

'If her nainsel' be hammerman hersel', her nainsel' may make her nain harness,' replied Henry.

'And so her nainsel' would, and never fash you for the matter; but it is said, *Gow Chrom*, that you sing and whistle tunes over the swords and harnishes that you work, that have power to make the blades cut steel-links as if they were paper, and the plate and mail turn back steel lances as if they were boddle prins?'

'They tell your ignorance any nonsense that Christian men refuse to believe,' said Henry. 'I whistle at my work whatever comes uppermost, like an honest craftsman, and commonly it is the Highlandman's "Och hone for Houghmanstares!"† My hammer goes naturally to that tune.'

'Friend, it is but idle to spur a horse when his legs are hamshackled,' said the Highlander haughtily. 'Her own self cannot fight even

* *i.e.* A man of the hammer.
† Note U. Houghmanstares.

now, and there is little gallantry in taunting her thus.'

'By nails and hammer, you are right there,' said the Smith, altering his tone. 'But speak out at once, friend, what is it thou wouldst have of me? I am in no humour for dallying.'

'A hauberk for her Chief, Eachin MacIan,' said the Highlander.

'You are a hammerman, you say? Are you a judge of this?' said our Smith, producing from a chest the mail shirt on which he had been lately employed.

The Gael handled it with a degree of admiration which had something of envy in it. He looked curiously at every part of its texture, and at length declared it the very best piece of armour that he had ever seen.

'A hundred cows and bullocks, and a good drift of sheep, would be e'en ower cheap an offer,' said the Highlandman, by way of tentative; 'but her nainsel' will never bid thee less, come by them how she can.'

'It is a fair proffer,' replied Henry; 'but gold nor gear will never buy that harness. I want to try my own sword on my own armour; and I will not give that mail-coat to any one but who will face me for the best of three blows and a thrust in the fair field; and it is your Chief's upon these terms.'

'Hut, prut, man—take a drink and go to bed,' said the Highlander, in great scorn. 'Are ye mad? Think ye the Captain of the Clan Quhele will be brawling and battling with a bit Perth burgess body like you? Whisht, man, and hearken. Her nainsel' will do ye mair credit than ever belonged to your kin. She will fight you for the fair harness hersel'.'

'She must first show that she is my match,' said Henry, with a grim smile.

'How! I, one of Eachin MacIan's Leichtach, and not your match!'

'You may try me, if you will. You say you are a *fir nan ord*—Do you know how to cast a sledge-hammer?'

'Ay, truly—ask the eagle if he can fly over Ferragon.'

'But before you strive with me, you must first try a cast with one of *my* Leichtach.—Here, Dunter, stand forth for the honour of Perth!—And now, Highlandman, there stands a row of hammers—choose which you will, and let us to the garden.'

The Highlander, whose name was Norman nan Ord, or Norman of the Hammer, showed his title to the epithet by selecting the largest hammer of the set, at which Henry smiled. Dunter, the stout journeyman of the Smith, made what was called a prodigious cast; but the Highlander, making a desperate effort, threw beyond it by two or three feet, and looked with an air of triumph to Henry, who again smiled in reply.

'Will you mend that?' said the Gael, offering our Smith the hammer.

'Not with that child's toy,' said Henry, 'which has scarce weight to fly against the wind.—Janniken, fetch me Samson; or one of you help the boy, for Samson is somewhat ponderous.'

The hammer now produced was half as heavy again as that which the Highlander had selected as one of unusual weight. Norman stood astonished; but he was still more so when Henry, taking his position, swung the ponderous implement far behind his right haunch joint, and dismissed it from his hand as if it had flown from a warlike engine. The air groaned and whistled as the mass flew through it. Down at length it came, and the iron head sunk a foot into the earth, a full yard beyond the cast of Norman.

The Highlander, defeated and mortified, went to the spot where the weapon lay, lifted it, poised it in his hand with great wonder, and examined it closely, as if he expected to discover more in it than a common hammer. He at length returned it to the owner with a melancholy smile, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head, as the Smith asked him whether he would not mend his cast.

'Norman has lost too much at the sport already,' he replied. 'She has lost her own name of the Hammerer. But does her ownself, the *Gow Chrom*, work at the anvil with that horse's load of iron?'

'You shall see, brother,' said Henry, leading the way to the smithy. 'Dunter,' he said, 'rax me that bar from the furnace;' and uplifting Samson, as he called the monstrous hammer, he plied the metal with a hundred strokes from right to left—now with the right hand, now with the left, now with both, with so much strength at once and dexterity, that he worked off a small but beautifully-proportioned horse-shoe in half the time that an ordinary smith would have taken for the same purpose, using a more manageable implement.

'Oigh, oigh!' said the Highlander; 'and what for would you be fighting with our young Chief, who is far above your standard, though you were the best smith ever wrought with wind and fire?'

'Hark you!' said Henry. 'You seem a good fellow, and I'll tell you the truth. Your master has wronged me, and I give him this harness freely for the chance of fighting him myself.'

'Nay, if he hath wronged you, he must meet you,' said the life-guardsman. 'To do a man wrong takes the eagle's feather out of the chief's bonnet; and were he the first in the Highlands, and to be sure so is Eachin, he must fight the man he has wronged, or else a rose falls from his chaplet.'

'Will you move him to this,' said Henry, 'after the fight on Sunday?'

'O, her nainsel' will do her best, if the hawks have not got her nainsel's bones to pick; for you must know, brother, that Clan Chattan's claws pierce rather deep.'

'The armour is your Chief's on that condition,' said Henry; 'but I will disgrace him before King and court if he does not pay me the price.'

'Deil a fear, deil a fear; I will bring him in to the barrace myself,' said Norman, 'assuredly.'

'You will do me a pleasure,' replied Henry; 'and that you may remember your promise, I will bestow on you this dirk. Look—If you hold it truly, and can strike between the mail-hood and the collar of your enemy, the surgeon will be needless.'

The Highlander was lavish in his expressions of gratitude, and took his leave.

'I have given him the best mail harness I ever wrought,' said the Smith to himself, rather repenting his liberality, 'for the poor chance that he will bring his Chief into a fair field with me; and then let Catharine be his who can win her fairly. But much I dread the youth will find some evasion, unless he have such luck on Palm Sunday as may induce him to try another combat. That is some hope, however; for I have often, ere now, seen a raw young fellow shoot up, after his first fight, from a dwarf into a giant-queller.'

Thus, with little hope, but with the most determined resolution, Henry Smith awaited the time that should decide his fate. What made him augur the worst, was the silence both of the Glover and of his daughter. They are ashamed, he said, to confess the truth to me, and therefore they are silent.

Upon the Friday at noon, the two bands of thirty men each, representing the contending clans, arrived at the several points where they were to halt for refreshments.

The Clan Quhele was entertained hospitably at the rich Abbey of Scone, while the Provost regaled their rivals at his Castle of Kinfauns; the utmost care being taken to treat both parties with the most punctilious attention, and to afford neither an opportunity of complaining of partiality. All points of etiquette were, in the meanwhile, discussed and settled by the Lord High Constable Errol, and the young Earl of Crawford, the forming acting on the part of the Clan Chattan, and the latter patronizing the Clan Quhele. Messengers were passing continually from the one earl to the other, and they held more than six meetings within thirty hours, before the ceremonial of the field could be exactly arranged.

Meanwhile, in case of revival of ancient quarrels, many seeds of which existed betwixt the burghers and their mountain neighbours, a proclamation commanded the citizens not to approach within half-a-mile of the place where the Highlanders were quartered; while on their part the intended combatants were prohibited from approaching Perth without special licence. Troops were stationed to enforce this order, who did their charge so scrupulously as to prevent Simon Glover himself, burgess and citizen of Perth, from approaching the town, because he owned having come thither at the same time with the champions of Eachin MacIan, and wore a plaid around him of their check or pattern. This interruption prevented Simon from seeking out Henry Wynd, and possessing him with a true knowledge of all that had happened since their separation, which intercourse, had it taken place, must have materially altered the catastrophe of our narrative.

On Saturday afternoon another arrival took place, which interested the city almost as much as the preparations for the expected combat. This was the approach of the Earl Douglas, who rode through the town with a troop of only thirty horse, but all of whom were knights and gentlemen of the first consequence. Men's eyes followed this dreaded peer as they pursue the flight of an eagle through the clouds, unable to ken the course of the bird of Jove, yet silent, attentive, and as earnest in observing him, as if they could guess the object for which he sweeps through the firmament. He rode slowly through the city, and passed out at the northern gate. He next alighted at the Dominican convent, and desired to see the Duke of Albany. The earl was introduced instantly, and received by the duke with a manner which was meant to be graceful and conciliatory, but which could not conceal both art and inquietude. When the first greetings were over, the earl said with great gravity, 'I bring you melancholy news. Your Grace's royal nephew, the Duke of Rothsay, is no more, and I fear hath perished by some foul practices.'

'Practices!' said the duke, in confusion, 'what practices?—who dared practise on the heir of the Scottish throne?'

''Tis not for me to state how these doubts arise,' said Douglas—'but men say the eagle was killed with an arrow fledged from his own wing, and the oak trunk rent by a wedge of the same wood.'

'Earl of Douglas,' said the Duke of Albany, 'I am no reader of riddles.'

'Nor am I a propounder of them,' said Douglas haughtily. 'Your Grace will find particulars in these papers worthy of perusal. I will go for half-an-hour to the cloister garden,* and then rejoin you.'

'You go not to the King, my lord?' said Albany.

'No,' answered Douglas; 'I trust your Grace will agree with me that we should conceal this great family misfortune from our sovereign till the business of to-morrow be decided.'

'I willingly agree,' said Albany. 'If the King heard of this loss, he could not witness the combat; and if he appear not in person, these men are likely to refuse to fight, and the whole work is cast loose. But I pray you sit down, my lord, while I read these melancholy papers respecting poor Rothsay.'

He passed the papers through his hands, turning some over with a hasty glance, and dwelling on others as if their contents had been of the last importance. When he had spent nearly a quarter of an hour in this manner, he raised his eyes, and said very gravely, 'My lord, in these most melancholy documents, it is yet a comfort to see nothing which can renew the divisions in the King's councils, which were settled by the last solemn agreement between your lordship and myself. My unhappy nephew was by that agreement to be set aside, until Time should send him a graver judgment. He is now removed by Fate, and our purpose in that matter is anticipated and rendered unnecessary.'

'If your Grace,' replied the earl, 'sees nothing to disturb the good understanding which the tranquillity and safety of Scotland require should exist between us, I am not so ill a friend of my country as to look closely for such.'

'I understand you, my Lord of Douglas,' said Albany eagerly. 'You hastily judged that I

* Note V. Gardens of the Dominicans.

should be offended with your lordship for exercising your powers of Lieutenancy, and punishing the detestable murderers within my territory of Falkland. Credit me, on the contrary, I am obliged to your lordship for taking out of my hands the punishment of these wretches, as it would have broken my heart even to have looked on them. The Scottish Parliament will inquire, doubtless, into this sacrilegious deed; and happy am I that the avenging sword has been in the hand of a man so important as your lordship. Our communication together, as your lordship must well recollect, bore only concerning a proposed restraint of my unfortunate nephew, until the advance of a year or two had taught him discretion?'

'Such was certainly your Grace's purpose, as expressed to me,' said the earl; 'I can safely avouch it.'

'Why, then, noble Earl, we cannot be censured, because villains, for their own revengeful ends, appear to have engrafted a bloody termination on our honest purpose?'

'The Parliament will judge it after their wisdom,' said Douglas. 'For my part, my conscience acquits me.'

'And mine assoilzies *me*,' said the duke with solemnity. 'Now, my lord, touching the custody of the boy James,* who succeeds to his father's claims of inheritance?'

'The King must decide it,' said Douglas, impatient of the conference. 'I will consent to his residence anywhere save at Stirling, Doune, or Falkland.'

With that he left the apartment abruptly.

'He is gone,' muttered the crafty Albany, 'and he must be my ally—yet feels himself disposed to be my mortal foe. No matter—Rothsay sleeps with his fathers—James may follow in time, and then—a crown is the recompense of my perplexities.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

——Thretty for thretty faucht in Barreris,
At Sanct Johnstoun on a day besyde the Black Freris.
WYNTOUN.

PALM SUNDAY now dawned. At an earlier period of the Christian Church, the use of any of the days of Passion Week for the purpose of combat would have been accounted a profanity worthy of excommunication. The Church of Rome, to her infinite honour, had decided that during the holy season of Easter, when the redemption of man from his fallen state was accomplished, the sword of war should be sheathed, and angry monarchs should respect the season termed the Truce of God. The ferocious violence of the latter wars betwixt Scotland and England had destroyed all observance of this decent and religious ordinance. Very often the most solemn occasions were chosen by one party for an attack, because they hoped to find the other engaged in religious duties, and unprovided for defence. Thus the Truce, once considered as proper to the season, had been discontinued; and it became not unusual even to select the sacred festivals of the Church for decision of the trial by combat, to which this intended contest bore a considerable resemblance.

On the present occasion, however, the duties of the day were observed with the usual solemnity, and the combatants themselves took share in them. Bearing branches of yew in their hands, as the readiest substitute for palm-boughs, they marched respectively to the Dominican and Carthusian convents, to hear high mass, and, by a show at least of devotion, to prepare themselves for the bloody strife of the day. Great care had of course been taken, that during this march they should not even come within the sound of each other's bagpipes; for it was certain that, like game-cocks exchanging mutual notes of defiance, they would have sought out and attacked each other before they arrived at the place of combat.

The citizens of Perth crowded to see the unusual procession on the streets, and thronged the churches where the two clans attended their devotions, to witness their behaviour, and to form a judgment from their appearance which was most likely to obtain the advantage in the approaching conflict. Their demeanour in the church, although not habitual frequenters of places of devotion, was perfectly decorous; and, notwithstanding their wild and untamed dispositions, there were few of the mountaineers who seemed affected either with curiosity or wonder. They appeared to think it beneath their dignity of character to testify either curiosity or surprise at many things which were probably then presented to them for the first time.

On the issue of the combat, few even of the most competent judges dared venture a prediction; although the great size of Torquil and his eight stalwart sons, induced some who professed themselves judges of the thews and sinews of men, to incline to ascribe the advantage to the party of the Clan Quhele. The opinion of the female sex was much decided by the handsome form, noble countenance, and gallant demeanour of Eachin MacIan. There were more than one who imagined they had recollection of his features; but his splendid military attire rendered the humble Glover's apprentice unrecognisable in the young Highland chief, saving by one person.

That person, as may well be supposed, was the Smith of the Wynd, who had been the foremost in the crowd that thronged to see the gallant champions of Clan Quhele. It was with mingled feelings of dislike, jealousy, and something approaching to admiration, that he saw the Glover's apprentice stripped of his mean slough, and blazing forth as a chieftain, who, by his quick eye and gallant demeanour, the noble shape of his brow and throat, his splendid arms and well-proportioned limbs, seemed well worthy to hold the foremost rank among men selected to live or die for the honour of their race. The Smith could hardly think that he looked upon the same passionate boy whom he had brushed off as he might a wasp that stung

* Second son of Robert III., brother of the unfortunate Duke of Rothsay, and afterwards King James I. of Scotland.

him, and, in mere compassion, forbore to despatch by treading on him.

'He looks it gallantly with my noble hauberk,' thus muttered Henry to himself, 'the best I ever wrought. Yet if he and I stood together where there was neither hand to help nor eye to see, by all that is blessed in this holy church, the good harness should return to its owner! All that I am worth would I give for three fair blows on his shoulders to undo my own best work; but such happiness will never be mine. If he escape from the conflict, it will be with so high a character for courage, that he may well disdain to put his fortune, in its freshness, to the risk of an encounter with a poor burgess like myself. He will fight by his champion, and turn me over to my fellow-craftsman the Hammerer, when all I can reap will be the pleasure of knocking a Highland bullock on the head. If I could but see Simon Glover!—I will to the other church in quest of him, since for sure he must have come down from the Highlands.'

The congregation was moving from the Church of the Dominicans, when the Smith formed this determination, which he endeavoured to carry into speedy execution, by thrusting through the crowd as hastily as the solemnity of the place and occasion would permit. In making his way through the press, he was at one instant carried so close to Eachin that their eyes encountered. The Smith's hardy and embrowned countenance coloured up like the heated iron on which he wrought, and retained its dark-red hue for several minutes. Eachin's features glowed with a brighter blush of indignation, and a glance of fiery hatred was shot from his eyes. But the sudden flush died away in ashy paleness, and his gaze instantly avoided the unfriendly but steady look with which it was encountered.

Torquil, whose eye never quitted his foster-son, saw his emotion, and looked anxiously around to discover the cause. But Henry was already at a distance, and hastening on his way to the Carthusian convent. Here also the religious service of the day was ended; and those who had so lately borne palms in honour of the great event which brought peace on earth, and goodwill to the children of men, were now streaming to the place of combat; some prepared to take the lives of their fellow-creatures, or to lose their own; others to view the deadly strife, with the savage delight which the heathens took in the contests of their gladiators.

The crowd was so great, that any other person might well have despaired of making way through it. But the general deference entertained for Henry of the Wynd, as the champion of Perth, and the universal sense of his ability to force a passage, induced all to unite in yielding room for him, so that he was presently quite close to the warriors of the Clan Chattan. Their pipers marched at the head of their column. Next followed the well-known banner, displaying a Mountain Cat rampant, with the appropriate caution—'Touch not the cat but (*i.e.* without) the glove.' The chief followed with his two-handed sword advanced, as if to protect the emblem of the tribe. He was a man of middle stature, more than fifty years old, but betraying, neither in features nor form, any decay of strength, or symptoms of age. His dark-red close-curled locks were in part chequered by a few grizzled hairs, but his step and gesture were as light in the dance, in the chase, or in the battle, as if he had not passed his thirtieth year. His grey eye gleamed with a wild light, expressive of valour and ferocity mingled; but wisdom and experience dwelt on the expression of his forehead, eyebrows, and lips. The chosen champions followed by two and two. There was a cast of anxiety on several of their faces, for they had that morning discovered the absence of one of their appointed number; and, in a contest so desperate as was expected, the loss seemed a matter of importance to all save to their high-mettled chief, MacGillie Chattanach.

'Say nothing to the Saxons of his absence,' said this bold leader, when the diminution of his force was reported to him. 'The false Lowland tongues might say that one of Clan Chattan was a coward, and perhaps that the rest favoured his escape, in order to have a pretence to avoid the battle. I am sure that Ferquhard Day will be found in the ranks ere we are ready for battle; or, if he should not, am not I man enough for two of the Clan Quhele? or would we not fight them fifteen to thirty, rather than lose the renown that this day will bring us?'

The tribe received the brave speech of their leader with applause, yet there were anxious looks thrown out in hopes of espying the return of the deserter; and perhaps the chief himself was the only one of the determined band who was totally indifferent on the subject.

They marched on through the streets without seeing anything of Ferquhard Day, who, many a mile beyond the mountains, was busied in receiving such indemnification as successful love could bestow for the loss of honour. MacGillie Chattanach marched on without seeming to observe the absence of the deserter, and entered upon the North Inch, a beautiful and level plain, closely adjacent to the city, and appropriated to the martial exercises of the inhabitants.

The plain is washed on one side by the deep and swelling Tay. There was erected within it a strong palisade, enclosing on three sides a space of one hundred and fifty yards in length, and seventy-four yards in width. The fourth side of the lists was considered as sufficiently fenced by the river. An amphitheatre for the accommodation of spectators surrounded the palisade, leaving a large space free to be occupied by armed men on foot and horseback, and for the more ordinary class of spectators. At the extremity of the lists, which was nearest to the city, there was a range of elevated galleries for the king and his courtiers, so highly decorated with rustic treillage, intermingled with gilded ornaments, that the spot retains to this day the name of the Golden, or Gilded Arbour.

The mountain minstrelsy, which sounded the appropriate pibrochs or battle-tunes of the rival confederacies, was silent when they entered on the Inch, for such was the order which had been given. Two stately but aged warriors, each

bearing the banner of his tribe, advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, and, pitching their standards into the earth, prepared to be spectators of a fight in which they were not to join. The pipers, who were also to be neutral in the strife, took their places by their respective *brattachs*.

The multitude received both bands with the same general shout, with which on similar occasions they welcome those from whose exertion they expect amusement, or what they term sport. The destined combatants returned no answer to this greeting, but each party advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, where were entrances by which they were to be admitted to the interior. A strong body of men-at-arms guarded either access; and the Earl Marshal at the one, and the Lord High Constable at the other, carefully examined each individual, to see whether he had the appropriate arms, being steel-cap, mail-shirt, two-handed sword, and dagger. They also examined the numbers of each party; and great was the alarm among the multitude, when the Earl of Errol held up his hand and cried,—'Ho!—The combat cannot proceed, for the Clan Chattan lack one of their number.'

'What reck of that?' said the young Earl of Crawford; 'they should have counted better ere they left home.'

The Earl Marshal, however, agreed with the Constable, that the fight could not proceed until the inequality should be removed; and a general apprehension was excited in the assembled multitude, that after all the preparation there would be no battle.

Of all present, there were only two, perhaps, who rejoiced at the prospect of the combat being adjourned; and these were, the Captain of the Clan Quhele, and the tender-hearted King Robert. Meanwhile the two chiefs, each attended by a special friend and adviser, met in the midst of the lists, having, to assist them in determining what was to be done, the Earl Marshal, the Lord High Constable, the Earl of Crawford, and Sir Patrick Charteris. The Chief of the Clan Chattan declared himself willing and desirous of fighting upon the spot, without regard to the disparity of numbers.

'That,' said Torquil of the Oak, 'Clan Quhele will never consent to. You can never win honour from us with the sword, and you seek but a subterfuge, that you may say when you are defeated, as you know you will be, that it was for want of the number of your band fully counted out. But I make a proposal—Ferquhard Day was the youngest of your band, Eachin MacIan is the youngest of ours—we will set him aside in place of the man who has fled from the combat.'

'A most unjust and unequal proposal!' exclaimed Toshach Beg, the second, as he might be termed, of MacGillie Chattanach. 'The life of the Chief is to the clan the breath of our nostrils, nor will we ever consent that our Chief shall be exposed to dangers which the Captain of Clan Quhele does not share.'

Torquil saw with deep anxiety that his plan was about to fail, when the objection was made to Hector's being withdrawn from the battle; and he was meditating how to support his proposal, when Eachin himself interfered. His timidity, it must be observed, was not of that sordid and selfish nature which induces those who are infected by it calmly to submit to dishonour rather than risk danger. On the contrary, he was morally brave, though constitutionally timid, and the shame of avoiding the combat became at the moment more powerful than the fear of facing it.

'I will not hear,' he said, 'of a scheme which will leave my sword sheathed during this day's glorious combat. If I am young in arms, there are enough of brave men around me, whom I may imitate if I cannot equal.'

He spoke these words in a spirit which imposed on Torquil, and perhaps on the young chief himself.

'Now, God bless his noble heart!' said the foster-father to himself. 'I was sure the foul spell would be broken through, and that the tardy spirit which besieged him would fly at the sound of the pipe and the first flutter of the brattach!'

'Hear me, Lord Marshal,' said the Constable. 'The hour of combat may not be much longer postponed, for the day approaches to high noon. Let the Chief of Clan Chattan take the half-hour which remains, to find, if he can, a substitute for this deserter; if he cannot, let them fight as they stand.'

'Content I am, said the Marshal, 'though, as none of his own clan are nearer than fifty miles, I see not how MacGillie Chattanach is to find an auxiliary.'

'That is his business,' said the High Constable; 'but if he offers a high reward, there are enough of stout yeomen surrounding the lists, who will be glad enough to stretch their limbs in such a game as is expected. I myself, did my quality and charge permit, would blithely take a turn of work amongst these wild fellows, and think it fame won.'

They communicated their decision to the Highlanders, and the Chief of the Clan Chattan replied,—'You have judged impartially and nobly, my lords, and I deem myself obliged to follow your direction.—So make proclamation, heralds, that if any one will take his share with Clan Chattan of the honours and chances of this day, he shall have present payment of a gold crown, and liberty to fight to the death in my ranks.'

'You are something chary of your treasure, Chief,' said the Earl Marshal; 'a gold crown is poor payment for such a campaign as is before you.'

'If there be any man willing to fight for honour,' replied MacGillie Chattanach, 'the price will be enough; and I want not the service of a fellow who draws his sword for gold alone.'

The heralds had made their progress, moving half-way round the lists, stopping from time to time, to make proclamation as they had been directed, without the least apparent disposition on the part of any one to accept of the proffered enlistment. Some sneered at the poverty of the Highlanders, who set so mean a price upon such a desperate service. Others affected resentment, that they should esteem the blood of citizens so lightly. None showed the slightest intention to undertake the task proposed, until the sound

of the proclamation reached Henry of the Wynd, as he stood without the barrier, speaking from time to time with Bailie Craigdallie, or rather listening vaguely to what the magistrate was saying to him.

'Ha! what proclaim they?' he cried out.

'A liberal offer on the part of MacGillie Chattanach,' said the host of the Griffin, 'who proposes a gold crown to any one who will turn Wild Cat for the day, and be killed a little in his service! That's all.'

'How!' exclaimed the Smith eagerly; 'do they make proclamation for a man to fight against the Clan Quhele?'

'Ay, marry do they,' said Griffin; 'but I think they will find no such fools in Perth.'

He had hardly said the word, when he beheld the Smith clear the barriers at a single bound, and alight in the lists, saying, 'Here am I, Sir Herald, Henry of the Wynd, willing to do battle on the part of the Clan Chattan.'

A cry of admiration ran through the multitude, while the grave burghers, not being able to conceive the slightest reason for Henry's behaviour, concluded that his head must be absolutely turned with the love of fighting. The Provost was especially shocked.'

'Thou art mad,' he said, 'Henry! Thou hast neither two-handed sword nor shirt-of-mail.'

'Truly no,' said Henry, 'for I parted with a mail-shirt, which I had made for myself, to yonder gay Chief of the Clan Quhele, who will soon find on his shoulders with what sort of blows I clink my rivets! As for two-handed sword, why, this boy's brand will serve my turn till I can master a heavier one.'

'This must not be,' said Errol. 'Hark thee, armourer, by Saint Mary, thou shalt have my Milan hauberk and good Spanish sword.'

'I thank your noble earlship, Sir Gilbert Hay; but the yoke with which your brave ancestor turned the battle at Loncarty would serve my turn well enough. I am little used to sword or harness that I have not wrought myself, because I do not well know what blows the one will bear out without being cracked, or the other lay on without snapping.'

The cry had in the meanwhile run through the multitude, and passed into the town, that the dauntless Smith was about to fight without armour, when, just as the fated hour was approaching, the shrill voice of a female was heard screaming for passage through the crowd. The multitude gave place to her importunity, and she advanced, breathless with haste, under the burden of a mail hauberk and a large two-handed sword. The widow of Oliver Proudfute was soon recognised, and the arms which she bore were those of the Smith himself, which, occupied by her husband on the fatal evening when he was murdered, had been naturally conveyed to his house with the dead body, and were now, by the exertions of his grateful widow, brought to the lists at a moment when such proved weapons were of the last consequence to their owner. Henry joyfully received the well-known arms, and the widow with trembling haste assisted in putting them on, and then took leave of him, saying, 'God for the champion of the widow and orphan, and ill luck to all who come before him!'

Confident at feeling himself in his well-proved armour, Henry shook himself as if to settle the steel-shirt around him, and, unsheathing the two-handed sword, made it flourish over his head, cutting the air through which it whistled in the form of the figure eight, with an ease and sleight of hand, that proved how powerfully and skilfully he could wield the ponderous weapon. The champions were now ordered to march in their turns around the lists, crossing so as to avoid meeting each other, and making obeisance as they passed the Golden Arbour where the king was seated.

While this course was performing, most of the spectators were again curiously comparing the stature, limbs, and sinews of the two parties, and endeavouring to form a conjecture as to the probable issue of the combat. The feud of a hundred years, with all its acts of aggression and retaliation, was concentrated in the bosom of each combatant. Their countenances seemed fiercely writhen into the wildest expression of pride, hate, and a desperate purpose of fighting to the very last.

The spectators murmured a joyful applause, in high-wrought expectation of the bloody game. Wagers were offered and accepted both on the general issue of the conflict, and on the feats of particular champions. The clear, frank, and elated look of Henry Smith rendered him a general favourite among the spectators, and odds, to use the modern expression, were taken that he would kill three of his opponents before he himself fell. Scarcely was the Smith equipped for the combat, when the commands of the chiefs ordered the champions into their places; and at the same moment Henry heard the voice of Simon Glover issuing from the crowd, who were now silent with expectation, and calling on him, 'Harry Smith, Harry Smith, what madness hath possessed thee?'

'Ay, he wishes to save his hopeful son-in-law, that is, or is to be, from the Smith's handling,' was Henry's first thought—his second was to turn and speak with him—and his third, that he could on no pretext desert the band which he had joined, or even seem desirous to delay the fight, consistently with honour.

He turned himself, therefore, to the business of the hour. Both parties were disposed by the respective chiefs in three lines, each containing ten men. They were arranged with such intervals between each individual, as offered him scope to wield his sword, the blade of which was five feet long, not including the handle. The second and third lines were to come up as reserves, in case the first experienced disaster. On the right of the array of Clan Quhele, the chief, Eachin MacIan, placed himself in the second line betwixt two of his foster-brothers. Four of them occupied the right of the first line, whilst the father and two others protected the rear of the beloved chieftain. Torquil, in particular, kept close behind, for the purpose of covering him. Thus Eachin stood in the centre of nine of the strongest men of his band, having four especial defenders in front, one on each hand, and three in his rear.

The line of the Clan Chattan was arranged in precisely the same order, only that the chief

occupied the centre of the middle rank, instead of being on the extreme right. This induced Henry Smith, who saw in the opposing bands only one enemy, and that was the unhappy Eachin, to propose placing himself on the left of the front rank of the Clan Chattan. But the leader disapproved of this arrangement; and, having reminded Henry that he owed him obedience, as having taken wages at his hand, he commanded him to occupy the space in the third line immediately behind himself, a post of honour, certainly, which Henry could not decline, though he accepted of it with reluctance.

When the clans were thus drawn up opposed to each other, they intimated their feudal animosity, and their eagerness to engage, by a wild scream, which, uttered by the Clan Quhele, was answered and echoed back by the Clan Chattan, the whole at the same time shaking their swords, and menacing each other, as if they meant to conquer the imagination of their opponents ere they mingled in the actual strife.

At this trying moment, Torquil, who had never feared for himself, was agitated with alarm on the part of his *dault*, yet consoled by observing that he kept a determined posture; and that the few words which he spoke to his clan were delivered boldly, and well calculated to animate them to combat, as expressing his resolution to partake their fate in death or victory. But there was no time for further observation. The trumpets of the king sounded a charge, the bagpipes blew up their screaming and maddening notes, and the combatants, starting forward in regular order, and increasing their pace till they came to a smart run, met together in the centre of the ground, as a furious land torrent encounters an advancing tide.

For an instant or two, the front lines, hewing at each other with their long swords, seemed engaged in a succession of single combats; but the second and third ranks soon came up on either side, actuated alike by the eagerness of hatred and the thirst of honour, pressed through the intervals, and rendered the scene a tumultuous chaos, over which the huge swords rose and sunk, some still glittering, others streaming with blood, appearing, from the wild rapidity with which they were swayed, rather to be put in motion by some complicated machinery, than to be wielded by human hands. Some of the combatants, too much crowded together to use those long weapons, had already betaken themselves to their poniards, and endeavoured to get within the sword-sweep of those opposed to them. In the meantime, blood flowed fast, and the groans of those who fell began to mingle with the cries of those who fought; for, according to the manner of the Highlanders at all times, they could hardly be said to shout, but to yell. Those of the spectators whose eyes were best accustomed to such scenes of blood and confusion, could nevertheless discover no advantage yet acquired by either party. The conflict swayed, indeed, at different intervals, forwards or backwards, but it was only in momentary superiority, which the party who acquired it almost instantly lost by a corresponding exertion on the other side. The wild notes of the pipers were still heard above the tumult, and stimulated to further exertions the fury of the combatants.

At once, however, and as if by mutual agreement, the instruments sounded a retreat; it was expressed in wailing notes, which seemed to imply a dirge for the fallen. The two parties disengaged themselves from each other, to take breath for a few minutes. The eyes of the spectators greedily surveyed the shattered array of the combatants as they drew off from the contest, but found it still impossible to decide which had sustained the greater loss. It seemed as if the Clan Chattan had lost rather fewer men than their antagonists; but in compensation, the bloody plaids and shirts of their party (for several on both sides had thrown their mantles away) showed more wounded men than the Clan Quhele. About twenty of both sides lay on the field dead or dying; and arms and legs lopped off, heads cleft to the chin, slashes deep through the shoulder into the breast, showed at once the fury of the combat, the ghastly character of the weapons used, and the fatal strength of the arms which wielded them. The Chief of the Clan Chattan had behaved himself with the most determined courage, and was slightly wounded. Eachin also had fought with spirit, surrounded by his body-guard. His sword was bloody; his bearing bold and warlike; and he smiled when old Torquil, folding him in his arms, loaded him with praises and with blessings.

The two chiefs, after allowing their followers to breathe for the space of about ten minutes, again drew up in their files, diminished by nearly one-third of their original number. They now chose their ground nearer to the river than that on which they had formerly encountered, which was encumbered with the wounded and the slain. Some of the former were observed, from time to time, to raise themselves to gain a glimpse of the field, and sink back, most of them to die from the effusion of blood which poured from the terrific gashes inflicted by the claymore.

Harry Smith was easily distinguished by his Lowland habit, as well as his remaining on the spot where they had first encountered, where he stood leaning on a sword beside a corpse, whose bonneted head, carried to ten yards' distance from the body by the force of the blow which had swept it off, exhibited the oak-leaf, the appropriate ornament of the body-guard of Eachin MacIan. Since he slew this man, Henry had not struck a blow, but had contented himself with warding off many that were dealt at himself, and some which were aimed at the chief. MacGillie Chattanach became alarmed, when, having given the signal that his men should again draw together, he observed that his powerful recruit remained at a distance from the ranks, and showed little disposition to join them.

'What ails thee, man?' said the chief. 'Can so strong a body have a mean and cowardly spirit? Come and make into the combat.'

'You as good as called me hireling but now,' replied Henry—'If I am such,' pointing to the headless corpse, 'I have done enough for my day's wage.'

'He that serves me without counting his hours,' replied the chief, 'I reward him without reckoning wages.'

'Then,' said the Smith, 'I fight as a volunteer, and in the post which best likes me.'

'All that is at your own discretion,' replied MacGillie Chattanach, who saw the prudence of humouring an auxiliary of such promise.

'It is enough,' said Henry; and, shouldering his heavy weapon, he joined the rest of the combatants with alacrity, and placed himself opposite to the Chief of the Clan Quhele.

It was then, for the first time, that Eachin showed some uncertainty. He had long looked up to Henry as the best combatant which Perth and its neighbourhood could bring into the lists. His hatred to him as a rival was mingled with recollection of the ease with which he had once, though unarmed, foiled his own sudden and desperate attack; and when he beheld him with his eyes fixed in his direction, the dripping sword in his hand, and obviously meditating an attack on him individually, his courage fell, and he gave symptoms of wavering, which did not escape his foster-father.

It was lucky for Eachin that Torquil was incapable, from the formation of his own temper, and that of those with whom he had lived, to conceive the idea of one of his own tribe, much less of his chief and foster-son, being deficient in animal courage. Could he have imagined this, his grief and rage might have driven him to the fierce extremity of taking Eachin's life, to save him from staining his honour. But his mind rejected the idea that his *dault* was a personal coward, as something which was monstrous and unnatural. That he was under the influence of enchantment, was a solution which superstition had suggested, and he now anxiously, but in a whisper, demanded of Hector, 'Does the spell now darken thy spirit, Eachin?'

'Yes, wretch that I am,' answered the unhappy youth; 'and yonder stands the fell enchanter!'

'What!' exclaimed Torquil, 'and you wear harness of his making?—Norman, miserable boy, why brought you that accursed mail?'

'If my arrow has flown astray, I can but shoot my life after it,' answered Norman-nan-Ord.—'Stand firm, you shall see me break the spell.'

'Yes, stand firm,' said Torquil. 'He may be a fell enchanter; but my own ear has heard, and my own tongue has told, that Eachin shall leave the battle whole, free, and unwounded—let us see the Saxon wizard who can gainsay that. He may be a strong man, but the fair forest of the Oak shall fall, stock and bough, ere he lay a finger on my *dault*. Ring around him, my sons,—*Bas air son Eachin!*'

The sons of Torquil shouted back the words, which signify, 'Death for Hector!'

Encouraged by their devotion, Eachin renewed his spirit, and called boldly to the minstrels of his clan, '*Seid suas*,' that is, strike up.

The wild pibroch again sounded the onset; but the two parties approached each other more slowly than at first, as men who knew and respected each other's valour. Henry Wynd, in his impatience to begin the contest, advanced before the Clan Chattan, and signed to Eachin to come on. Norman, however, sprang forward to cover his foster-brother, and there was a general, though momentary pause, as if both parties were willing to obtain an omen of the fate of the day from the event of this duel. The Highlander advanced, with his large sword uplifted, as in act to strike; but, just as he came within sword's length, he dropped the long and cumbrous weapon, leapt lightly over the Smith's sword, as he fetched a cut at him, drew his dagger, and, being thus within Henry's guard, struck him with the weapon (his own gift) on the side of the throat, directing the blow downwards into the chest, and calling aloud, at the same time, 'You taught me the stab!'

But Henry Wynd wore his own good hauberk, doubly defended with a lining of tempered steel. Had he been less surely armed, his combats had been ended for ever. Even as it was, he was slightly wounded.

'Fool!' he replied, striking Norman a blow with the pommel of his long sword, which made him stagger backwards, 'you were taught the thrust, but not the parry;' and fetching a blow at his antagonist which cleft his skull through the steel-cap, he strode over the lifeless body to engage the young chief, who now stood open before him.

But the sonorous voice of Torquil thundered out, '*Far eil air son Eachin!*' (Another for Hector!), and the two brethren who flanked their chief on each side, thrust forward upon Henry, and, striking both at once, compelled him to keep the defensive.

'Forward, race of the Tiger-Cat!' cried MacGillie Chattanach; 'save the brave Saxon; let these kites feel your talons!'

Already much wounded, the chief dragged himself up to the Smith's assistance, and cut down one of the Leichtach, by whom he was assailed. Henry's own good sword rid him of the other.

'*Reist air son Eachin!*' (Again for Hector!), shouted the faithful foster-father.

'*Bas air son Eachin!*' (Death for Hector!), answered two more of his devoted sons, and opposed themselves to the fury of the Smith and those who had come to his aid; while Eachin, moving towards the left wing of the battle, sought less formidable adversaries, and again, by some show of valour, revived the sinking hopes of his followers. The two children of the Oak who had covered this movement shared the fate of their brethren; for the cry of the Clan Chattan chief had drawn to that part of the field some of his bravest warriors. The sons of Torquil did not fall unavenged, but left dreadful marks of their swords on the persons of the dead and living. But the necessity of keeping their most distinguished soldiers around the person of their chief told to disadvantage on the general event of the combat; and so few were now the number who remained fighting, that it was easy to see that the Clan Chattan had fifteen of their number left, though most of them wounded; and that of the Clan Quhele only about ten remained, of whom there were four of the chief's body-guard, including Torquil himself.

They fought and struggled on, however, and, as their strength decayed, their fury seemed to increase. Henry Wynd, now wounded in many places, was still bent on breaking through or

exterminating the band of bold hearts who continued to fight around the object of his animosity. But still the father's shout of, 'Another for Hector!' was cheerfully answered by the fatal countersign, 'Death for Hector!' and though the Clan Quhele were now outnumbered, the combat seemed still dubious. It was bodily lassitude alone that again compelled them to another pause.

The Clan Chattan were then observed to be twelve in number, but two or three were scarce able to stand without leaning on their swords. Five were left of the Clan Quhele; Torquil and his youngest son were of the number, both slightly wounded. Eachin alone had, from the vigilance used to intercept all blows levelled against his person, escaped without injury. The rage of both parties had sunk, through exhaustion, into sullen desperation. They walked staggering, as if in their sleep, through the carcasses of the slain, and gazed on them, as if again to animate their hatred towards their surviving enemies, by viewing the friends they had lost.

The multitude soon after beheld the survivors of the desperate conflict drawing together to renew the exterminating feud on the banks of the river, as the spot least slippery with blood, and less encumbered with the bodies of the slain.

'For God's sake—for the sake of the mercy which we daily pray for,' said the kind-hearted old king to the Duke of Albany, 'let this be ended! Wherefore should these wretched rags and remnants of humanity be suffered to complete their butchery?—Surely they will now be ruled, and accept of peace on moderate terms?'

'Compose yourself, my liege,' said his brother. 'These men are the pest of the Lowlands. Both Chiefs are still living—if they go back unharmed, the whole day's work is cast away. Remember your promise to the Council, that you would not cry hold.'

'You compel me to a great crime, Albany, both as a King, who should protect his subjects, and as a Christian man, who respects the brother of his faith.'

'You judge wrong, my lord,' said the duke; 'these are not loving subjects, but disobedient rebels, as my Lord of Crawford can bear witness; and they are still less Christian men, for the Prior of the Dominicans will vouch for me, that they are more than half heathen.'

The king sighed deeply. 'You must work your pleasure, and are too wise for me to contend with. I can but turn away, and shut my eyes from the sights and sounds of a carnage which makes me sicken. But well I know that God will punish me for even witnessing this waste of human life.'

'Sound, trumpets,' said Albany; 'their wounds will stiffen if they dally longer.'

While this was passing, Torquil was embracing and encouraging his young chief.

'Resist the witchcraft but a few minutes longer! Be of good cheer—you will come off without either scar or scratch, wem or wound. Be of good cheer!'

'How can I be of good cheer,' said Eachin, 'while my brave kinsmen have one by one died at my feet?—died all for me, who could never deserve the least of their kindness!'

'And for what were they born save to die for their Chief?' said Torquil composedly. 'Why lament that the arrow returns not to the quiver, providing it hit the mark? Cheer up yet—Here are Tormot and I but little hurt, while the Wild-Cats drag themselves through the plain as if they were half-throttled by the terriers—Yet one brave stand, and the day shall be your own, though it may well be that you alone remain alive.—Minstrels, sound the gathering!'

The pipers on both sides blew their charge, and the combatants again mingled in battle, not indeed with the same strength, but with unabated inveteracy. They were joined by those whose duty it was to have remained neuter, but who now found themselves unable to do so. The two old champions who bore the standards had gradually advanced from the extremity of the lists, and now approached close to the immediate scene of action. When they beheld the carnage more nearly, they were mutually impelled by the desire to revenge their brethren, or not to survive them. They attacked each other furiously with the lances to which the standards were attached, closed after exchanging several deadly thrusts, then grappled in close strife, still holding their banners, until at length, in the eagerness of their conflict, they fell together into the Tay, and were found drowned after the combat, closely locked in each other's arms. The fury of battle, the frenzy of rage and despair, infected next the minstrels. The two pipers, who, during the conflict, had done their utmost to keep up the spirits of their brethren, now saw the dispute well-nigh terminated for want of men to support it. They threw down their instruments, rushed desperately upon each other with their daggers, and each being more intent on despatching his opponent than in defending himself, the piper of Clan Quhele was almost instantly slain, and he of Clan Chattan mortally wounded. The last, nevertheless, again grasped his instrument, and the pibroch of the clan yet poured its expiring notes over the Clan Chattan, while the dying minstrel had breath to inspire it. The instrument which he used, or at least that part of it called the chanter, is preserved in the family of a Highland chief to this day, and is much honoured under the name of the *Federan Dhu*, or Black Chanter.*

Meanwhile, in the final charge, young Tormot, devoted like his brethren, by his father Torquil, to the protection of his chief, had been mortally wounded by the unsparing sword of the Smith. The other two remaining of the Clan Quhele had also fallen, and Torquil, with his foster-son and the wounded Tormot, forced to retreat before eight or ten of the Clan Chattan, made a stand

* The present Cluny MacPherson, chief of his clan, is in possession of this ancient trophy of their presence at the North Inch. Another account of it is given by a tradition, which says that an aërial minstrel appeared over the heads of the Clan Chattan, and, having played some wild strains, let the instrument drop from his hand. Being made of glass, it was broken by the fall, excepting only the chanter, which, as usual, was of lignum-vitæ. The MacPherson piper secured this enchanted pipe, and the possession of it is still considered as insuring the prosperity of the clan.

on the bank of the river, while their enemies were making such exertions as their wounds would permit to come up with them. Torquil had just reached the spot where he had resolved to make the stand, when the youth Tormot dropped and expired. His death drew from his father the first and only sigh which he had breathed throughout the eventful day.

'My son Tormot!' he said, 'my youngest and dearest! But if I save Hector, I save all.—Now, my darling *dault*, I have done for thee all that man may, excepting the last. Let me undo the clasps of that ill-omened armour, and do thou put on that of Tormot; it is light, and will fit thee well. While you do so, I will rush on these crippled men, and make what play with them I can. I trust I shall have but little to do, for they are following each other like disabled steers. At least, darling of my soul, if I am unable to save thee, I can show thee how a man should die.'

While Torquil thus spoke, he unloosed the clasps of the young chief's hauberk, in the simple belief that he could thus break the meshes which fear and necromancy had twined about his heart.

'My father, my father, my more than parent!' said the unhappy Eachin—'Stay with me!—with you by my side, I feel I can fight to the last.'

'It is impossible,' said Torquil. 'I will stop them coming up, while you put on the hauberk. God eternally bless thee, beloved of my soul!'

And then, brandishing his sword, Torquil of the Oak rushed forward with the same fatal war-cry which had so often sounded over that bloody field, *Bas air son Eachin!*—The words rung three times in a voice of thunder; and each time that he cried his war-shout, he struck down one of the Clan Chattan, as he met them successively straggling towards him.—'Brave battle, hawk—well flown, falcon!' exclaimed the multitude, as they witnessed exertions which seemed, even at this last hour, to threaten a change of the fortunes of the day. Suddenly these cries were hushed into silence, and succeeded by a clashing of swords so dreadful, as if the whole conflict had recommenced in the person of Henry Wynd and Torquil of the Oak. They cut, foined, hewed, and thrust, as if they had drawn their blades for the first time that day; and their inveteracy was mutual, for Torquil recognised the foul wizard, who, as he supposed, had cast a spell over his child; and Henry saw before him the giant, who, during the whole conflict, had interrupted the purpose for which alone he had joined the combatants—that of engaging in single combat with Hector. They fought with an equality which, perhaps, would not have existed, had not Henry, more wounded than his antagonist, been somewhat deprived of his usual agility.

Meanwhile Eachin, finding himself alone, after a disorderly and vain attempt to put on his foster-brother's harness, became animated by an emotion of shame and despair, and hurried forward to support his foster-father in the terrible struggle, ere some other of the Clan Chattan should come up. When he was within five yards, and sternly determined to take his share in the death-fight, his foster-father fell, cleft from the collar-bone well-nigh to the heart, and murmuring with his last breath, *Bas air son Eachin!*—The unfortunate youth saw the fall of his last friend, and at the same moment beheld the deadly enemy who had hunted him through the whole field, standing within sword's point of him, and brandishing the huge weapon which had hewed its way to his life through so many obstacles. Perhaps this was enough to bring his constitutional timidity to its highest point; or perhaps he recollected, at the same moment, that he was without defensive armour, and that a line of enemies, halting indeed and crippled, but eager for revenge and blood, were closely approaching. It is enough to say that his heart sickened, his eyes darkened, his ears tingled, his brain turned giddy—all other considerations were lost in the apprehension of instant death; and, drawing one ineffectual blow at the Smith, he avoided that which was aimed at him in return, by bounding backward; and, ere the former could recover his weapon, Eachin had plunged into the stream of the Tay. A roar of contumely pursued him as he swam across the river, although, perhaps, not a dozen of those who joined in it would have behaved otherwise in the like circumstances. Henry looked after the fugitive in silence and surprise, but could not speculate on the consequences of his flight, on account of the faintness which seemed to overpower him as soon as the animation of the contest had subsided. He sat down on the grassy bank, and endeavoured to stanch such of his wounds as were pouring fastest.

The victors had the general meed of gratulation. The Duke of Albany and others went down to survey the field; and Henry Wynd was honoured with particular notice.

'If thou wilt follow me, good fellow,' said the Black Douglas, 'I will change thy leathern apron for a knight's girdle, and thy burgage tenement for an hundred-pound-land to maintain thy rank withal.'

'I thank you humbly, my lord,' said the Smith dejectedly, 'but I have shed blood enough already; and Heaven has punished me, by foiling the only purpose for which I entered the combat.'

'How, friend?' said Douglas. 'Didst thou not fight for the Clan Chattan, and have they not gained a glorious conquest?'

'*I fought for my own hand*,' said the Smith indifferently; and the expression is still proverbial in Scotland.*

The good King Robert now came up on an ambling palfrey, having entered the barriers for the purpose of causing the wounded to be looked after.

'My Lord of Douglas,' he said, 'you vex the poor man with temporal matters, when it seems he may have short time to consider those that are spiritual. Has he no friends here who will bear him where his bodily wounds, and the health of his soul, may be both cared for?'

'He hath as many friends as there are good men in Perth,' said Sir Patrick Charteris; 'and I esteem myself one of the closest.'

* Meaning, I did such a thing for my own pleasure, not for your profit.

'A churl will savour of churl's kind,' said the haughty Douglas, turning his horse aside; 'the proffer of knighthood from the sword of Douglas had recalled him from death's door, had there been a drop of gentle blood in his body.'

Disregarding the taunt of the mighty earl, the Knight of Kinfauns dismounted to take Henry in his arms, as he now sunk back from very faintness. But he was prevented by Simon Glover, who, with other burgesses of consideration, had now entered the barrace.

'Henry, my beloved son Henry!' said the old man. 'O, what tempted you to this fatal affray?—Dying—speechless.'

'No—not speechless,' said Henry.—'Catharine'——

He could utter no more.

'Catharine is well, I trust; and shall be thine—that is, if'——

'If she be safe, thou wouldst say, old man,' said the Douglas, who, though something affronted at Henry's rejection of his offer, was too magnanimous not to interest himself in what was passing.—'She is safe, if Douglas's banner can protect her—safe, and shall be rich. Douglas can give wealth to those who value it more than honour.'

'For her safety, my lord, let the heartfelt thanks and blessings of a father go with the noble Douglas. For wealth, we are rich enough—Gold cannot restore my beloved son.'

'A marvel!' said the earl,—'a churl refuses nobility—a citizen despises gold!'

'Under your lordship's favour,' said Sir Patrick, 'I, who am knight and noble, take licence to say that such a brave man as Henry Wynd may reject honourable titles—such an honest man as this reverend citizen may dispense with gold.'

'You do well, Sir Patrick, to speak for your town, and I take no offence,' said the Douglas. 'I force my bounty on no one.—But,' he added, in a whisper to Albany, 'your Grace must withdraw the King from this bloody sight, for he must know *that* to-night which will ring over broad Scotland when to-morrow dawns. This feud is ended. Yet even *I* grieve that so many brave Scottish men lie here slain, whose brands might have decided a pitched field in their country's cause.'

With difficulty King Robert was withdrawn from the field; the tears running down his aged cheeks and white beard, as he conjured all around him, nobles and priests, that care should be taken for the bodies and souls of the few wounded survivors, and honourable burial rendered to the slain. The priests who were present answered zealously for both services, and redeemed their pledge faithfully and piously.

Thus ended this celebrated conflict of the North Inch of Perth. Of sixty-four brave men (the minstrels and standard-bearers included) who strode manfully to the fatal field, seven alone survived, who were conveyed from thence in litters, in a case little different from the dead and dying around them, and mingled with them in the sad procession which conveyed them from the scene of their strife. Eachin alone had left it void of wounds, and void of honour.

It remains but to say, that not a man of the Clan Quhele survived the bloody combat, except the fugitive chief; and the consequence of the defeat was the dissolution of their confederacy. The clans of which it consisted are now only matter of conjecture to the antiquary, for, after this eventful contest, they never assembled under the same banner. The Clan Chattan, on the other hand, continued to increase and flourish; and the best families of the Northern Highlands boast their descent from the race of the Cat-a-Mountain.*

CHAPTER XXXV.

While the king rode slowly back to the convent which he then occupied, Albany, with a discomposed aspect and faltering voice, asked the Earl of Douglas, 'Will not your lordship, who saw this most melancholy scene at Falkland, communicate the tidings to my unhappy brother?'

'Not for broad Scotland,' said the Douglas. 'I would sooner bare my breast, within flight-shot, as a butt to an hundred Tyndale bowmen. No; by Saint Bride of Douglas! I could but say I saw the ill-fated youth dead. How he came by his death, your Grace can perhaps better explain. Were it not for the rebellion of March, and the English war, I would speak my own mind of it.' So saying, and making his obeisance to the king, the earl rode off to his own lodgings, leaving Albany to tell his tale as he best could.

'The rebellion and the English war!' said the duke to himself,—'Ay, and thine own interest, haughty Earl, which, imperious as thou art, thou darest not separate from mine. Well, since the task falls on me, I must and will discharge it.'

He followed the king into his apartment. The king looked at him with surprise after he had assumed his usual seat.

'Thy countenance is ghastly, Robin,' said the king. 'I would thou wouldst think more deeply when blood is to be spilled, since its consequences affect thee so powerfully. And yet, Robin, I love thee the better that thy kind nature will sometimes show itself, even through thy reflecting policy.'

'I would to Heaven, my royal brother,' said Albany, with a voice half choked, 'that the bloody field we have seen were the worst we had to see or hear of this day. I should waste little sorrow on the wild kerne who lie piled on it like carrion. But'——he paused.

'How!' exclaimed the king, in terror,—'What new evil?—Rothsay?—It must be—it is Rothsay!—Speak out!—What new folly has been done?—What fresh mischance?'

'My lord—my liege—folly and mischance are now ended with my hapless nephew.'

'He is dead!—he is dead!' screamed the agonized parent. 'Albany, as thy brother, I conjure thee—But no—I am thy brother no longer! As thy King, dark and subtle man, I charge thee to tell the worst!'

Albany faltered out,—'The details are but imperfectly known to me—but the certainty is, that my unhappy nephew was found dead in his

* Note W. Combat on the North Inch.

apartment last night from sudden illness—as I have heard.'

'O Rothsay!—O my beloved David!—Would to God I had died for thee, my son—my son!'

So spoke, in the emphatic words of Scripture, the helpless and bereft father, tearing his grey beard and hoary hair, while Albany, speechless and conscience-struck, did not venture to interrupt the tempest of his grief. But the agony of the king's sorrow almost instantly changed to fury—a mood so contrary to the gentleness and timidity of his nature, that the remorse of Albany was drowned in his fear.

'And this is the end,' said the king, 'of thy moral saws and religious maxims!—But the besotted father, who gave the son into thy hands, who gave the innocent lamb to the butcher, is a king! and thou shalt know it to thy cost. Shall the murderer stand in presence of his brother—stained with the blood of that brother's son? No!—What ho, without there!—MacLouis!—Brandanes!—Treachery! Murder!—Take arms, if you love the Stuart!'

MacLouis, with several of the guards, rushed into the apartment.

'Murder and treason!' exclaimed the miserable king. 'Brandanes—your noble prince'—here his grief and agitation interrupted for a moment the fatal information it was his object to convey. At length he resumed his broken speech,—'An axe and a block instantly into the court-yard!—Arrest'—— The word choked his utterance.

'Arrest whom, my noble liege?' said MacLouis, who, observing the king influenced by a tide of passion so different from the gentleness of his ordinary demeanour, almost conjectured that his brain had been disturbed by the unusual horrors of the combat he had witnessed,—'Whom shall I arrest, my liege?' he replied. 'Here is none but your Grace's royal brother of Albany.'

'Most true,' said the king, his brief fit of vindictive passion soon dying away. 'Most true—none but Albany—none but my parent's child—none but my brother. O God! enable me to quell the sinful passion which glows in this bosom—*Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*'

MacLouis cast a look of wonder towards the Duke of Albany, who endeavoured to hide his confusion under an affectation of deep sympathy, and muttered to the officer,—

'The great misfortune has been too much for his understanding.'

'What misfortune, please your Grace?' replied MacLouis. 'I have heard of none.'

'How!—not heard of the death of my nephew Rothsay?'

'The Duke of Rothsay dead, my lord of Albany!' exclaimed the faithful Brandane, with the utmost horror and astonishment.—'When, how, and where?'

'Two days since—the manner as yet unknown—at Falkland.'

MacLouis gazed at the duke for an instant; then, with a kindling eye and determined look, said to the king, who seemed deeply engaged in his mental devotion,—'My liege! a minute or two since you left a word—one word—unspoken. Let it pass your lips, and your pleasure is law to your Brandanes!'

'I was praying against temptation, MacLouis,' said the heart-broken king, 'and you bring it to me. Would you arm a madman with a drawn weapon?—But O, Albany! my friend, my brother—my bosom counsellor!—how—how camest thou by the heart to do this?'

Albany, seeing that the king's mood was softening, replied with more firmness than before,—'My castle has no barrier against the power of death—I have not deserved the foul suspicions which your Majesty's words imply. I pardon them, from the distraction of a bereaved father. But I am willing to swear by cross and altar—by my share in salvation, by the souls of our royal parents'——

'Be silent, Robert!' said the king; 'add not perjury to murder.—And was this all done to gain a step nearer to a crown and sceptre? Take them to thee at once, man; and mayst thou feel as I have done, that they are both of red-hot iron!—O, Rothsay, Rothsay! thou hast at least escaped being a king!'

'My liege,' said MacLouis, 'let me remind you that the crown and sceptre of Scotland are, when your Majesty ceases to bear them, the right of Prince James, who succeeds to his brother's rights.'

'True, MacLouis,' said the king eagerly, 'and will succeed, poor child, to his brother's perils! Thanks, MacLouis, thanks—You have reminded me that I have still work upon earth. Get thy Brandanes under arms with what speed thou canst. Let no man go with us whose truth is not known to thee. None in especial who has trafficked with the Duke of Albany—that man, I mean, who calls himself my brother!—and order my litter to be instantly prepared. We will to Dunbarton, MacLouis, or to Bute. Precipices, and tides, and my Brandanes' hearts, shall defend the child till we can put oceans betwixt him and his cruel uncle's ambition.—Farewell, Robert of Albany—farewell for ever, thou hard-hearted, bloody man! Enjoy such share of power as the Douglas may permit thee—But seek not to see my face again, far less to approach my remaining child! for, that hour thou dost, my guards shall have orders to stab thee down with their partizans!—MacLouis, look it be so directed.'

The Duke of Albany left the presence without attempting further justification or reply.

What followed is matter of history. In the ensuing Parliament, the Duke of Albany prevailed on that body to declare him innocent of the death of Rothsay, while, at the same time, he showed his own sense of guilt by taking out a remission or pardon for the offence. The unhappy and aged monarch secluded himself in his Castle of Rothsay, in Bute, to mourn over the son he had lost, and watch with feverish anxiety over the life of him who remained. As the best step for the youthful James's security, he sent him to France to receive his education at the court of the reigning sovereign. But the vessel in which the Prince of Scotland sailed was taken by an English cruiser; and although there was a truce for the moment betwixt the kingdoms, Henry IV. ungenerously detained him a prisoner. This last blow completely broke the heart of the unhappy King Robert III. Venge-

ance followed, though with a slow pace, the treachery and cruelty of his brother. Robert of Albany's own grey hairs went, indeed, in peace to the grave, and he transferred the regency which he had so foully acquired to his son Murdoch. But, nineteen years after the death of the old king, James I. returned to Scotland, and Duke Murdoch of Albany, with his sons, was brought to the scaffold, in expiation of his father's guilt, and his own.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile.
BURNS.

WE now return to the Fair Maid of Perth, who had been sent from the horrible scene at Falkland, by order of the Douglas, to be placed under the protection of his daughter, the now widowed Duchess of Rothsay. That lady's temporary residence was a religious house called Campsie, the ruins of which still occupy a striking situation on the Tay. It arose on the summit of a precipitous rock, which descends on the princely river, there rendered peculiarly remarkable by the cataract called Campsie Linn, where its waters rush tumultuously over a range of basaltic rock, which intercepts the current like a dyke erected by human hands. Delighted with a site so romantic, the monks of the Abbey of Cupar reared a structure there, dedicated to an obscure saint, named Saint Hunnand, and hither they were wont themselves to retire for pleasure or devotion. It had readily opened its gates to admit the noble lady who was its present inmate, as the country was under the influence of the powerful Lord Drummond, the ally of the Douglas. There the earl's letters were presented to the duchess by the leader of the escort which conducted Catharine and the glee-maiden to Campsie. Whatever reason she might have to complain of Rothsay, his horrible and unexpected end greatly shocked the noble lady, and she spent the greater part of the night in indulging her grief, and in devotional exercises.

On the next morning, which was that of the memorable Palm Sunday, she ordered Catharine Glover and the minstrel into her presence. The spirits of both the young women had been much sunk and shaken by the dreadful scenes in which they had so lately been engaged; and the outward appearance of the Duchess Marjory was, like that of her father, more calculated to inspire awe than confidence. She spoke with kindness, however, though apparently in deep affliction, and learned from them all which they had to tell concerning the fate of her erring and inconsiderate husband. She appeared grateful for the efforts which Catharine and the glee-maiden had made, at their own extreme peril, to save Rothsay from his horrible fate. She invited them to join in her devotions; and at the hour of dinner gave them her hand to kiss, and dismissed them to their own refection, assuring both, and Catharine in particular, of her efficient protection, which should include, she said, her father's, and be a wall around them both, so long as she herself lived.

They retired from the presence of the widowed princess, and partook of a repast with her duennas and ladies, all of whom, amid their profound sorrow, showed a character of stateliness, which chilled the light heart of the Frenchwoman, and imposed restraint even on the more serious character of Catharine Glover. The friends, for so we may now term them, were fain, therefore, to escape from the society of these persons, all of them born gentlewomen, who thought themselves but ill-assorted with a burgher's daughter and a strolling glee-maiden, and saw them with pleasure go out to walk in the neighbourhood of the convent. A little garden, with its bushes and fruit-trees, advanced on one side of the convent, so as to skirt the precipice, from which it was only separated by a parapet built on the ledge of the rock, so low that the eye might easily measure the depth of the crag, and gaze on the conflicting waters which foamed, struggled, and chafed over the reef below.

The Fair Maiden of Perth and her companion walked slowly on a path that ran within this parapet, looked at the romantic prospect, and judged what it must be when the advancing summer should clothe the grove with leaves. They observed for some time a deep silence. At length the gay and bold spirit of the glee-maiden rose above the circumstances in which she had been and was now placed.

'Do the horrors of Falkland, fair May, still weigh down your spirits? Strive to forget them as I do; we cannot tread life's path lightly, if we shake not from our mantles the rain-drops as they fall.'

'These horrors are not to be forgotten,' answered Catharine. 'Yet my mind is at present anxious respecting my father's safety; and I cannot but think how many brave men may be at this instant leaving the world, even within six miles of us, or little farther.'

'You mean the combat betwixt sixty champions, of which the Douglas's equerry told us yesterday? It were a sight for a minstrel to witness. But out upon these womanish eyes of mine—they could never see swords cross each other without being dazzled. But see,—look yonder, May Catharine, look yonder! That flying messenger certainly brings news of the battle.'

'Methinks I should know him who runs so wildly,' said Catharine—'But if it be him I think of, some wild thoughts are urging his speed.'

As she spoke, the runner directed his course to the garden. Louise's little dog ran to meet him, barking furiously, but came back, to cower, creep, and growl behind its mistress; for even dumb animals can distinguish when men are driven on by the furious energy of irresistible passion, and dread to cross or encounter them in their career. The fugitive rushed into the garden at the same reckless pace. His head was bare, his hair dishevelled; his rich acton, and all his other vestments, looked as if they

* Note X. Death of the Duke of Rothsay.

had been lately drenched in water. His leathern buskins were cut and torn, and his feet marked the sod with blood. His countenance was wild, haggard, and highly excited, or, as the Scottish phrase expresses it, much *raised*.

'Conachar!' said Catharine, as he advanced, apparently without seeing what was before him, as hares are said to do when severely pressed by the greyhounds. But he stopped short when he heard his own name.

'Conachar,' said Catharine, 'or rather Eachin MacIan—what means all this?—Have the Clan Quhele sustained a defeat?'

'I *have* borne such names as this maiden gives me,' said the fugitive, after a moment's recollection. 'Yes, I was called Conachar when I was happy, and Eachin when I was powerful. But now I have no name, and there is no such clan as thou speak'st of; and thou art a foolish maid to speak of that which is not, to one who has no existence.'

'Alas! unfortunate'——

'And why unfortunate, I pray you?' exclaimed the youth. 'If I am coward and villain, have not villany and cowardice command over the elements?—Have not I braved the water without its choking me, and trod the firm earth without its opening to devour me? And shall a mortal oppose my purpose?'

'He raves, alas!' said Catharine. 'Haste to call some help. He will not harm me; but I fear he will do evil to himself. See how he stares down on the roaring waterfall!'

The glee-woman hastened to do as she was ordered; and Conachar's half-frenzied spirit seemed relieved by her absence. 'Catharine,' he said, 'now she is gone, I will say I know thee—I know thy love of peace, and hatred of war. But hearken—I have, rather than strike a blow at my enemy, given up all that a man calls dearest—I have lost honour, fame, and friends; and such friends!' (he placed his hands before his face),—'O, their love surpassed the love of woman! Why should I hide my tears?—All know my shame—all should see my sorrow. Yes, all might see, but who would pity it?—Catharine, as I ran like a madman down the strath, man and woman called shame on me!—The beggar to whom I flung an alms, that I might purchase one blessing, threw it back in disgust, and with a curse upon the coward! Each bell that tolled, rung out, Shame on the recreant caitiff! The brute beasts in their lowing and bleating—the wild winds in their rustling and howling—the hoarse waters in their dash and roar, cried, Out upon the dastard!—The faithful nine are still pursuing me; they cry, with feeble voice, "Strike but one blow in our revenge, we all died for you!"'

While the unhappy youth thus raved, a rustling was heard in the bushes. 'There is but one way!' he exclaimed, springing upon the parapet, but with a terrified glance towards the thicket, through which one or two attendants were stealing, with the purpose of surprising him. But the instant he saw a human form emerge from the cover of the bushes, he waved his hands wildly over his head, and shrieking out, '*Bas air Eachin!*' plunged down the precipice into the raging cataract beneath.

It is needless to say that aught save thistle-down must have been dashed to pieces in such a fall. But the river was swelled, and the remains of the unhappy youth were never seen. A varying tradition has assigned more than one supplement to the history. It is said by one account, that the young Captain of Clan Quhele swam safe to shore, far below the Linns of Campsie; and that, wandering disconsolately in the deserts of Rannoch, he met with Father Clement, who had taken up his abode in the wilderness as a hermit, on the principle of the old Culdees. He converted, it is said, the heart-broken and penitent Conachar, who lived with him in his cell, sharing his devotion and privations, till death removed them in succession.

Another wilder legend supposes that he was snatched from death by the *Daoine Shie*, or fairy-folk; and that he continues to wander through wood and wild, armed like an ancient Highlander, but carrying his sword in his left hand. The phantom appears always in deep grief. Sometimes he seems about to attack the traveller, but, when resisted with courage, always flies. These legends are founded on two peculiar points in his story—his evincing timidity, and his committing suicide; both of them circumstances almost unexampled in the history of a mountain chief.

When Simon Glover, having seen his friend Henry duly taken care of in his own house in Curfew Street, arrived that evening at the Place of Campsie, he found his daughter extremely ill of a fever, in consequence of the scenes to which she had lately been a witness, and particularly the catastrophe of her late playmate. The affection of the glee-maiden rendered her so attentive and careful a nurse, that the Glover said it should not be his fault if she ever touched lute again, save for her own amusement.

It was some time ere Simon ventured to tell his daughter of Henry's late exploits, and his severe wounds; and he took care to make the most of the encouraging circumstance that her faithful lover had refused both honour and wealth, rather than become a professed soldier, and follow the Douglas. Catharine sighed deeply, and shook her head at the history of bloody Palm Sunday on the North Inch. But apparently she had reflected that men rarely advance in civilisation or refinement beyond the ideas of their own age, and that a headlong and exuberant courage, like that of Henry Smith, was, in the iron days in which they lived, preferable to the deficiency which had led to Conachar's catastrophe. If she had any doubts on the subject, they were removed in due time by Henry's protestations, so soon as restored health enabled him to plead his own cause.

'I should blush to say, Catharine, that I am even sick of the thoughts of doing battle. Yonder last field showed carnage enough to glut a tiger. I am therefore resolved to hang up my broadsword, never to be drawn more unless against the enemies of Scotland.'

'And should Scotland call for it,' said Catharine, 'I will buckle it round you.'

'And, Catharine,' said the joyful Glover, 'we will pay largely for soul masses for those who have fallen by Henry's sword; and that will not only

cure spiritual flaws, but make us friends with the Church again.'

'For that purpose, father,' said Catharine, 'the hoards of the wretched Dwining may be applied. He bequeathed them to me, but I think you would not mix his base blood-money with your honest gains!'

'I would bring the plague into my house as soon,' said the resolute Glover.

The treasures of the wicked apothecary were distributed accordingly among the four monasteries; nor was there ever after a breath of suspicion concerning the orthodoxy of old Simon or his daughter.

Henry and Catharine were married within four months after the battle of the North Inch, and never did the corporations of the Glovers and Hammermen trip their sword-dance so featly as at the wedding of the boldest burgess and brightest maiden in Perth. Ten months after, a gallant infant filled the well-spread cradle, and was rocked by Louise, to the tune of

Bold and True,
In bonnet blue.

The names of the boy's sponsors are recorded, as 'Ane Hie and Michty Lord, Archibald Erl of Douglas, ane Honorabil and gude Knicht, Schir Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns, and ane Gracious Princess, Marjory, Dowaire of his Serene Highness David, umquhile Duke of Rothsay.' Under such patronage a family rises fast; and several of the most respected houses in Scotland, but especially in Perthshire, and many individuals, distinguished both in arts and arms, record with pride their descent from the *Gow Chrom* and the *Fair Maid of Perth*.

FALKLAND PALACE.

NOTES TO THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH.

Note A, p. 198.—Translation of Fordun.

[In the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and ninety-six, a great part of the north of Scotland, beyond the mountains, was disturbed by two pestilent Caterans and their followers; namely, Scheabeg and his kin, of the Clan Kay, and Cristi-Jonson, with his kin, called the Clan Quhele, who by no paction or management could be pacified, and by no art of the king or governor could be subdued, until the noble and active Lord, David of Lindesay and Crawford, and the Lord Thomas, Earl of Moray, applied to the task their diligence and powers, and so arranged matters betwixt the parties that they agreed to meet before the King on a certain day at Perth, and each to select thirty of his tribe, to encounter with swords, bows and arrows, and targets, all other weapons and armour excluded, by which encounter an end might be put to the strife of the clans, and the land enjoy peace. This contract highly pleased both parties; and on the next day of the month before the feast of Saint Michael, on the North Inch of Perth, before the King, governor, and an immense multitude, they accordingly compeared duly, and entered into a most fierce conflict, in which, out of the sixty, all were killed save one of the Clan Kay, and eleven of the opposite side. It also fell out there, that, after they were all assembled in the lists, one of them, looking around for a mode of escape, leaped from among the whole body into the river Tay, and crossed it by swimming. He was pursued by thousands, but never caught. The two parties stood thereupon astonished, as unable to proceed with the engagement on account of the want of the fugitive; for the party having its numbers entire would not consent to let one be taken away; nor could the other party by any reward induce any one to supply the place of the absentee. All stood clustering in stupor, accordingly, complaining of the loss of the fugitive. And that whole business seemed even likely to break short, when lo! into the midst of the space there broke a common mechanic, low in stature, but fierce in aspect, saying, 'Here am I! who will induce me to enter with these workmen into this theatric game? I will try the sport for half-a-mark, asking but this beyond, that if I come living out of these lists, I shall receive my bread from some of you while I live; because, as it is said, "greater love hath no man, than in that he layeth down his life for his friends." With what reward shall I be gifted, then, who [to serve the State] lay down my life for the enemies of the king and the State?' What he desired was at once promised by the king and several nobles. With that the man drew his bow, and sent the first arrow into the opposite band, killing one of them. Immediately thereafter the arrows fly, the shields clatter, and the swords vibrate; and, as butchers deal with oxen in the shambles, so ruthlessly and fearlessly do the parties massacre one another promiscuously and by turns. Nor was there one found among so many, who, from want of will or heart, sought to shrink behind the backs of others, or to decline the terrible contest. The volunteer before mentioned finally escaped unhurt. After this event, the north was quiet for a long time; nor did the Caterans make excursions thence as formerly.]

Note B, p. 206.—View from the Wicks of Baiglie.

The following note is supplied by a distinguished local antiquary:—

'The modern method of conducting the highways through the valleys and along the bases, instead of over the tops of the mountains, as in the days when Chrystal Croftangry travelled, has deprived the stranger of two very striking points of view on the road from Edinburgh to Perth. The first of these presented itself at the summit of one of the Ochills, and the second, which was, in fact, but a nearer view of a portion of the first, was enjoyed on attaining the western shoulder of the hill of Moredun, or Moncreiff. This view from Moncreiff (that which, it is said, made the Romans exclaim that they had found another field of Mars on the bank of another Tiber) now opens to the traveller in a less abrupt and striking manner than formerly, but it still retains many of those features which Pennant* has so warmly eulogized. The view from the Ochills has been less fortunate, for the road here winds through a narrow but romantic valley amongst these eminences, and the passing stranger is ushered into Strathearn, without an opportunity being offered to him of surveying the magnificent scene which in days of no ancient date every traveller from the South had spread out before him at the Wicks of Baiglie.

'But in seeking out this spot—and it will repay the toil of the ascent a thousandfold—the admirer of such scenes should not confine his researches to the Wicks of Baiglie, strictly so called, but extend them westward until he gain the old road from Kinross to the Church of Drone, being that by which Mr. Croftangry must have journeyed. The point cannot be mistaken; it is the only one from which Perth itself is visible. To this station, for reasons that the critic will duly appreciate, might, with great propriety, be applied the language of one of the guides at Dunkeld, on reaching a bold projecting rock on Craig Vinean—"Ah, sirs, this is the *decisive point!*"'

Note C, p. 207.—Royal Marriages.

David II., after the death of his Queen Jane, married his mistress, 'ane lusty woman, named Margaret Logy,' and though he soon repented, and would fain have repudiated her, the Pope interesting himself in her favour, he found himself bound. As to the next generation, Boece tells us, that 'Afore King Robert (II.) marryit Euphame, the Earl of Rossis dochter, he had Elizabeth Mure (of Rowallan) in place of his wife.' He adds, 'In the thrid year of King Robert deceasit Euphame his Queen; and he incontinent marryit Elizabeth, lemmen afore rehearsit, for the affection that he had to hir bairnis.'—Bellenden, vol. ii. p. 452.

Robert III. himself was the son of Elizabeth Mure.

Note D, p. 212.—Robert Bruce.

The story of Bruce, when in sore straits, watching a spider near his bed, as it made repeated unsuccessful efforts to attach its thread, but still persevering, at last attained the object, and drawing from this an augury which encouraged him to proceed in spite of fortune's hard usage, is familiar to the reader of Barbour. It was ever after held a foul crime in any of the name of Bruce, or inheriting Gentle King Robert's blood, to injure an insect of this tribe. But, indeed, it is well known that compassion towards the weak formed part of his character through life; and the beautiful incident of his stopping his army when on the march, in circumstances of pressing difficulty in the Ulster campaign, because a poor *lavendere* (washerwoman) was taken with the pains of childbirth, and must have been left, had he proceeded, to the mercy of the Irish kernes, is only one of many anecdotes, that to this day keep up a peculiar tenderness, as well as pride of feeling, in the general recollection of this great man, now five hundred years mingled with the dust.

* [A Welsh traveller, who visited Scotland in 1769 and in 1772, and left an account of his visit in a work in three volumes, 1771-75.]

Note E, p. 216.—Glune-amie.

This word has been one of the torments of the lexicographers. There is no doubt that in Perthshire, and wherever the Highlanders and the Lowlanders bordered on each other, it was a common term whereby, whether in scorn or honour, the Gaelic race used to be designated. Whether the *etymon* be, as Celtic scholars say, *Gluin-eamach*, i.e. *the Gartered* (and certainly the garter has always been a marking feature in 'the Garb of old Gaul'), or, as Dr. Jamieson seems to insinuate, the word originally means *black cattle*, and had been contemptuously applied by the Sassenach to the herdsman, as on an intellectual level with his herd, I shall not pretend to say more than that *adhuc sub judice lis est.*

Note F, p. 218.—High Street.

The two following notes are furnished by a gentleman well versed in the antiquities of bonnie Saint Johnston:—

'Some confusion occasionally occurs in the historical records of Perth, from there having been two high or principal streets in that city: the North High Street, still called *the* High Street, and the South High Street, now known only as the South Street, or Shoegate. An instance of this occurs in the evidence of one of the witnesses on the Gowrie conspiracy, who deponed, that the Earl of Gowrie ran in from "the High Street;" whereas the earl's house stood in that part of the town now known as the South Street. This circumstance will explain how the Smith had to pass Saint Anne's Chapel and Saint John's Church on his way from the High Street to Curfew Row, which edifices he would not have approached if his morning walk had been taken through the more northerly of the two principal streets.'

Note G, p. 218.—Curfew Street.

'Curfew Street, or Row, must, at a period not much earlier than that of the story, have formed part of the suburbs of Perth. It was the Wynd or Row immediately surrounding the Castle Yard, and had probably been built, in part at least, soon after the castle was razed, and its moat filled up, by Robert Bruce. There is every probability that, in the days of Robert the Third, it was of greater extent than at present, the *Castle Gable*, which now terminates it to the eastward, having then run in a line with the Skinnergate, as the ruins of some walls still bear witness. The shops, as well as the houses of the Glovers, were then, as the name implies, chiefly in the Skinnergate; but the charters in possession of the incorporation show that the members had considerable property in or adjacent to the Curfew Row, consisting not only of fields and gardens, but of dwelling-houses.

'In the wall of the corner house of the Curfew Row, adjacent to the Blackfriars' Vennel, there is still to be seen a niche in the wall where the curfew bell hung. This house formed at one time a part of a chapel dedicated to Saint Bartholomew, and in it at no very distant period the members of the Glover incorporation held their meetings.'

Note H, p. 226.—The Glovers.

Our' local antiquary says:—'The Perth artisans of this craft were of great repute, and numbered amongst them, from a very early period, men of considerable substance. There are still extant among their records many charters and grants of money and lands to various religious purposes, in particular, to the upholding of the altar of Saint Bartholomew, one of the richest of the many shrines within the parish church of Saint John.

'While alluding to these evidences of the rich possessions of the old Glovers of Perth, it ought not to pass unnoticed,—as Henry pinched Simon on the subject of his rival artificers in leather, the cordwainers—that the chaplain "aikers of Saint Crispin," on the Leonardhall property, were afterwards bought up by the glovers.

'The avocations of this incorporation were not always of a peaceful nature. They still show a banner under which their forefathers fought in the troubles of the seventeenth century. It bears this inscription: "*The perfect honour of a craft, or beauty of a trade, is not in wealthe but in moral worth, whereby virtue gains renowme;*" and surmounted by the words, "Grace and Peace," the date 1604.

'The only other relic in the archives of this body which calls for notice in this place is a leathern lash, called "The whip of Saint Bartholomew," which the craft are often admonished in the records to apply to the back of refractory apprentices. It cannot have existed in the days of our friend the Glover, otherwise its frequent application to the shoulders of Conachar would have been matter of record in the history of that family.'

Note I, p. 234.—East Port.

The following is extracted from a kind communication of the well-known antiquary, Mr. Morrison of Perth:—

'The port at which the deputation for Kinfauns must have met was a strongly fortified gate at the east end of the High Street, opening to the bridge. On the north side of the street adjoining the gate, stood the Chapel of the Virgin, from which the monks had access to the river by a flight of steps, still called "Our Lady's Stairs." Some remains of this chapel are yet extant, and one of the towers is in a style of architecture which most antiquaries consider peculiar to the age of Robert III. Immediately opposite, on the south side of the street, a staircase is still to be seen, evidently of great antiquity, which is said to have formed part of "*Gowrie's Palace.*" But as Gowrie House stood at the other end of the Watergate; as most of the houses of the nobility were situated *between* the staircase we now refer to and Gowrie House; and as, singularly enough, this stair is built upon ground which, although in the middle of the town, is not within the burgh lands, some of the local antiquaries do not hesitate to say that it formed part of the royal palace, in which the Kings of Scotland resided until they found more secluded, and probably more comfortable, lodging in the Blackfriars' Monastery. Leaving the determination of this question to those who have more leisure for solving it, thus far is certain, that the place of rendezvous for the hero of the tale and his companions was one of some consequence in the town, where their bearing was not likely to pass unobserved. The bridge to which they passed through the gate was a very stately edifice. Major calls it "Pontem Sancti Joannis ingentem apud Perth." The date of its erection is not known, but it was extensively repaired by Robert Bruce, in whose reign it suffered by the repeated sieges to which Perth was subjected, as well as by some of those inundations of the Tay to which it was frequently exposed, and one of which eventually swept it away in 1621.'

Note J, p. 288.—Saint Johnston's Hunt is up.

This celebrated slogan, or war-cry, was often accompanied by a stirring strain of music, which was of much repute in its day, but which has long eluded the search of musical antiquaries. It is described by the local poet, Mr. Henry Adamson (1638), as a great inspirer of courage.

> Courage to give, was mightilie then blown
> Saint Johnston's Hunt's up, since most famous known
> By all Musitians.———
>
> *The Muses Threnodie, 5th Muse.*

From the description which follows, one might suppose that it had also been accompanied by a kind of war-dance.

> O! how they bend their backs and fingers tirle!
> Moving their quivering heads, their brains do whirle
> With divers moods; and as with uncouth rapture
> Transported, so do shake their bodies' structure;
> Their eyes do reele, heads, arms, and shoulders move:
> Feet, legs, and hands, and all their parts approve
> That heavenlie harmonie: while as they threw
> Their browes,—O mighty strain! that's brave!—they shew
> Great phantasie:———
>
> *Ibid. Id.*

Note K, p. 289.—Henry Smith or Wynd.

Mr. Morrison says:—'The various designations by which Henry or Hal of the Wynd, the Gow Crom or Bandy-legged Smith of Saint Johnston, was known, have left the field open to a great variety of competitors for the honour of being reckoned among his descendants. The want of early registers, and various other circumstances, prevent our venturing to pronounce any verdict on the comparative strength of these claims, but we shall state them all fairly and briefly.

'First, we have the Henry or Hendrie families, who can produce many other instances besides their own, in which a Christian name has become that of a family or tribe, from the celebrity attached to it through the great deeds of

some one of their ancestors by whom it was borne. Then follow the Hals, Halls, and Halleys, among whom even some of the ancient and honourable race of the Halkets have ranged themselves. All these claims are, however, esteemed very lightly by the Wynds, who to this day pride themselves on their thews and sinews, and consider that their ancestor being styled "Henrie Winde" by the metrical historian of the town, is of itself proof sufficient that their claim is more solid than the name would altogether imply.

'It is rather singular that, in spite of all the ill-will which Henry seems to have borne to the Celts, and the contemptuous terms in which he so often speaks of them in the text, the Gows should be found foremost among the claimants, and that the strife should lie mainly between them and their Saxon namesakes, the Smiths, families whose number, opulence, and respectability will render it an extremely difficult matter to say which of them are in the direct line, even if it should be clearer than it is that the children of the hero were known by their father's occupation, and not by his residence.

'It only remains to notice the pretensions of the Chroms, Crooms, Crambs, or Crombies, a name which every schoolboy will associate, if not with the athletic, at least with the gymnastic exercises for which the Gow Chrom and the grammar school of Perth were equally celebrated. We need scarcely add, that while the Saxon name corresponding with the word Gow has brought a host of competitors into the field, there has not yet started any claimant resting his pretension on the quality expressed in the epithet *Chrom, i.e.* bandy-legged.'

Note L, p. 296.—The Council-room.

Mr. Morrison says:—'The places where the public assemblies of the citizens, or their magistrates, were held, were so seldom changed in former times, that there seems every reason to conclude that the meetings of the town council of Perth were always held in or near the place where they still convene. The room itself is evidently modern; but the adjoining building, which seems to have been reared close to, if it did not actually form a part of, the Chapel of the Virgin, bears many marks of antiquity. The room in which, it is not improbable, the council meetings were held about the period of our story, had been relieved of part of its gloomy aspect, in the reign of the third James, by the addition of one of those octagonal towers which distinguish the architecture of his favourite Cochran.* The upper part of it and the spire are modern, but the lower structure is a good specimen of that artist's taste.

'The power of trying criminal cases of the most serious kind, and of inflicting the highest punishment of the law, was granted by Robert III. to the magistrates of Perth, and was frequently exercised by them, as the records of the town abundantly prove.

Note M, p. 296.—Morrice-dancers.

Considerable diversity of opinion exists respecting the introduction of the morrice dance into Britain. The name points it out as of Moorish origin; and so popular has this leaping kind of dancing for many centuries been in this country, that when Handel was asked to point out the peculiar taste in dancing and music of the several nations of Europe—to the French he ascribed the minuet; to the Spaniard the saraband; to the Italian the arietta; to the English the hornpipe, or morrice dance.

The local antiquary whose kindness has already been more than once acknowledged, says:—

'It adds not a little interest to such an inquiry, in connection with a story in which the fortunes of a Perth Glover form so prominent a part—to find that the Glover Incorporation of Perth have preserved entire among their relics the attire of one of the morrice-dancers, who, on some festive occasion, exhibited his paces "to the jocose recreatment" of one of the Scottish monarchs, while on a visit to the Fair City.

'This curious vestment is made of fawn-coloured silk, in the form of a tunic, with trappings of green and red satin. There accompany it *two hundred and fifty-two* small circular bells, formed into twenty-one sets of twelve bells each, upon pieces of leather, made to fasten to various parts of the body. What is most remarkable about these bells is the perfect intonation of each set, and the regular musical *intervals* between the tone of each. The twelve bells on each piece of leather are of various sizes, yet all combining to form one perfect intonation in concord with the leading note in the set. These concords are maintained not only in each set, but also in the intervals between the various pieces. The performer could thus produce, if not a *tune*, at least a pleasing and musical chime, according as he regulated with skill the movements of his body. This is sufficient evidence that the morrice-dance was not quite so absurd and unmeaning as might at first be supposed; but that a tasteful performer could give pleasure by it to the skilful, as well as amusement to the vulgar.'

Note N, p. 298.—High Church of Saint John.

'There is,' says Mr. Morrison, 'a simplicity in the internal architecture of the building which bespeaks a very ancient origin, and makes us suspect that the changes it has undergone have in a great measure been confined to its exterior. Tradition ascribes its foundation to the Picts, and there is no doubt that in the age immediately subsequent to the termination of that monarchy it was famed throughout all Scotland. It is probable that the western part of it was built about that period, and the eastern not long afterwards, and in both divisions there is still to be seen a unity and beauty of design which is done little justice to by the broken, irregular, and paltry manner in which the exterior has at various times been patched up. When the three churches into which it is now cut down were in one, the ceilings high and decorated, the aisles enriched by the offerings of the devotees to the various altars which were reared around it, and the arches free from the galleries which now deform all these Gothic buildings, it must have formed a splendid theatre for such a spectacle as that of the trial by bier-right.'

Note O, p. 310.—Ordeal by Fire.

In a volume of miscellanies published in Edinburgh in 1825, under the name of *Janus*, there is included a very curious paper, illustrative of the solemnity with which the Catholic Church in the dark ages superintended the appeal to Heaven by the ordeal of *fire;* and as the ceremonial on occasions such as that in the text was probably much the same as what is there described, an extract may interest the reader.

'Church-Service for the Ordeal by Fire.

'We are all well aware that the ordeal by fire had, during many centuries, the sanction of the Church, and moreover, that, considering in what hands the knowledge of those times lay, this blasphemous horror could never have existed without the connivance, and even actual co-operation, of the priesthood.

'It is only a few years ago, however, that any actual form of ritual, set apart by ecclesiastical authority for this atrocious ceremony of fraud, has been recovered. Mr. Busching, the well-known German antiquary, has the merit of having discovered a most extraordinary document of this kind, in the course of examining the charter-chest of an ancient Thuringian monastery; and he has published it in a periodical work, entitled "*Die Vorzeit*," in 1817. We shall translate the *prayers*, as given in that work, as literally as possible. To those who suspected no deceit, there can be no doubt this service must have been as awfully impressive as any that is to be found in the formularies of any Church; but words are wanting to express the abject guilt of those who, well knowing the base trickery of the whole matter, who, having themselves assisted in preparing all the appliances of legerdemain behind the scenes of the sanctuary-stage, dared to clothe their iniquity in the most solemn phraseology of religion.

'A fire was kindled within the church, not far from the great altar. The person about to undergo the ordeal was placed in front of the fire, surrounded by his friends, by all who were in any way interested in the result of the trial, and by the whole clergy of the vicinity. Upon a table near the fire, the coulter over which he was to walk, the bar he was to carry, or, if he were a knight, the steel gloves which, after they had been made red-hot, he was to put on his hands, were placed in view of all.

'Part of the usual service of the day being performed, a priest advances, and places himself in front of the fire, uttering, at the same moment, the following prayer, which is the first Mr. Busching gives:—

'"O Lord God, bless this place, that herein there may be health, and holiness, and purity, and sanctification, and victory, and humility, and meekness, fulfilment of the law,

* [William Cochran, 1738–1785, a Scottish portrait-painter.]

and obedience to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. May thy blessing, O God of purity and justice, be upon this place, and upon all that be therein; for the sake of Christ, the Redeemer of the world."

'A second priest now lifts the iron, and bears it towards the fire. A series of prayers follows; all to be repeated ere the iron is laid on the fire.

'These are the Prayers to be said over the Fire and the Iron.

'"1. Lord God, Almighty Father, Fountain of Light, hear us:—enlighten us, O thou that dwellest in light unapproachable. Bless this fire, O God; and as from the midst of the fire thou didst of old enlighten Moses, so from this flame enlighten and purify our hearts, that we may be worthy, through Christ our Lord, to come unto thee, and unto the life eternal.

'"2. Our Father which art in heaven, etc.

'"3. O Lord, save thy servant. Lord God, send him help out of Zion, thy holy hill. Save him, O Lord. Hear us, O Lord. O Lord, be with us.

'"4. O God, Holy and Almighty, hear us. By the majesty of thy most holy name, and by the coming of thy dear Son, and by the gift of the comfort of thy Holy Spirit, and by the justice of thine eternal seat, hear us, good Lord. Purify this metal, and sanctify it, that all falsehood and deceit of the devil may be cast out of it, and utterly removed; and that the truth of thy righteous judgment may be opened and made manifest to all the faithful that cry unto thee this day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

'The iron is now placed in the fire, and sprinkled with consecrated water, both before and after it is so placed. The mass is said while the iron is heating,—the introductory scripture being,—"O Lord, thou art just, and righteous are all thy judgments." The priest delivers the wafer to the person about to be tried, and, ere he communicates, the following prayer is said by the priest and congregation:—

'"We pray unto thee, O God, that it may please thee to absolve this thy servant, and to clear him from his sins. Purify him, O heavenly Father, from all the stains of the flesh, and enable him, by thy all-covering and atoning grace, to pass through this fire—thy creature—triumphantly, being justified in Christ our Lord."

'Then the Gospel:—"Then there came one unto Jesus, who fell upon his knees, and cried out, Good Master, what must I do that I may be saved? Jesus said, Why callest thou me good?" etc.

'The chief priest, from the altar, now addresses the accused, who is still kneeling near the fire:—

'"By the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by the Christianity whose name thou bearest, and by the baptism in which thou wert born again, and by all the blessed relics of the saints of God that are preserved in this church, I conjure thee, Come not unto this altar, nor eat of this body of Christ, if thou beest guilty in the things that are laid to thy charge, but if thou beest innocent therein, come, brother, and come freely."

'The accused then comes forward and communicates,—the priest saying,—"This day may the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which were given and shed for thee, be thy protection and thy succour, yea, even in the midst of the flame."

'The priest now reads this prayer:—"O Lord, it hath pleased thee to accept our spiritual sacrifice. May the joyful partaking in this holy sacrament be comfortable and useful to all that are here present, and serviceable to the removing of the bondage and thraldom of whatsoever sins do most easily beset us. Grant also, that to this thy servant it may be of exceeding comfort, gladdening his heart, until the truth of thy righteous judgment be revealed."

'The organ now peals, and *Kyrie Eleeison* and the Litany are sung in full chorus.

'After this comes another prayer:—

'"O God! thou that through fire hast shown forth so many signs of thy almighty power! thou that didst snatch Abraham, thy servant, out of the brands and flames of the Chaldeans, wherein many were consumed! thou that didst cause the bush to burn before the eyes of Moses, and yet not to be consumed! God, that didst send thy Holy Spirit in the likeness of tongues of fiery flame, to the end that thy faithful servants might be visited and set apart from the unbelieving generation; God, that didst safely conduct the three children through the flame of the Babylonians; God, that didst waste Sodom with fire from heaven, and preserve Lot, thy servant, as a sign and a token of thy mercy: O God, show forth yet once again thy visible power, and the majesty of thy unerring judgment: that truth may be made manifest, and falsehood avenged, make thou this fire thy minister before us; powerless be it where is the power of purity, but sorely burning, even to the flesh and the sinews, the hand that hath done evil, and that hath not feared to be lifted up in false swearing. O God! from whose eye nothing can be concealed, make thou this fire thy voice to us thy servants, that it may reveal innocence, or cover iniquity with shame. Judge of all the earth! hear us: hear us, good Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son."

'The priest now dashes once more the holy water over the fire, saying, "Upon this fire be the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that it may be a sign to us of the righteous judgment of God."

'The priest pauses; instantly the accused approaches to the fire, and lifts the iron, which he carries nine yards from the flame. The moment he lays it down he is surrounded by the priests, and borne by them into the vestry; there his hands are wrapped in linen cloths, sealed down with the signet of the Church; these are removed on the third day, when he is declared innocent or guilty, according to the condition in which his hands are found. "*Si sinus rubescens in vestigio ferri reperiatur, culpabilis ducatur. Sin autem mundus reperiatur, Laus Deo referatur.*"

'Such is certainly one of the most extraordinary records of the craft, the audacity, and the weakness of mankind.'

The belief that the corpse of a murdered person would bleed on the touch, or at the approach of the murderer, was universal among the northern nations. We find it seriously urged in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, so late as 1688, as an evidence of guilt. The case was that of Philip Standsfield, accused of the murder of his father; and this part of the evidence against him is thus stated in the 'libel,' or indictment:—'And when his father's dead body was sighted and inspected by chirurgeons, and the clear and evident signs of the murder had appeared, the body was sewed up, and most carefully cleaned, and his nearest relations and friends were desired to lift his body to the coffin; and, accordingly, James Row, merchand (who was in Edinburgh in the time of the murder), having lifted the left side of Sir James his head and shoulder, and the said Philip the right side, his father's body, though carefully cleaned, as said is, so as the least blood was not on it, did (according to God's usual method of discovering murders) blood afresh upon him, and defiled all his hands, which struck him with such a terror, that he immediately let his father's head and body fall with violence, and fled from the body, and in consternation and confusion cried, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" and bowed himself down over a seat in the church (where the corps were inspected), wiping his father's innocent blood off his own murdering hands upon his cloaths.' To this his counsel replied, that 'this is but a superstitious observation, without any ground either in law or reason; and Carpzovius* relates, that several persons upon that ground had been unjustly challenged.' It was, however, insisted on as a link in the chain of evidence, not as a merely singular circumstance, but as a miraculous interposition of Providence; and it was thus animadverted upon by Sir George Mackenzie, the king's counsel, in his charge to the jury:—'But they, fully persuaded that Sir James was murdered by his own son, sent out some chirurgeons and friends, who, having raised the body, did see it bleed miraculously upon his touching it. In which God Almighty himself was pleased to bear a share in the testimonies we produce; that divine power, which makes the blood circulate during life, has oft times, in all nations, opened a passage to it after death upon such occasions, but most in this case.'

Note P, p. 310.—Skinners' Yards.

'The Skinners' Yard,' says Mr. Morrison, 'is still in the possession of that fraternity, and is applied to the purpose which its name implies. Prior to the time of the peaceable Robert, it was the court-yard of the castle. Part of the gate which opened from the town to the drawbridge of the castle is still to be seen, as well as some traces of the foundation of the keep or donjon, and of the towers which surrounded the castle-yard. The Curfew Row, which now encloses the Skinners' Yard, at that time formed the avenue or street leading from the northern part of the town to the Dominican monastery.'

*[A member of a Brandenburg (Prussian) family, celebrated as priests and divines; presumably the great authority on law, Benedikt Carpzovius, who was professor of jurisprudence at Leipzig in the middle of the seventeenth century.]

Note Q, p. 312. Earl of Errol's Lodgings.

'The Constable's, or Earl of Errol's lodgings,' says Mr. Morrison, 'stood near the south end of the Watergate, the quarter of the town in which most of the houses of the nobility were placed, amidst gardens which extended to the wall of the city adjoining the river. The families of the Hays had many rich possessions in the neighbourhood, and other residences in the town besides that commonly known as the Constable's Lodgings. Some of these subsequently passed, along with a considerable portion of the Carse, to the Ruthven or Gowrie family. The last of those noble residences in Perth, which retained any part of its former magnificence (and on that account styled the palace), was the celebrated Gowrie House, which was nearly entire in 1805, but of which not a vestige now remains. On the confiscation of the Gowrie estates, it merged into the public property of the town; and, in 1746, was presented by the magistrates to the Duke of Cumberland. His Royal Highness, on receiving this mark of the attachment or servility of the Perth rulers, asked, with sarcastic nonchalance, "If the *piece of ground* called the Carse of Gowrie went along with it."'

Note R, p. 328.—Lake Islands.

The security no less than the beauty of the situations led to the choice of these lake islands for religious establishments. Those in the Highlands were generally of a lowly character, and in many of them the monastic orders were tolerated, and the rites of the Romish Church observed, long after the Reformation had swept both 'the rooks and their nests' out of the Lowlands. The Priory on Loch Tay was founded by Alexander I., and the care of it committed to a small body of monks; but the last residents in it were three nuns, who, when they did emerge into society, seemed determined to enjoy it in its most complicated and noisy state, for they came out only once a year, and that to *a market* at Kenmore. Hence that fair is still called 'Fiell na m'hau maomb,' or Holy Woman's market.

Note S, p. 329.—Highland Funeral Ceremonies.

The installation, the marriage, and the funeral of a chieftain, were the three periods of his course observed with the highest ceremony by all the clan. The latter was perhaps the most imposing of the three spectacles, from the solemnity of the occasion, and the thrilling effect produced by the coronach, sung by hundreds of voices, its melancholy notes undulating through the valleys, or reverberating among the hills. All these observances are fading away, and the occasional attempt at a gathering for the funeral of a chief, now resembles the dying note of the coronach, faintly echoed for the last time among the rocks.

Note T, p. 355.—Red-hand.

Mr. Morrison says:—'The case of a person taken *red-hand* by the magistrates of Perth, and immediately executed, was the main cause of the power of trying cases of life and death being taken from them, and from all subordinate judicatories. A young English officer connected with some families of rank and influence, who was stationed with a recruiting party at Perth, had become enamoured of a lady there, so young as still to be under the tuition of a dancing-master. Her admirer was in the habit of following her into the school, to the great annoyance of the teacher, who, on occasion of a ball given in his class-room in the Kirkgate, stationed himself at the door, determined to resist the entrance of the officer, on account of the scandal to which his visits had given rise. The officer came as a matter of course, and a scuffle ensued, which at last bore so threatening an aspect, that the poor dancing-master fled through the passage, or *close*, as it is called, by which there was access to the street. He was pursued by the officer with his drawn sword, and was run through the body ere he could reach the street, where the crowd usually assembled on such occasions might have protected him. The officer was instantly apprehended, and executed, it is understood, even without any form of trial; at least there is no notice of it in any of the records where it would with most probability have been entered. But the sword is still in the possession of a gentleman whose ancestors held official situations in the town at the time, and the circumstances of the murder and of the execution have been handed down with great minuteness and apparent truth of description from father to son. It was immediately afterwards that the power of the civic magistrates in matters criminal was abridged,—it is thought chiefly through the influence of the friends of this young officer.'

Note U, p. 358.—Houghmanstares.

'This place, twice referred to in the course of our story as hateful to the Highlanders, lies near the *Stare-dam*, a collection of waters in a very desolate hollow between the hill of Birnam and the road from Perth to Dunkeld. The *eeriness* of the place is indescribable, and is rendered yet more striking from its being within a furlong of one of the loveliest and richest scenes in Scotland—the north-west opening of Strathmore. The "dam" has been nearly drained within these few years, but the miserable patches of sickly corn which have with vast labour and cost been obtained, look still more melancholy than the solitary tarn which the barren earth seems to have drunk up. The whole aspect of the place fitted it for being the scene of the trial and punishment of one of the most notorious bands of thieves and outlaws that ever laid the Low Country under contribution. Ruthven, the sheriff, is said to have held his court on a rising ground to the north, still called the Court-hill; and there were lately, or there still may be, at the east end of the Roch-in-Roy wood, some oaks on which the Highlanders were hung, and which long went by the name of the Hanged-men's trees. The hideous appearance of the bodies hanging in chains gave the place a name which to this day grates on the ear of a Celt.'—Morrison.

Note V, p. 360.—Gardens of the Dominicans.

'The gardens of the Dominicans surrounded the monastery on all sides, and were of great extent and beauty. Part of them immediately adjoined the North Inch, and covered all that space of ground now occupied by Atholl Place, the Crescent, and Rose Terrace, besides a considerable extent of ground to the west and south, still known by the name of the Black Friars. On a part of these grounds, overlooking the North Inch, probably near the south end of the Terrace, a richly-decorated summer-house stood, which is frequently mentioned in old writings as the Gilten Arbour. From the balconies of this edifice King Robert is supposed to have witnessed the conflict of the clans. What the peculiar forms, construction, or ornaments of this building were, which gained for it this title, is not even hinted at by any of the local chroniclers. It may be mentioned, however, although it is a matter of mere tradition, that the ornaments on the ceiling of the Monks' Tower (a circular watch-tower at the south-east angle of the town) were said to have been copied from those on the Gilten Arbour, by orders of the first Earl of Gowrie, at the corner of whose garden the Monks' Tower stood. This tower was taken down at the same time with Gowrie House, and many yet remember the general appearance of the paintings on the ceiling, yet it does not seem to have occurred to any one to have had them copied. They were allegorical and astronomical, representing the virtues and vices, the seasons, the zodiac, and other subjects commonplace enough: yet even the surmise that they might have been copied from others still more ancient, if it could not save them from destruction, should have entitled them to a greater share than they seem to have possessed of the notice of their contemporaries. The patience with which the antiquaries of Perth have submitted to the removal (in many cases the wanton and useless removal) of the historical monuments with which they were at one time surrounded, is truly wonderful!'—Morrison.

Note W, p. 369.—Combat on the North Inch.

The reader may be amused with the account of this onslaught in Boece, as translated by Bellenden:—

'At this time, mekil of all the north of Scotland was hevely trublit be two clannis of Irsmen,* namit Clankayis and Glenquhattanis; invading the cuntre, be thair weris, with ithand slauchter and reif. At last, it was appointit betwix the heidis-men of thir two clannis, be avise of the Erlis of Murray and Crawfurd, that xxx of the principall men of the ta clan sal cum, with othir xxx of the tothir clan, arrayit in thair best avise; and sall convene afore the king at Perth, for decision of al pleis; and fecht with scharp swerdis to the deith, but ony harnes; and that clan

* [Or, Ersemen, *i.e.* Celtic Highlanders.]

quhare the victory succedit to have perpetuall empire above the tothir. Baith thir clannis, glaid of this condition, come to the North Inche, beside Perth, with jugis set in scaffaldis, to discus the verite. Ane of thir clannis wantit ane man to perfurnis furth the nowmer, and wagit ane carll, for money, to debait thair actioun, howbeit this man pertenit na thing to thaim in blud nor kindnes. Thir two clannis stude arrayit with gret hatrent aganis othir; and, be sound of trumpet, ruschit togidder; takand na respect to thair woundis, sa that they micht destroy thair ennimes; and faucht in this maner lang, with uncertane victory: quhen ane fel, ane othir was put in his rowme. At last, the Clankayis war al slane except ane, that swam throw the watter of Tay. Of Glenquhattanis, was left xi personis on live; bot thay war sa hurt, that they micht nocht hald thair swerdis in thair handis. This debait was fra the incarnation, MCCCXCVI yeiris.'

NOTE X, p. 371.—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF ROTHSAY.

The death of the Duke of Rothsay is not accompanied with the circumstances detailed by later writers in Wintoun. The Chronicler of Lochleven says simply:—

> A thousand foure hundyr yeris and twa,
> All before as ye herd done,
> Our lord the Kingis eldest sone,
> Suete and vertuous, yong and fair,
> And his nerast lauchful ayr,
> Honest, habil, and avenand,
> Our Lorde, our Prynce, in all plesand
> Cunnand into letterature,
> A seymly persone in stature,
> Schir Davy Duke of Rothesay,
> Of Marche the sevyn and twenty day
> Yauld his Saule til his Creatoure,
> His corse til hallowit Sepulture.
> In Lundoris his Body lies,
> His Spirite intil Paradys.'
>
> B. ix. cap. 23.

The Continuator of Fordun is far more particular, and though he does not positively pronounce on the guilt of Albany, says enough to show that, when he wrote, the suspicion against him was universal; and that Sir John Ramorny was generally considered as having followed the dark and double course ascribed to him in the novel.

'Anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo primo, obiit columna ecclesiæ robustissima, vas eloquentiæ, thesaurus scientiæ, ac defensor catholicæ fidei, dominus Walterus Treyl episcopus S. Andreæ; et etiam domina Anabella regina apud Sconam decessit, et sepulta est in Dunfermelyn. Hi enim duo, dum viverent, honorem quasi regni exaltabant; videlicet, principes et magnates in discordiam concitatos ad concordiam revocantes, alienigenas et extraneos egregiè susceptantes et conviviantes, ac munificè dimissos lætificantes. Unde quasi proverbialiter tunc dictum exstitit, quòd mortuis reginâ Scotiæ, comite de Douglas, et episcopo Sancti Andreæ, abiit decus, recessit honor, et honestas obiit Scotiæ. Eodem anno quarta mortalitas exstitit in regno. Paulo ante dominus rex in consilio deputavit certos consiliarios, valentes barones et milites, juratos ad regendum et consiliandum dominum David Stewart ducem Rothsaiensem, comitem de Carrik, et principem regni, quia videbatur regi et consilio quod immiscebat se sæpiùs effrænatis lusibus et levioribus ludicris. Propter quod et ipse consilio astrictus saniori, juravit se regimini eorum et consilio conformare. Sed mortuâ reginâ ipsius nobili matre, quæ eum in multis refrænabat, tanquam laqueus contritus fuisset, speravit se liberatum, et, spreto proborum consilio, denuo in priori levitate se totum dedit. Propter quod consilium procerum sibi assignatum quitabat se regi, et si voluisset, non tamen posse se eum ad gravitatem morum flexisse attestatur. Unde rex impotens et decrepitus scripsit fratri suo duci Albaniæ, gubernatori regni ut arrestaretur, et ad tempus custodiæ deputaretur, donec virgâ disciplinæ castigatus, seipsum meliùs cognosceret. Non enim osculatur filium pater, sed aliquando castigat. Sed quod rex proposuit ad filii emendam, tendit ei ad noxam. Nam uterque bajulus literæ regalis ad gubernatorem de facto ostendit, se incentorem et instigatorem regi ut taliter demandaret, quod honori alterius obviaret, sicut experientiâ exitus rei patefecit. Domini enim Willelmus Lindesay de Rossy et Johannes Remorgeney milites, regis familiares et consiliarii, nuncii et portatores erant literarum regis gubernatori: quique etiam, ut dicitur, duci Rothsaiensi priùs suggesserunt, ut, post obitum episcopi Sancti Andreæ, castrum suum ad usum regis, quousque novus episcopus instituëretur, reciperet et servaret: quique ipsum ducem, nihil mali premeditatum, ad castrum Sancti Andreæ simpliciter, et cum moderata familia, equitantem, inter villam de Nidi et Stratyrum arrestaverunt, et per potentiam eundem ducem ad ipsum castrum Sancti Andreæ, sibi ad deliberandum paratum, induxerunt, et ibidem in custodia tenuerunt, quousque dux Albaniæ cum suo consilio apud Culros tento, quid de eo facerent, deliberaverunt. Qui quidem dux Albaniæ, cum domino Archibaldo II. comite de Douglas, manu validâ ipsum ad turrim de Faulkland, jumento impositum et russeto collobio chlamidatum transvexerunt: ubi in quadam honesta camerula eum servandum deputaverunt. In qua tam diu custoditus, scilicet per Johannem Selkirk et Johannem Wrycht, donec dyssenteriâ, sive ut alii volunt, fame tabefactus, finem vitæ dedit vij Kal. Aprilis, in vigilia Paschæ, serò, sive in die Paschæ summo mane, et sepultus est in Londoris. Præmissus verò Johannes Remorgeney tam principi, quàm domino regi, erat consiliarius, audax spiritu, et pronunciatione eloquentissimus, ac in arduis causis prolocutor regis, et causidicus disertissimus: qui, ut dicitur, ante hæc suggessit ipsi principi duci Rothsaiensi, ut patruum suum ducem Albaniæ arrestaret, et, qualicunque occasione nactâ, statim de medio tolleret: quod facere omnino princeps refutavit. Istud attendens miles, malitiæ suæ fuligine occæcatus, à cœptis desistere nequivit, hujusmodi labe attachiatus; quia, ut ait Chrysostomus, "Coërceri omnino nequit animus pravâ semel voluntate vitiatus." Et ideo, vice versâ, pallium in alterum humerum convertens, hoc idem maleficium ducem Albaniæ de nepote suo duce Rothsaiensi facere instruxit; aliàs sine fallo ut asseruit, dux Rothsaiensis de ipso finem facturus fuisset. Dictus insuper D. Willelmus Lindesay cum ipso Johanne Remorgeney in eandem sententiam fortè consentivit, pro eo quòd dictus dux Rothsaiensis sororem ipsius D. Willelmi Euphemiam de Lindesay affidavit, sed per sequentia aliarum matrimonia attemptata, sicut et filiam comitis Marchiæ, sic eandem repudiavit. Ipse enim, ut æstimo, est ille David, de quo vates de Breclyngton sic vaticinatus est, dicens;

> Psalletur gestis David luxuria festis,
> Quòd tenet uxores uxore suâ meliores,
> Deficient mores regales, perdet honores.

Paulo ante captionem suam apparuit mirabilis cometes, emittens ex se radios crinitos ad Aquilonem tendentes. Ad quam visendum cùm primò appareret, quodam vespere in castro de Edinburgh cum aliis ipse dux secedens, fertur ipsum sic de stella disseruisse, dicens; "Ut à mathematicis audivi, hujusmodi cometes cùm apparet, signat mortem vel mutationem alicujus principis, vel alicujus patriæ destructionem." Et sic evenit ut predixit. Nam, duce capto, statim in præjacentem materiam, sicut Deus voluit, redit stella. In hoc potuit iste dux Sibyllæ prophetissæ comparari, de qua sic loquitur Claudianus:

> Miror, cur aliis quæ fata pandere soles,
> Ad propriam cladem cæca Sibylla taces.'

The narrative of Boece attaches murder distinctly to Albany. After mentioning the death of Queen Annabella Drummond, he thus proceeds:—

'Be quhais deith, succedit gret displeseir to hir son, David Duk of Rothesay: for, during hir life, he wes haldin in virtews and honest occupatioun: eftir hir deith, he began to rage in all maner of insolence: and fulyeit virginis, matronis, and nunnis, be his unbridillit lust. At last, King Robert, informit of his young and insolent maneris, send letteris to his brothir, the Duk of Albany, to intertene his said son, the Duk of Rothesay, and to leir him honest and civill maneris. The Duk of Albany, glaid of thir writtingis, tuk the Duk of Rothesay betwix Dunde and Sanct Androis, and brocht him to Falkland, and inclusit him in the tour thairof, but ony meit or drink. It is said, ane woman, havand commiseratioun on this Duk, leit meill fall doun throw the loftis of the toure: be quhilkis, his life wes certane dayis savit. This woman, fra it wes knawin, wes put to deith. On the same maner, ane othir woman gaif him milk of hir paup, throw ane lang reid; and wes slane with gret cruelte, fra it wes knawin. Than wes the Duk destitute of all mortall supplie; and brocht, finalie, to sa miserable and hungry appetite, that he eit, nocht allanerlie the filth of the toure quhare he wes, bot his awin fingaris; to his gret marterdome. His body was beryit in Lundoris, and kithit miraklis mony yeris eftir; quhil, at last, King James the First began to punis his slayaris; and fra that time furth, the miraclis ceissit.'

The *Remission*, which Albany and Douglas afterwards received at the hands of Robert III., was first printed by Lord Hailes; and is as follows:—

'Robertus, Dei gratiâ, Rex Scottorum, Universis, ad quorum notitiam præsentes literæ pervenerint, Salutem in Domino sempiternam: Cum nuper carissimi nobis, Robertus Albaniæ Dux, Comes de Fife et de Menteth, frater noster germanus, et Archibaldus Comes de Douglas,

et Dominus Galwidiæ, filius noster secundum legem, ratione filiæ nostræ quam duxit in uxorem, præcarissimum filium nostrum, primogenitum David, quondam Ducem Rothsaye ac Comitem de Carrick et Atholiæ, capi fecerunt, et personaliter arrestari, et in castro Sancti Andreæ primo custodiri, deindeque apud Faucland in custodia detineri, ubi ab hac luce, divinâ providentiâ, et non aliter, migrasse dignoscitur. Quibus comparentibus coram nobis, in concilio nostro generali apud Edinburgh, decimo sexto die mensis Maii, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo secundo, inchoato, et nonnullis diebus continuato, et super hoc interrogatis ex officio nostro regali, sive accusatis, hujusmodi captionem, arrestationem, mortem, ut superius est expressum, confitentes, causas ipsos ad hoc moventes, pro publica, ut asseruerunt, utilitate arctantes, in præsentia nostra assignarunt, quas non duximus præsentibus inserendas, et ex causâ: Habita deinde super hoc diligenti inquisitione, consideratis omnibus et singulis in hac parte considerandis, hujusmodi causam tangentibus, et maturâ deliberatione concilii nostri præhabitâ discussis, prænotatos Robertum fratrem nostrum germanum, Archibaldumque filium nostrum secundum jura, et eorum in hac parte participes quoscunque, viz. arrestatores, detentores, custodes, consiliarios, et omnes alios consilium, videlicet, auxilium, vel favorem eisdem præstantes, sive eorum jussum aut mandatum qualitercunque exsequentes, excusatos habemus; necnon et ipsos, et eorum quemlibet, a crimine læsæ majestatis nostræ, vel alio quocunque crimine, culpa, injuria, rancore, et offensa, quæ eis occasione præmissorum imputari possent qualitercunque, in dicto consilio nostro palam et publicè declaravimus, pronunciavimus, et diffinivimus, tenoreque præsentium declaramus, pronunciamus, et per hanc diffinitivam nostram sententiam diffinimus, innocentes, innoxios, inculpabiles, quietos, liberos, et immunes, penitus et omnimodo: Et si quam contra ipsos, sive eorum aliquem, aut aliquam vel aliquos, in hoc facto qualitercunque, participes, vel eis, quomodolibet adhærentes, indignationem, iram, rancorem, vel offensionem, concepimus qualitercunque, illos proprio motu, ex certa scientia, et etiam ex deliberatione concilii nostri jam dicti, annullamus, removemus, et adnullatos volumus haberi, in perpetuum. Quare omnibus et singulis subditis nostris, cujuscunque statûs aut conditionis exstiterint districtè, præcipimus et mandamus, quatenus sæpe dictis Roberto et Archibaldo, eorumque in hoc facto participibus, consentientibus, seu adhærentibus, ut præmittitur, verbo non detrahent, neque facto, nec contra eosdem murmurent qualitercunque, unde possit eorum bona fama lædi, vel aliquod præjudicium generari, sub omni pœna quæ exinde competere poterit, quomodolibet ipso jure. Datum, sub testimonio magni sigilli nostri, in monasterio Sanctæ Crucis de Edinburgh, vicesimo die mensis Maii prædicti, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo secundo, et regni nostri anno tertio decimo.'

Lord Hailes sums up his comment on the document with words which, as Pinkerton says, leave no doubt that he considered the prince as having been murdered: viz. 'The Duke of Albany and the Earl of Douglas obtained a remission in terms as ample as if they had actually murdered the heir-apparent.'

SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH, PERTH.

GLOSSARY TO THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH.

Abbas Letitiæ, Abbé de Liesse, the Abbot of Gladness.
Acton, a quilted vest or tunic, worn between the coat-of-mail and the body; also the outer armour.
Adhuc sub judice lis est, the matter is still a subject of discussion.
Aiker, acre, field.
Ain, own.
Al fresco, in the open air.
Alkyn, all kind of.
Allanerlie, only.
Allay, to mix with, dilute.
Almoner, the distributor of alms.
Alter ego, other or second self; hence, a very close intimate.
Amiral, admiral.
Ane, one.
Angel, a gold coin varying in value from 6s. 8d. to 10s.
Argosy, a mediæval merchant vessel.
Arietta, an Italian dance.
A secretis, a private secretary.
Assoilzie, to acquit, pronounce free from sin.
Assythment, a fine for bloodshed, paid to the nearest relatives of the slain person.
Astucious, astute, designing.
Ave, a prayer beginning with this Latin word, which means Hail!
Avenand, elegant in person and manners.
Avise, fashion, manner; also advice.
Ayr, heir.

Back-bearand, a thief caught in the act of carrying away stolen goods on his back.
Barrace, the lists, or enclosure for tournaments.
Barreris, barriers, lists.
Barret, a military cap, headpiece.
Bas air son Eachin, death for Hector.
Bastinado, a method of punishment in Turkey and Persia, by beating the soles of the feet with a rod.
Beau cousin, good cousin, my dear fellow.
Belle France, La, beautiful France.
Benedicite, Be ye blessed; on p. 245, almost equivalent to the familiar Bless me!
Bestial, animals, as cattle, sheep, and so forth.
Betid, happened, came to pass.
Bield, to shelter, protect.
Bieyfir, a double portion of food.
Biggin, a linen cap or hood.
Bigging, a building.
Bink, a range of frames or shelves for holding dishes, etc.
Blood-boltered, smeared, sprinkled with blood.
Blood-witt, a penalty for bloodshed, paid to the king.
Boddle prin, a toilet pin that cost a boddle, a small Scotch copper coin.
Bona roba, a courtesan, showy wanton.
Bonus socius, a comrade, mate.
Bordeller, a frequenter of brothels.
Borrel, rustic, rough.
Bountith, something given over and above the usual wages, a bounty.
Bowie, a small wooden milk pail.
Braggadocio, a bragging, boasting fellow.
Brattach, the standard of a Highland clan.
Brave, a bravado, affront.
Brent-browed, with a smooth and beautiful forehead.
Brewis, bread or toasted oatmeal soaked in the fatty scum of broth.
Brook, to bear, deserve.
Brose, oatmeal over which boiling water has been poured, so as to make a coarse porridge.
Burgage tenement, property held under the crown in a royal burgh.
But (in the motto 'Touch not the cat but a glove'), without. But *But dout*, without doubt.

Cailliach, an old woman.
Campus Martius, the Field of Mars, the exercise ground of the soldiers outside the city of ancient Rome.
Carle, a fellow, man.
Cartel, a challenge to a duel.
Catheran, a Highland robber.
Cavey, or *cavie*, a hen-coop.
Chevron, a glove.
Cicerone, a guide, conductor.
Clanjamfrey, low, worthless people, trumpery folk.
Cogan na schie, Peace or war, I care not.
Cogging, to cheat, lie, wheedle.
Cogue, a drinking-cup, wooden vessel.
Corbie, a raven.
Cordovan, a species of leather, as originally dressed at Cordova in Spain.
Coronach, a Highland dirge for the dead.
Coronal, a wreath, crown.
Coryphæus, the leader of the chorus in the ancient Greek drama.

Costard, the head, a term implying contempt.
Couteau de chasse, a hunting knife, hanger.
Covine, a secret or collusive agreement.
Cumber, a disturbance, embarrassment.
Cummer, a gossip, companion.
Cunnand, skilful, knowing.
Curragh, a light skiff, made of a hide stretched over wicker-work or the branches of a tree.
Cursus medendi, a course of medical study.
Curtal axe, a short curved sword or cutlass.
Cynanche trachealis, the croup.

Daoine shie, fairy folk.
Dalmatic, a pilgrim's cloak.
Dare lucem, to throw light upon, to decide positively.
Dargue, or *darg*, a task, or work.
Dault, a foster-son.
Deasil, circling round a thing the same way as the sun goes, that is, from right to left.
Debait, to strive, fight.
Deboshed, debauched.
Deil, to share, distribute.
Detergent elixir, an infallible and wonderful cleansing substance.
Dey-woman, a dairy-maid.
Die Vorzeit, antiquity, olden times.
Dink, contemptuous of others.
Dittay, in, under indictment.
Divan, a council.
Dominus, Sir.
Douce, fair, honest.
Dourlach, a Highland knapsack.
Dout, doubt.
Douze, twelve.
Dowaire, dowager.
Dree a sore weird, to pay a severe penance.
Dromond, a large transport vessel.
Duenna, a chaperone, an elderly female of strict propriety.
Dunniewassal, a Highland gentleman.

Emir, an Eastern governor or prince.
Ephemerides, a table showing the daily positions of the planets.
Esprit fort, a free-thinker.
Etymon, the root, original form of a word.
Exheredation, a disinheriting.

Fabliau, a tale in verse, usually satirical.
Faitour, an evil-doer, scoundrel.
Far eil air son Eachin, another for Hector.
Fastern's E'en, the evening preceding the Lent fast, that is, Shrove Tuesday.
Faucht, fought.
Federan Dhu, black chanter.
Fey, doomed, predestined.
Fiell na m'hau maomb, Holy Woman's market, that is, Kenmore Fair.
Fir nan ord, a man of the hammer, a smith.
Flasket, a long shallow basket.
Flyte she, fling she, whether she scold or kick, go into a fit of anger.
Foin, to thrust, stab.
Fou, tipsy, intoxicated.
Freris, friars.
Fulyeit, defiled.

Gabbart, or *gabbard*, a kind of heavy lighter.
Gaffer, said to be a contraction of grandfather or good father.
Galliard, a gallant.
Gallo-glass or *gallow-glass*, a heavy-armed Highlander.
Gallows-lee, the place where the gallows was set up.
Gear, business, work.
Girth, an asylum, sanctuary.
Glibb, or *glib*, a bushy head of hair.
Gloom, to look sullen at, frown at.
Gluineamach, the gartered ones, *i.e.* Highlanders.
Gossipred, intimacy, familiar friendship.
Gouge, a wench.
Gout, or *goutte*, a drop.
Gouvernante, a housekeeper.
Graddan cake, a cake made of toasted or parched corn,—wheat or barley.
Graith, implements, equipment.
Gude, or *good, women of*, women of respectability.

Habergeon, a short coat of ringed mail or armour, without sleeves.
Habil, able, fit.
Haffets, the temples, the face between the cheeks and ears.
Haill, whole.
Hand-habend, taken with the stolen goods in his possession.
Hards, refuse, coarse ends.
Harrow, or *haro*, a cry of distress, a shout for help.
Hauberk, a coat of mail without sleeves.
Havand, having.
Heidis-men, head-men, chiefs.
Her nainsel, my own self.
Hobbler, a light-armed soldier, who used to be mounted on a hobby or small horse.
Hobbleshow, or *hubble-show*, a tumult, hubbub.
Holidame, sacred word of honour, an asseveration.
Holped up, literally, helped, supported; but the ironical word 'finely' makes it equivalent to 'embarrassed.'
Hone, to lament, moan.
Hospitium, the apartments in a convent set apart for strangers, travellers, and pilgrims.
Hosting, a mustering of armed men.

Ille manu fortis, Anglis ludebit in hortis, he, strong of hand, shall play in the English gardens.
Inch, island. The Inch of Perth is not now an island, but a level expanse of greensward.
Inclusit, shut up.
In extremis, at the last gasp.
Infang and outfang, the right of a baron or corporation to try thieves, whether taken (with the booty) in or outside of his (its) own jurisdiction.
In principio, in the beginning.
Intertene, to take another into one's own house, maintain.
Ithand, busy, constant.

Jackmen, military retainers, men wearing jacks or armour.
Jillet, Jilt, a gay or lively young woman.
Jolterheaded, stupid, thick-headed.

Kain-hen, or *cain-hen*, a sort of duty in kind paid by a tenant to his landlord.
Kempe, or *kemp*, a champion, warrior of renown.
Ken, to know.
Kerne, a light-armed Highlander.
Kirstening, christening or baptising.
Kithit, or *kythed*, produced, caused.
Kyrie Eleeison, Lord have mercy.

La belle France, beautiful France.
Lai, a favourite form of song current amongst the minstrels of the North of France.
Land-louper, an adventurer, vagrant.
Lauchful, lawful.
Lawing, an inn reckoning.
Leichtach, a body-guard.
Leir, or *lure*, to teach.
Leman, a courtesan, woman of ill-fame.
Levin-bolt, lightning.
Limmer, or *limmar*, a scoundrel, worthless fellow.
Lipping, making notches in a sword or knife.
Lith, a joint, limb.
Loaning, a narrow street or lane.
Lockman, the executioner.
Loftis, lofts, storeys.
Loon, a fellow, person; also a woman of easy virtue, a mistress, courtesan.

Lug and the horn, by the, by the ear and horn, as if he were an animal.
Lugs, stow the, to crop or cut off the ears.
Lurdane, a good-for-nothing fellow.

Má, more.
Ma belle tenebrosa, my lovely brunette.
Mahound, a contemptuous name for Mohammed.
Main, a cock-fighting match. See *Welsh main*.
Mair, in Scotland, the messenger of a county (sheriff's) court.
Maker, a poet.
Mal-talent, ill-humour, resentment.
Malvoisie, a sweet wine, red or white, grown in the islands of the Ægean; generally called Malmsey.
Mammock, a fragment, shapeless piece.
Manège, a riding school.
Mangonel, a military engine for hurling stones, etc.
Mansworn, perjured.
Marischal taeh, sewer or server of the mess.
Mark, or *merk*, a coin worth in Scotland 1s. 1⅓d., and in England 13s. 4d.
Massamore, the principal dungeon of a feudal castle.
Maun, must.
May Catharine, Maid Catharine.
Mekil, or *muckle*, much, a great part.
Messan, a mongrel, cur.
Metheglin, a drink of honey and water, boiled, fermented, and spiced.
Mirk, dark.
Mister, manner of, sort of.
Mohr ar chat, the great cat.
Mulct, a fine, penalty.
Mumper, a beggar, stroller.

Nain, nainsel', her, own, my own self.
Neidfyre, forced fire. See *Tine-egan*.
Ne plus ultra, the very highest degree.
Nerast, nearest, next.
Noble, an old English gold coin, worth 6s. 8d.
Non nostrum est, it's not our business to (decide the question).

Occurrent, an event, incident, occurrence.
Opiferque per orbem dicor, I am called one that brings aid (*i.e.* the healer) the world over.
Outlies, one who lives outside the municipal bounds.
Outrance, the last extremity.

Packing and peeling, trafficking, with an implied sense of unfair dealing.
Paladin, a hero of chivalry.
Palladium, a protecting divinity, or a token of such.
Pantler, the officer who had care of the bread or the pantry.
Paramours, in illicit love.
Passemented, decked with lace or embroidery.
Paughty, proud, haughty.
Paup, pap, nipple.
Pavesse, a large triangular shield.
Pavise, a lively motion, like those of a dancer.
Peat, a contemptuous term charging one with pride, a wilful and proud young woman.
Peccadillo, a slight or trifling fault.
Pellack, a porpoise.
Perfurnis, to complete, accomplish.
Petronel, a horseman's pistol, a short carbine.
Pinner, a head-dress worn by ladies of rank.
Pirn, to wind a, to unravel a difficulty.
Plough-graith, plough-fittings.
Pontem Sancti Johannis ingentem apud Perth, the great bridge of Saint John at Perth.
Potter-carrier, a vulgar name for an apothecary.
Pottingar, a pottage-maker, cook; here an apothecary.
Pottingry, the calling of an apothecary.
Pottle-pot, a large tankard.
Pouncet-box, a box for holding perfumes.
Precisian, a strict observer of moral rules.
Precognition, a preliminary examination or official inquiry.
Privado, a minion, favourite.
Propine, a gift, present.
Protégé, one who is under the protection of, or whose interests are advanced by, another.
Proximus est carcer subterraneus, sive ut Mauri appellant Maxmorra, Next is the subterranean dungeon, or, as the Moors call it, *Mazmorra*.
Ptisan, a cooling drink made of barley and other ingredients.
Puissant, valorous, powerful.
Pyne, pain.

Quha, who.
Quhais, whose.
Quhare, where, to which.

Rampauge, to storm and scold.
Rax, to reach, stretch, hand.
Recreatment, entertainment, amusement.
Rede, counsel, advice.
Reif, or *reive*, robbery.
Reist air son Eachin, again for Hector.
Reiving, marauding; *reiver*, a marauder.
Remede, or *remeid*, a remedy.
Requiem eternam dona, grant eternal rest.
Revenant, one that has come back to life.
Romaunt, a mediæval romance.
Rouping, to cry out hoarsely, croak.

Sackless, innocent.
Salvage, rude, wild.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis, Holy Mary, pray for us.
Saraband, a Spanish dance.
Sassenach, Saxon, *i.e.* Englishman or Lowlander of Scotland.
Seanachie, a Highland genealogist or chronicler.
Secret, a light and flexible shirt of chain mail, worn under the jerkin.
Secretis, A, a private secretary.
Seid suas, strike up.
Selcouth, strange, unusual.
Semple, one of low birth.
Shieling, or *shealing*, a hut.
Shogging, jogging, moving away.
Sirvente, the favourite form of song current amongst the Troubadours.
Si sinus rubescens, etc. (p. 377), If there is a reddish swelling where the iron touched, he is esteemed guilty, but if the hand is whole, praise is rendered unto God.
Skene, or *skean*, a Highlander's knife or dagger.
Slogan, a war-cry, rallying-cry.
Smaik, a contemptible fellow.
Soldan, or *Sultan*, a heathen ruler.
Sporran, a Highlander's purse.
Stickler, the second in a single combat.
Stigmata, marks of blood, blood-stains.
Stint, to stop.
Stir, to disturb, injure.
Stouthrief, theft with violence.
Stow the lugs, to crop, cut off the ears.
Styptic, a remedy for stopping the flow of blood from a wound.
Succedit, fell, accrued.
Super totam materiem, totally, with respect to the whole affair.
Swallow-tails, arrows.
Sweet gale, the bog-myrtle.
Swinged, soundly beaten, chastised.

Ta, the one.
Taishatar, a Highland seer.
Tent a wound, to probe, attend to, a wound.
Tester, an old French silver coin, worth about sixpence.
Thiggers and sorners, sturdy beggars.
Thraw, to thwart, oppose.

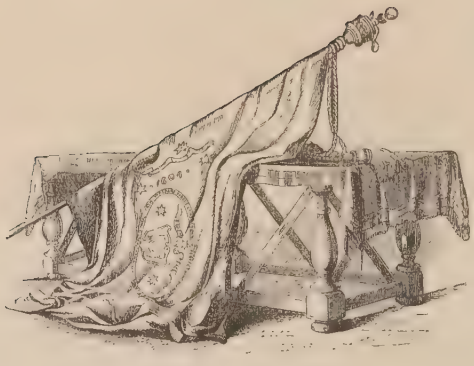
Thretty, thirty.
Threw, distorted, bent.
Thrums, ends, loose threads.
Tine-egan, a magical invocation of evil spirits practised in the Highlands.
Tirle, to twirl.
Tirrivie, an outburst of passion.
Tocher, a dowry.
Tod, a fox.
Tolbooth, a prison.
Treillage, trellis-work.
Tuilzie, a brawl, street-fight.
Tumbril, a cart or sledge for conveying criminals to execution.

Umquhile, late, deceased.
Usquebaugh, whisky.

Venit extrema dies, the last day has come.
Vestiary, a room for keeping clothes; a tiring-room.
Videlicet, namely, that is to say.
Vorzeit, Die, antiquity, olden times.

Wagit, hired.
Walawa, woe! lo! woe! Now usually written well-a-day!
Warder, a staff or baton of office, used for making signals.
Warstle, a wrestle, personal struggle.
Wassail, ale flavoured with sugar and spices.
Wastel bread, a kind of fine white bread.
Wean, a small child.
Weapon-shawing, or *wapenshaw*, a periodical review of arms; a rendezvous for military exercises.
Weird, Dree a sore, to pay a severe penance.
Welked, marked with whelks or blisters.
Welsh main, a cock-fight of sixteen birds on each side, which was continued until only one was left alive.
Wem, or *wemm*, a scar, a blemish.
Weris, wars.
Wight, a fellow, person.
Will she, nill she, equivalent to, 'She *will* have her own way.'
Wrocht, wrought, caused.

Yauld, yielded, gave up.



BANNER OF THE GLOVERS OF PERTH.

ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN

OR THE MAIDEN OF THE MIST

By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

'What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground?' SHAKESPEARE

SCENE IN THE DUNGEON AT BREISACH, *page* 458

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ARTHUR RESCUED BY ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN.—PAGE 400.

INTRODUCTION 1831

This novel was written at a time when circumstances did not place within my reach the stores of a library tolerably rich in historical works, and especially the memoirs of the Middle Ages, amidst which I had been accustomed to pursue the composition of my fictitious narratives. In other words, it was chiefly the work of leisure hours in Edinburgh, not of quiet mornings in the country. In consequence of trusting to a memory, strongly tenacious certainly, but not less capricious in its efforts, I have to confess on this occasion more violations of accuracy in historical details than can perhaps be alleged against others of my novels. In truth, often as I have been complimented on the strength of my memory, I have through life been entitled to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer to his parish minister when eulogizing him with respect to the same faculty. 'No, doctor,' said the honest Border laird, 'I have no command of my memory; it only retains what happens to hit my fancy; and like enough, sir, if you were to preach to me for a couple of hours on end, I might be unable at the close of the discourse to remember one word of it.' Perhaps there are few men whose memory serves them with equal fidelity as to many different classes of subjects; but I am sorry to say that, while mine has rarely failed me as to any snatch of verse or trait of character that had once interested my fancy, it has generally been a frail support, not only as to names and dates, and other minute technicalities of history, but as to many more important things.

I hope this apology will suffice for one mistake which has been pointed out to me by the descendant of one of the persons introduced in this story, and who complains, with reason, that I have made a peasant deputy of the ancestor of a distinguished and noble family, none of whom ever declined from the high rank to which, as far as my pen trenched on it, I now beg leave to restore them. The name of the person who figures as deputy of Soleure in these pages, was always, it seems, as it is now, that of a patrician house. I am reminded by the same correspondent of another slip, probably of less consequence. The emperor of the days my novel refers to, though the representative of that Leopold who fell in the great battle of Sempach, never set up any pretensions against the liberties of the gallant Swiss, but, on the contrary, treated with uniform prudence and forbearance such of that nation as had established their independence, and with wise, as well as generous kindness, others who still continued to acknowledge fealty to the imperial crown. Errors of this sort, however trivial, ought never, in my opinion, to be pointed out to an author without meeting with a candid and respectful acknowledgment.

With regard to a general subject of great curiosity and interest, in the eyes at least of all antiquarian students, upon which I have touched at some length in this narrative, I mean the Vehmic *tribunals of Westphalia, a name so awful in men's ears during many centuries, and which, through the genius of Goethe, has again been revived in public fancy with a full share of its ancient terrors, I am bound to state my opinion that a wholly new and most important light has been thrown upon this matter since Anne of Geierstein first appeared, by the elaborate researches of my ingenious friend, Mr. Francis Palgrave,* whose proof-sheets, containing the pas-*

* Afterwards Sir Francis Palgrave.

sages I allude to, have been kindly forwarded to me, and whose complete work will be before the public ere this Introduction can pass through the press.

'In Germany,' says this very learned writer, 'there existed a singular jurisdiction, which claimed a direct descent from the pagan policy and mystic ritual of the earliest Teutons.

'We learn from the historians of Saxony that the "Frey Feldgericht," or Free Field Court of Corbey, was, in pagan times, under the supremacy of the priests of the Eresburgh, the temple which contained the Irminsule, or pillar of Irmin.† After the conversion of the people, the possessions of the temple were conferred by Louis the Pious upon the abbey which arose upon its site. The court was composed of sixteen persons, who held their offices for life. The senior member presided as the Gerefa or Graff; the junior performed the humbler duties of "Frohner," or summoner; the remaining fourteen acted as the Echevins, and by them all judgments were pronounced or declared. When any one of these died, a new member was elected by the priests, from amongst the twenty-two septs or families inhabiting the Gau or district, and who included all the hereditary occupants of the soil. Afterwards, the selection was made by the monks, but always with the assent of the Graff and of the "Frohner."*

'The seat of judgment, the king's seat, or "Königs-stuhl," was always established on the greensward; and we collect from the context, that the tribunal was also raised or appointed in the common fields of the Gau, for the purpose of deciding disputes relating to the land within its precinct. Such a "king's seat" was a plot sixteen feet in length, and sixteen feet in breadth; and when the ground was first consecrated, the Frohner dug a grave in the centre, into which each of the Free Echevins threw a handful of ashes, a coal, and a tile. If any doubt arose whether a place of judgment had been duly hallowed, the judges sought for the tokens. If they were not found, then all the judgments which had been given became null and void. It was also of the very essence of the court that it should be held beneath the sky, and by the light of the sun. All the ancient Teutonic judicial assemblies were held in the open air; but some relics of solar worship may, perhaps, be traced in the usage and in the language of this tribunal. The forms adopted in the Free Field Court also betray a singular affinity to the doctrines of the British Bards respecting their Gorseddau, or Conventions, which were always held in the open air, in the eye of the light, and in face of the sun.‡

'When a criminal was to be judged, or a cause to be decided, the Graff and the Free Echevins assembled around the "König-stuhl;" and the "Frohner," having proclaimed silence, opened the proceedings by reciting the following rhymes:—

> *"Sir Graff, with permission,*
> *I beg you to say,*
> *According to law, and without delay,*
> *If I, your knave,*
> *Who judgment crave,*
> *With your good grace,*
> *Upon the king's seat this seat may place."*

'To this address the Graff replied:

> *"While the sun shines with even light*
> *Upon masters and knaves, I shall declare*
> *The law of might, according to right.*
> *Place the king's seat true and square;*
> *Let even measure, for justice' sake,*
> *Be given in sight of God and man,*
> *That the plaintiff his complaint may make,*
> *And the defendant answer,—if he can."*

'In conformity to this permission, the "Frohner" placed the seat of judgment in the middle of the plot, and then he spake for the second time:

> *"Sir Graff, Master brave,*
> *I remind you of your honour, here,*
> *And moreover, that I am your knave;*
> *Tell me therefore, for law sincere,*
> *If these mete-wands are even and sure,*
> *Fit for the rich and fit for the poor,*
> *Both to measure land and condition;*
> *Tell me as you would eschew perdition."*

And so speaking, he laid the mete-wand on the ground. The Graff then began to try the measure, by placing his right foot against the wand, and he was followed by the other Free Echevins in rank and order, according to seniority. The length of the mete-wand being thus proved, the "Frohner" spake for the third time:

> *"Sir Graff, I ask by permission,*
> *If I with your mete-wand may mete*
> *Openly, and without displeasure,*
> *Here the king's free judgment seat."*

'And the Graff replied:

> *"I permit right,*
> *And I forbid wrong,*
> *Under the pains and penalties*
> *That to the old known laws belong."*

'Now was the time of measuring the mystic plot; it was measured by the mete-wand along and athwart, and when the dimensions were found to be true, the Graff placed himself in the seat of judgment, and gave the charge to the assembled Free Echevins, warning them to pronounce judgment, according to right and justice.

> *"On this day, with common consent,*
> *And under the clear firmament,*
> *A Free Field Court is established here,*
> *In the open eye of day;*
> *Enter soberly ye who may.*
> *The seat in its place is right,*
> *The mete-wand is found to be right;*
> *Declare your judgments without delay:*
> *And let the doom be truly given,*
> *Whilst yet the Sun shines bright in heaven."*

'Judgment was given by the Free Echevins according to plurality of voices.'

After observing that the Author of Anne of Geierstein had, by what he calls a 'very excusable poetical licence,' transferred something of these judicial rhymes from the Free Field Court of the Abbey of Corbey to the Free Vehmic Tribunals

* [The fortified camp or stronghold of the ancient Saxons, situated on the upper river Diemel, between Westphalia and Waldeck; it is now called Marsberg.]

† [The *Irmen Säule*, or Irmin Pillars, were wooden pillars set up in various parts of ancient heathen Germany, in honour of the god Irmen.]

‡ Owen Pugh's Elegies of Lewarch Hen, Pref., p. 46.—The place of these meetings was set apart by forming a circle of stones around the *Maen Gorsedd*, or Stone of the Gorsedd.

of Westphalia, Mr. Palgrave proceeds to correct many vulgar errors, in which the novel he remarks on no doubt had shared, with respect to the actual constitution of those last-named courts. 'The protocols of their proceedings,' he says, 'do not altogether realize the popular idea of their terrors and tyranny.' It may be allowed to me to question whether the mere protocols of such tribunals are quite enough to annul all the import of tradition respecting them; but in the following details there is no doubt much that will instruct the antiquarian, as well as amuse the popular reader.

'The court,' says Mr. Palgrave, 'was held with known and notorious publicity beneath the "eye of light;" and the sentences, though speedy and severe, were founded upon a regular system of established jurisprudence, not so strange, even to England, as it may at first sight appear.

'Westphalia, according to its ancient constitution, was divided into districts called "Freygraffschafften," each of which usually contained one, and sometimes many, Vehmic tribunals, whose boundaries were accurately defined. The right of the "Stuhlherr," or Lord, was of a feudal nature, and could be transferred by the ordinary modes of alienation; and if the Lord did not choose to act in his own person, he nominated a "Freigraff" to execute the office in his stead. The court itself was composed of "Freyschöpffen," Scabini, or Echevins, nominated by the Graff, and who were divided into two classes: the ordinary, and the "Wissenden" or "Witan," who were admitted under a strict and singular bond of secrecy.

'The initiation of these, the participators in all the mysteries of the tribunal, could only take place upon the "Red Earth," or within the limits of the ancient Duchy of Westphalia. Bareheaded and ungirt, the candidate is conducted before the dread tribunal. He is interrogated as to his qualifications, or rather as to the absence of any disqualification. He must be freeborn, a Teuton, and clear of any accusation cognisable by the tribunal of which he is to become a member.—If the answers are satisfactory, he then takes the oath, swearing by the Holy Law that he will conceal the secrets of the Holy Vehme from wife and child—from father and mother—from sister and brother—from fire and water—from every creature upon which the sun shines, or upon which the rain falls—from every being between earth and heaven.

'Another clause relates to his active duties. He further swears, that he will "say forth" to the tribunal all crimes or offences which fall beneath the secret ban of the emperor, which he knows to be true, or which he has heard from trustworthy report; and that he will not forbear to do so, for love nor for loathing, for gold nor for silver nor precious stones.—This oath being imposed upon him, the new Freischöpff was then entrusted with the secrets of the Vehmic tribunal. He received the password by which he was to know his fellows, and the grip or sign by which they recognised each other in silence; and he was warned of the terrible punishment awaiting the perjured brother.—If he discloses the secrets of the court, he is to expect that he will be suddenly seized by the ministers of vengeance. His eyes are bound, he is cast down on the soil, his tongue is torn out through the back of his neck—and he is then to be hanged seven times higher than any other criminal. And whether restrained by the fear of punishment, or by the stronger ties of mystery, no instance was ever known of any violation of the secrets of the tribunal.

'Thus connected by an invisible bond, the members of the "Holy Vehme" became extremely numerous. In the fourteenth century, the league contained upwards of one hundred thousand members. Persons of every rank sought to be associated to this powerful community, and to participate in the immunities which the brethren possessed. Princes were eager to allow their ministers to become the members of this mysterious and holy alliance; and the cities of the Empire were equally anxious to enrol their magistrates in the Vehmic union.

'The supreme government of the Vehmic tribunals was vested in the great or general Chapter, composed of the Freegraves and all the other initiated members, high and low. Over this assembly the emperor might preside in person, but more usually by his deputy, the Stadtholder of the ancient Duchy of Westphalia; an office which, after the fall of Henry the Lion, Duke of Brunswick, was annexed to the Archbishopric of Cologne.

'Before the general Chapter all the members were liable to account for their acts. And it appears that the "Freegraves" reported the proceedings which had taken place within their jurisdictions in the course of the year. Unworthy members were expelled, or sustained a severe punishment. Statutes, or "Reformations," as they were called, were here enacted for the regulation of the courts, and the amendment of any abuses; and new and unforeseen cases, for which the existing laws did not provide a remedy, received their determination in the Vehmic Parliament.

'As the Echevins were of two classes, uninitiated and initiated, so the Vehmic courts had also a twofold character: the "Offenbare Ding" was an open court or Folkmoot, but the "Heimliche Ächt" was the far-famed Secret Tribunal.

The first was held three times in each year. According to the ancient Teutonic usage, it usually assembled on Tuesday, anciently called "Dingstag," or court-day, as well as "Dienstag," or serving-day, the first open or working-day after the two great weekly festivals of Sunday and Moon-day. Here all the householders of the district, whether free or bond, attended as suitors. The "Offenbare Ding" exercised a civil jurisdiction; and in this Folkmoot appeared any complainant or appellant who sought to obtain the aid of the Vehmic tribunal, in those cases when it did not possess that summary jurisdiction from which it has obtained such fearful celebrity. Here also the suitors of the district made presentments, or "wroge," as they are termed, of any offences committed within their knowledge, and which were to be punished by the Graff and Echevins.

'The criminal jurisdiction of the Vehmic tribunal took the widest range. The "Vehme" could punish mere slander and contumely. Any violation of the Ten Commandments was to be restrained by the Echevins. Secret crimes, not to be proved by the ordinary testimony of witnesses, such as magic, witchcraft, and poison, were particularly to be restrained by the Vehmic judges; and they sometimes designated their jurisdiction as comprehending every offence against the honour of man or the precepts of religion. Such a definition, if definition it can be called, evidently allowed them to bring every action of which an individual might complain within the scope of their tribunals. The forcible usurpation of land became an offence against the "Vehme." And if the property of an humble individual was occupied by the proud burghers of the Hanse, the power of the defendants might afford a reasonable excuse for the interference of the Vehmic power.*

'The Echevins, as conservators of the Ban of the Empire, were bound to make constant circuits within their districts, by night and by day. If they could apprehend a thief, a murderer, or the perpetrator of any other heinous crime, in possession of the "mainour," or in the very act—or if his own mouth confessed the deed, they hung him upon the next tree. But to render this execution legal, the following requisites were necessary:—Fresh suit, or the apprehension and execution of the offender before daybreak or nightfall; the visible evidence of the crime; and lastly, that three Echevins, at least, should seize the offender, testify against him, and judge of the recent deed.

'If, without any certain accuser, and without the indication of crime, an individual was strongly and vehemently suspected; or when the nature of the offence was such as that its proof could only rest upon opinion and presumption, the offender then became subject to what the German jurists term the inquisitorial proceeding; it became the duty of the Echevin to denounce the "Leumund," or manifest evil fame, to the Secret Tribunal. If the Echevins and the Freygraff were satisfied with the presentment, either from their own knowledge, or from the information of their compeer, the offender was said to be "verfämbt" — his life was forfeited; and wherever he was found by the brethren of the tribunal, they executed him without the slightest delay or mercy. An offender who had escaped from the Echevins was liable to the same punishment; and such, also, was the doom of the party who, after having been summoned pursuant to an appeal preferred in open court, made default in appearing. But one of the "Wissenden" was in no respect liable to the summary process, or to the

* [A mediæval association of North German towns for mutual help and protection in trafficking both at home and beyond seas.]

inquisitorial proceeding, unless he had revealed the secrets of the court. He was presumed to be a true man; and if accused upon vehement suspicion, or "Leumund," the same presumption or evil repute which was fatal to the uninitiated, might be entirely rebutted by the compurgatory oath of the Free Echevin. If a party, accused by appeal, did not shun investigation, he appeared in the open court, and defended himself according to the ordinary rules of law. If he absconded, or if the evidence or presumptions were against him, the accusation then came before the judges of the Secret Court, who pronounced the doom. The accusatorial process, as it was termed, was also, in many cases, brought in the first instance before the "Heimliche Acht." Proceeding upon the examination of witnesses, it possessed no peculiar character, and its forms were those of the ordinary courts of justice. It was only in this manner that one of the "Wissenden," or Witan, could be tried; and the privilege of being exempted from the summary process, or from the effects of the "Leumund," appears to have been one of the reasons which induced so many of those who did not tread the "Red Earth" to seek to be included in the Vehmic bond.

'There was no mystery in the assembly of the Heimliche Acht. Under the oak, or under the lime-tree, the judges assembled in broad daylight, and before the eye of heaven; but the tribunal derived its name from the precautions which were taken for the purpose of preventing any disclosure of its proceedings which might enable the offender to escape the vengeance of the Vehme. Hence the fearful oath of secrecy which bound the Echevins. And if any stranger was found present in the court, the unlucky intruder instantly forfeited his life as a punishment of his temerity. If the presentment or denunciation did chance to become known to the offender, the law allowed him a right to appeal. But the permission was of very little utility, it was a profitless boon, for the Vehmic judges always laboured to conceal the judgment from the hapless criminal, who seldom was aware of his sentence until his neck was encircled by the halter.

'Charlemagne, according to the traditions of Westphalia, was the founder of the Vehmic tribunal; and it was supposed that he instituted the court for the purpose of coercing the Saxons, ever ready to relapse into the idolatry from which they had been reclaimed, not by persuasion, but by the sword. This opinion, however, is not confirmed either by documentary evidence or by contemporary historians. And if we examine the proceedings of the Vehmic tribunal, we shall see that, in principle, it differs in no essential character from the summary jurisdiction exercised in the townships and hundreds of Anglo-Saxon England. Amongst us, the thief or the robber was equally liable to summary punishment, if apprehended by the men of the township; and the same rules disqualified them from proceeding to summary execution. An English outlaw was exactly in the situation of him who had escaped from the hands of the Echevins, or who had failed to appear before the Vehmic Court—he was condemned unheard, nor was he confronted with his accusers. The inquisitorial proceedings, as they are termed by the German jurists, are identical with our ancient presentments. Presumptions are substituted for proofs, and general opinion holds the place of a responsible accuser. He who was untrue to all the people in the Saxon age, or liable to the malcredence of the inquest at a subsequent period, was scarcely more fortunate than he who was branded as "Leumund" by the Vehmic law.

'In cases of open delict and of outlawry, there was substantially no difference whatever between the English and the Vehmic proceedings. But in the inquisitorial process, the delinquent was allowed, according to our older code, to run the risk of the ordeal. He was accused by or before the Hundred, or the Thanes of the Wapentake; and his own oath cleared him, if a true man: but he "bore the iron" if unable to avail himself of the credit derived from a good and fair reputation. The same course may have been originally adopted in Westphalia; for the "Wissend," when accused, could exculpate himself by his compurgatory oath, being presumed to be of good fame; and it is therefore probable that an uninitiated offender, standing a stage lower in character and credibility, was allowed the last resort of the ordeal. But when the "Judgment of God" was abolished by the decrees of the Church, it did not occur to the Vehmic judges to put the offender upon his second trial by the visne, which now forms the distinguishing characteristic of the English law, and he was at once considered as condemned. The Heimliche Acht is a presentment not traversable by the offender.*

'The Vehmic tribunals can only be considered as the original jurisdictions of the "Old Saxons" which survived the subjugation of their country. The singular and mystic forms of initiation, the system of enigmatical phrases, the use of the signs and symbols of recognition, may probably be ascribed to the period when the whole system was united to the worship of the Deities of Vengeance, and when the sentence was promulgated by the Doomsmen, assembled, like the Asi† of old, before the altars of Thor‡ or Woden.§ Of this connection with ancient pagan policy, so clearly to be traced in the Icelandic courts, the English territorial jurisdictions offer some very faint vestiges; but the mystery had long been dispersed, and the whole system passed into the ordinary machinery of the law.

'As to the Vehmic tribunals, it is acknowledged that, in a truly barbarous age and country, their proceedings, however violent, were not without utility. Their severe and secret vengeance often deterred the rapacity of the noble robber, and protected the humble suppliant; the extent, and even the abuse, of their authority was in some measure justified in an Empire divided into numerous independent jurisdictions, and not subjected to any paramount tribunal, able to administer impartial justice to the oppressed. But, as the times improved, the Vehmic tribunals degenerated. The Echevins, chosen from the inferior ranks, did not possess any personal consideration. Opposed by the opulent cities of the Hanse, and objects of the suspicion and the enmity of the powerful aristocracy, the tribunals of some districts were abolished by law, and others took the form of ordinary territorial jurisdictions; the greater number fell into desuetude. Yet, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, a few Vehmic tribunals existed in name, though, as it may be easily supposed, without possessing any remnant of their pristine power.'—PALGRAVE *on the* Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth. *Proofs and Illustrations, p.* 157.

I have marked by Roman letters *the most important passage of the above quotation. The view it contains seems to me to have every appearance of truth and justice; and if such should, on maturer investigation, turn out to be the fact, it will certainly confer no small honour on an English scholar to have discovered the key to a mystery which had long exercised in vain the laborious and profound students of German antiquity.*

There are probably several other points on which I ought to have embraced this opportunity of enlarging; but the necessity of preparing for an excursion to foreign countries, in quest of health and strength, that have been for some time sinking, makes me cut short my address upon the present occasion.

Although I had never been in Switzerland, and numerous mistakes must of course have occurred in my attempts to describe the local scenery of that romantic region, I must not conclude without a statement highly gratifying to myself, that the work met with a reception of more than usual cordiality among the descendants of the Alpine heroes whose manners I had ventured to treat of; and I have in particular to express my thanks to the several Swiss gentlemen who have, since the novel was published, enriched my little collection of armour with specimens of the huge weapon that sheared the lances of the Austrian chivalry at Sempach,‖ and was employed with equal

* [He was put to the ordeal of carrying red-hot iron.]

† [The gods were called *Asir* in the ancient Scandinavian mythology.]

‡ [The god of thunder in Scandinavian mythology.]

§ [The chief of the ancient Scandinavian gods.]

‖ [At Sempach, in the canton of Lucerne, the Swiss defeated the Austrian nobility, four times greater than their own forces in number, in 1386.]

success on the bloody days of Granson and Morat.† Of the ancient doublehanded* espadons *of the Switzer, I have in this way received, I think, not less than six, in excellent preservation, from as many different individuals, who thus testified their general approbation of these pages. They are not the less interesting, that gigantic swords, of nearly the same pattern and dimensions, were employed in their conflicts with the bold knights and men-at-arms of England, by Wallace, and the sturdy foot-soldiers who, under his guidance, laid the foundations of Scottish independence.*

The reader who wishes to examine with attention the historical events of the period which the novel embraces, will find ample means of doing so in the valuable works of Zschokké‡ and M. de Barante§ — which last author's account of the Dukes of Burgundy is among the most valuable of recent accessions of European literature — and in the new Parisian edition of Froissart,‖ which has not as yet attracted so much attention in this country as it well deserves to do.¶

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, *Sept.* 17, 1831.

* [At this place, situated at the southern extremity of the Lake of Neuchatel, the Swiss defeated Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, in 1476. See Chapter xxxii. below.]

† [Morat, in the extreme north of the canton of Fribourg, was the scene of a second defeat of Charles of Burgundy in the same year, 1476.]

‡ [A German novelist who wrote a history of the three Leagues in Switzerland (1798).]

§ [His work is designated *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*, 1364–1477, 12 vols., 1824–28.]

‖ [A celebrated French chronicler of the fourteenth century.]

¶ Note A. Remarks on the Novel.

SWISS TWO-HANDED SWORDS. ABBOTSFORD.

ARTHUR'S DUEL WITH DONNERHUGEL.—PAGE 416.

CHAPTER I.

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean— * *
* * * * * I am giddy.

MANFRED.

THE course of four centuries has well-nigh elapsed since the series of events which are related in the following chapters took place on the Continent. The records which contained the outlines of the history, and might be referred to as proof of its veracity, were long preserved in the superb library of the Monastery of Saint Gall,* but perished, with many of the literary treasures of that establishment, when the convent was plundered by the French Revolutionary armies. The events are fixed by historical date to the middle of the fifteenth century—that important period, when chivalry still shone with a setting ray, soon about to be totally obscured; in some countries, by the establishment of free institutions, in others, by that of arbitrary power, which alike rendered useless the interference of those self-endowed redressers of wrongs, whose only warrant of authority was the sword.

Amid the general light which had recently shone upon Europe, France, Burgundy, and Italy, but more especially Austria, had been made acquainted with the character of a people of whose very existence they had before been scarcely conscious. It is true that the inhabitants of those countries which lie in the vicinity of the Alps, that immense barrier, were not ignorant that, notwithstanding their rugged and desolate appearance, the secluded valleys which winded among those gigantic mountains nourished a race of hunters and shepherds; men who, living in a state of primeval simplicity, compelled from the soil a subsistence gained by severe labour, followed the chase over the most savage precipices and through the darkest pine forests, or drove their cattle to spots which afforded them a scanty pasturage, even in the vicinage of eternal snows. But the existence of such a people, or rather of a number of small communities who followed nearly the same poor and hardy course of life, had seemed to the rich and powerful princes in the neighbourhood a matter of as little consequence, as it is to the stately herds which repose in a fertile meadow, that a few half-starved goats find their scanty food among the rocks which overlook their rich domain.

But wonder and attention began to be attracted towards these mountaineers about the middle of the fourteenth century, when reports were spread abroad of severe contests, in which the German chivalry, endeavouring to suppress insurrections among their Alpine vassals, had sustained repeated and bloody defeats, although having on their side numbers and discipline, and the advantage of the most perfect military equipment then known and confided in. Great was the wonder that cavalry, which made the only efficient part of the feudal armies of these ages, should be routed by men on foot; that warriors sheathed in complete steel should be overpowered by naked peasants who wore no defensive armour, and were irregularly provided with pikes, hal-

* [At Saint Gall or Saint Gallen, a few miles from the southern shore of the Lake of Constance in Switzerland.]

berds, and clubs, for the purpose of attack; above all, it seemed a species of miracle that knights and nobles of the highest birth should be defeated by mountaineers and shepherds. But the repeated victories of the Swiss, at Laupen,* Sempach, and on other less distinguished occasions, plainly intimated that a new principle of civil organisation, as well as of military movements, had arisen amid the stormy regions of Helvetia.†

Still, although the decisive victories which obtained liberty for the Swiss Cantons, as well as the spirit of resolution and wisdom with which the members of the little confederation had maintained themselves against the utmost exertions of Austria, had spread their fame abroad through all the neighbouring countries, and although they themselves were conscious of the character and actual power which repeated victories had acquired for themselves and their country, yet down to the middle of the fifteenth century, and at a later date, the Swiss retained in a great measure the wisdom, moderation, and simplicity of their ancient manners; so much so, that those who were entrusted with the command of the troops of the Republic in battle, were wont to resume the shepherd's staff when they laid down the truncheon, and, like the Roman dictators, to retire to complete equality with their fellow-citizens, from the eminence of military command to which their talents, and the call of their country, had raised them.

It is, then, in the Forest Cantons ‡ of Switzerland, in the autumn of 1474, while these districts were in the rude and simple state we have described, that our tale opens.

Two travellers, one considerably past the prime of life, the other probably two or three and twenty years old, had passed the night at the little town of Lucerne, the capital of the Swiss State of the same name, and beautifully situated on the lake of the Four Cantons. Their dress and character seemed those of merchants of a higher class, and while they themselves journeyed on foot, the character of the country rendering that by far the most easy mode of pursuing their route, a young peasant lad, from the Italian side of the Alps, followed them with a sumpter mule, laden apparently with men's wares and baggage, which he sometimes mounted, but more frequently led by the bridle.

The travellers were uncommonly fine-looking men, and seemed connected by some very near relationship,—probably that of father and son; for at the little inn where they lodged on the preceding evening, the great deference and respect paid by the younger to the elder had not escaped the observation of the natives, who, like other sequestered beings, were curious in proportion to the limited means of information which they possessed. They observed, also, that the merchants, under pretence of haste, declined opening their bales, or proposing traffic to the inhabitants of Lucerne, alleging in excuse that they had no commodities fitted for the market. The females of the town were the more displeased with the reserve of the mercantile travellers, because they were given to understand that it was occasioned by the wares in which they dealt being too costly to find customers among the Helvetian mountains; for it had transpired, by means of their attendant, that the strangers had visited Venice, and had there made many purchases of rich commodities, which were brought from India and Egypt to that celebrated emporium, as to the common mart of the Western World, and thence dispersed into all quarters of Europe. Now the Swiss maidens had of late made the discovery that gauds and gems were fair to look upon, and though without the hope of being able to possess themselves of such ornaments, they felt a natural desire to review and handle the rich stores of the merchants, and some displeasure at being prevented from doing so.

It was also observed that, though the strangers were sufficiently courteous in their demeanour, they did not evince that studious anxiety to please, displayed by the travelling pedlars or merchants of Lombardy or Savoy, by whom the inhabitants of the mountains were occasionally visited; and who had been more frequent in their rounds of late years, since the spoils of victory had invested the Swiss with some wealth, and had taught many of them new wants. Those peripatetic traders were civil and assiduous, as their calling required; but the new visitors seemed men who were indifferent to traffic, or at least to such slender gains as could be gathered in Switzerland.

Curiosity was further excited by the circumstance that they spoke to each other in a language which was certainly neither German, Italian, nor French, but from which an old man serving in the cabaret, who had once been as far as Paris, supposed they might be English; a people of whom it was only known in these mountains that they were a fierce insular race, at war with the French for many years, and a large body of whom had long since invaded the Forest Cantons, and sustained such a defeat in the valley of Reussweil, as was well remembered by the grey-haired men of Lucerne, who received the tale from their fathers.

The lad who attended the strangers was soon ascertained to be a youth from the Grisons country, who acted as their guide, so far as his knowledge of the mountains permitted. He said they designed to go to Bâle, but seemed desirous to travel by circuitous and unfrequented routes. The circumstances just mentioned increased the general desire to know more of the travellers and of their merchandise. Not a bale, however, was unpacked, and the merchants, leaving Lucerne next morning, resumed their toilsome journey, preferring a circuitous route and bad roads, through the peaceful cantons of Switzerland, to encountering the exactions and rapine of the robber chivalry of Germany, who, like so many sovereigns, made war each at his own pleasure, and levied tolls and taxes on every one who passed their domains of a mile's breadth, with all the insolence of petty tyranny.

* [Fought in 1339 between the burghers of Berne and the feudal nobles of that part of the German empire, the former winning the victory.]

† [The Latin name for Switzerland.]

‡ [The Four Forest Cantons are those grouped around the Lake of Lucerne,—Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden.]

For several hours after leaving Lucerne, the journey of our travellers was successfully prosecuted. The road, though precipitous and difficult, was rendered interesting by those splendid phenomena, which no country exhibits in a more astonishing manner than the mountains of Switzerland, where the rocky pass, the verdant valley, the broad lake, and the rushing torrent, the attributes of other hills as well as these, are interspersed with the magnificent and yet fearful horrors of the glaciers, a feature peculiar to themselves.

It was not an age in which the beauties or grandeur of a landscape made much impression either on the minds of those who travelled through the country, or who resided in it. To the latter, the objects, however dignified, were familiar, and associated with daily habits and with daily toil; and the former saw, perhaps, more terror than beauty in the wild region through which they passed, and were rather solicitous to get safe to their night's quarters, than to comment on the grandeur of the scenes which lay between them and their place of rest. Yet our merchants, as they proceeded on their journey, could not help being strongly impressed by the character of the scenery around them. Their road lay along the side of the lake, at times level and close on its very margin, at times rising to a great height on the side of the mountain, and winding along the verge of precipices which sunk down to the water as sharp and sheer as the wall of a castle descending upon the ditch which defends it. At other times it traversed spots of a milder character,—delightful green slopes, and lowly, retired valleys, affording both pasturage and arable ground, sometimes watered by small streams, which winded by the hamlet of wooden huts with their fantastic little church and steeple, meandered round the orchard and the mount of vines, and, murmuring gently as they flowed, found a quiet passage into the lake.

'That stream, Arthur,' said the elder traveller, as with one consent they stopped to gaze on such a scene as I have described, 'resembles the life of a good and a happy man.'

'And the brook, which hurries itself headlong down yon distant hill, marking its course by a streak of white foam,' answered Arthur,—'what does that resemble?'

'That of a brave and unfortunate one,' replied his father.

'The torrent for me,' said Arthur; 'a headlong course which no human force can oppose, and then let it be as brief as it is glorious.'

'It is a young man's thought,' replied his father; 'but I am well aware that it is so rooted in thy heart, that nothing but the rude hand of adversity can pluck it up.'

'As yet the root clings fast to my heart's strings,' said the young man; 'and methinks adversity's hand hath had a fair grasp of it.'

'You speak, my son, of what you little understand,' said his father. 'Know that till the middle of life be passed, men scarce distinguish true prosperity from adversity, or rather they court as the favours of fortune what they should more justly regard as the marks of her displeasure. Look at yonder mountain, which wears on its shaggy brow a diadem of clouds, now raised and now depressed, while the sun glances upon, but is unable to dispel it;—a child might believe it to be a crown of glory—a man knows it to be the signal of tempest.'

Arthur followed the direction of his father's eye to the dark and shadowy eminence of Mount Pilatus.*

'Is the mist on yonder wild mountain so ominous, then?' asked the young man.

'Demand of Antonio,' said his father; 'he will tell you the legend.'

The young merchant addressed himself to the Swiss lad who acted as their attendant, desiring to know the name of the gloomy height, which, in that quarter, seems the leviathan of the huge congregation of mountains assembled about Lucerne.

The lad crossed himself devoutly, as he recounted the popular legend, that the wicked Pontius Pilate, Proconsul of Judea, had here found the termination of his impious life; having, after spending years in the recesses of that mountain which bears his name, at length, in remorse and despair rather than in penitence, plunged into the dismal lake which occupies the summit. Whether water refused to do the executioner's duty upon such a wretch, or whether, his body being drowned, his vexed spirit continued to haunt the place where he committed suicide, Antonio did not pretend to explain. But a form was often, he said, seen to emerge from the gloomy waters, and go through the action of one washing his hands; and when he did so, dark clouds of mist gathered first round the bosom of the Infernal Lake (such it had been styled of old), and then, wrapping the whole upper part of the mountain in darkness, presaged a tempest or hurricane, which was sure to follow in a short space. He added, that the evil spirit was peculiarly exasperated at the audacity of such strangers as ascended the mountain to gaze at his place of punishment, and that, in consequence, the magistrates of Lucerne had prohibited any one from approaching Mount Pilatus, under severe penalties. Antonio once more crossed himself as he finished his legend; in which act of devotion he was imitated by his hearers, too good Catholics to entertain any doubt of the truth of the story.

'How the accursed heathen scowls upon us!' said the younger of the merchants, while the cloud darkened and seemed to settle on the brow of Mount Pilatus. '*Vade retro;*—be thou defied, sinner!'

A rising wind, rather heard than felt, seemed to groan forth, in the tone of a dying lion, the acceptance of the suffering spirit to the rash challenge of the young Englishman. The mountain was seen to send down its rugged sides thick wreaths of heaving mist, which, rolling through the rugged chasms that seamed the grisly hill, resembled torrents of rushing lava pouring down from a volcano. The ridgy precipices, which formed the sides of these huge ravines, showed their splintery and rugged edges over the vapour, as if dividing from each other the descending streams of mist which rolled

* [An isolated peak, 7000 feet high, at the western end of the Lake of Lucerne.]

around them. As a strong contrast to this gloomy and threatening scene, the more distant mountain range of Rigi shone brilliant with all the hues of an autumnal sun.

While the travellers watched this striking and varied contrast, which resembled an approaching combat betwixt the powers of Light and Darkness, their guide, in his mixed jargon of Italian and German, exhorted them to make haste on their journey. The village to which he proposed to conduct them, he said, was yet distant, the road bad and difficult to find, and if the Evil One' (looking to Mount Pilatus, and crossing himself) 'should send his darkness upon the valley, the path would be both doubtful and dangerous. The travellers, thus admonished, gathered the capes of their cloaks close round their throats, pulled their bonnets resolvedly over their brows, drew the buckle of the broad belts which fastened their mantles, and each with a mountain staff in his hand, well shod with an iron spike, they pursued their journey with unabated strength and undaunted spirit.

With every step the scenes around them appeared to change. Each mountain, as if its firm and immutable form were flexible and varying, altered in appearance like that of a shadowy apparition, as the position of the strangers relative to them changed with their motions, and as the mist, which continued slowly though constantly to descend, influenced the rugged aspect of the hills and valleys which it shrouded with its vapoury mantle. The nature of their progress, too, never direct, but winding by a narrow path along the sinuosities of the valley, and making many a circuit round precipices and other obstacles which it was impossible to surmount, added to the wild variety of a journey, in which, at last, the travellers totally lost any vague idea which they had previously entertained concerning the direction in which the road led them.

'I would,' said the elder, 'we had that mystical needle which mariners talk of, that points ever to the north, and enables them to keep their way on the waters, when there is neither cape nor headland, sun, moon, nor stars, nor any mark in heaven or earth, to tell them how to steer.'

'It would scarce avail us among these mountains,' answered the youth; 'for though that wonderful needle may keep its point to the northern pole-star when it is on a flat surface like the sea, it is not to be thought it would do so when these huge mountains arise like walls betwixt the steel and the object of its sympathy.

'I fear me,' replied the father, 'we shall find our guide, who has been growing hourly more stupid since he left his own valley, as useless as you suppose the compass would be among the hills of this wild country.—Canst tell, my boy,' said he, addressing Antonio in bad Italian, 'if we be in the road we purposed?'

'If it please Saint Antonio,' said the guide, who was obviously too much confused to answer the question directly.

'And that water, half covered with mist, which glimmers through the fog at the foot of this huge black precipice—is it still a part of the Lake of Lucerne, or have we lighted upon another since we ascended that last hill?'

Antonio could only answer that they ought to be on the Lake of Lucerne still, and that he hoped that what they saw below them was only a winding branch of the same sheet of water. But he could say nothing with certainty.

'Dog of an Italian!' exclaimed the younger traveller, 'thou deservest to have thy bones broken, for undertaking a charge which thou art as incapable to perform as thou art to guide us to heaven!'

'Peace, Arthur,' said his father; 'if you frighten the lad, he runs off, and we lose the small advantage we might have by his knowledge; if you use your baton, he rewards you with the stab of a knife,—for such is the humour of a revengeful Lombard. Either way, you are marred instead of helped.—Hark thee hither, my boy,' he continued, in his indifferent Italian; 'be not afraid of that hot youngster, whom I will not permit to injure thee; but tell me, if thou canst, the names of the villages by which we are to make our journey to-day.'

The gentle mode in which the elder traveller spoke reassured the lad, who had been somewhat alarmed at the harsh tone and menacing expressions of his younger companion; and he poured forth, in his patois, a flood of names, in which the German guttural sounds were strangely intermixed with the soft accents of the Italian, but which carried to the hearer no intelligible information concerning the object of his question; so that at length he was forced to conclude, 'Even lead on, in Our Lady's name, or in Saint Antonio's if you like it better; we shall but lose time, I see, in trying to understand each other.'

They moved on as before, with this difference, that the guide, leading the mule, now went first, and was followed by the other two, whose motions he had formerly directed by calling to them from behind. The clouds meantime became thicker and thicker, and the mist, which had at first been a thin vapour, began now to descend in the form of a small thick rain, which gathered like dew upon the capotes of the travellers. Distant rustling and groaning sounds were heard among the remote mountains, similar to those by which the Evil Spirit of Mount Pilatus had seemed to announce the storm. The boy again pressed his companions to advance, but at the same time threw impediments in the way of their doing so, by the slowness and indecision which he showed in leading them on.

Having proceeded in this manner for three or four miles, which uncertainty rendered doubly tedious, the travellers were at length engaged in a narrow path, running along the verge of a precipice. Beneath was water, but of what description they could not ascertain. The wind, indeed, which began to be felt in sudden gusts, sometimes swept aside the mist so completely as to show the waves glimmering below; but whether they were those of the same lake on which their morning journey had commenced, whether it was another and separate sheet of water of a similar character, or whether it was a river or large brook, the view afforded was too indistinct to determine. Thus far was

certain, that they were not on the shores of the Lake of Lucerne where it displays its usual expanse of waters; for the same hurricane gusts which showed them water in the bottom of the glen, gave them a transient view of the opposite side, at what exact distance they could not well discern, but near enough to show tall abrupt rocks and shaggy pine-trees, here united in groups, and there singly anchored among the cliffs which overhung the water. This was a more distinct landscape than the farther side of the lake would have offered, had they been on the right road.

Hitherto the path, though steep and rugged, was plainly enough indicated, and showed traces of having been used both by riders and foot passengers. But suddenly, as Antonio with the loaded mule had reached a projecting eminence, around the peak of which the path made a sharp turn, he stopped short, with his usual exclamation, addressed to his patron saint. It appeared to Arthur that the mule shared the terrors of the guide; for it started back, put forward its fore-feet separate from each other, and seemed, by the attitude which it assumed, to intimate a determination to resist every proposal to advance, at the same time expressing horror and fear at the prospect which lay before it.

Arthur pressed forward, not only from curiosity, but that he might if possible bear the brunt of any danger before his father came up to share it. In less time than we have taken to tell the story, the young man stood beside Antonio and the mule, upon a platform of rock on which the road seemed absolutely to terminate, and from the farther side of which a precipice sunk sheer down, to what depth the mist did not permit him to discern, but certainly uninterrupted for more than three hundred feet.

The blank expression which overcast the visage of the younger traveller, and traces of which might be discerned in the physiognomy of the beast of burden, announced alarm and mortification at this unexpected, and, as it seemed, insurmountable obstacle. Nor did the looks of the father, who presently after came up to the same spot, convey either hope or comfort. He stood with the others gazing on the misty gulf beneath them, and looking all around, but in vain, for some continuation of the path, which certainly had never been originally designed to terminate in this summary manner. As they stood uncertain what to do next, the son in vain attempting to discover some mode of passing onward, and the father about to propose that they should return by the road which had brought them hither, a loud howl of the wind, more wild than they had yet heard, swept down the valley. All being aware of the danger of being hurled from the precarious station which they occupied, snatched at bushes and rocks by which to secure themselves, and even the poor mule seemed to steady itself in order to withstand the approaching hurricane. The gust came with such unexpected fury that it appeared to the travellers to shake the very rock on which they stood, and would have swept them from its surface like so many dry leaves, had it not been for the momentary precautions which they had taken for their safety. But as the wind rushed down the glen, it completely removed for the space of three or four minutes the veil of mist which former gusts had only served to agitate or discompose, and showed them the nature and cause of the interruption which they had met with so unexpectedly.

The rapid but correct eye of Arthur was then able to ascertain that the path, after leaving the platform of rock on which they stood, had originally passed upwards in the same direction along the edge of a steep bank of earth, which had then formed the upper covering of a stratum of precipitous rocks. But it had chanced in some of the convulsions of nature which take place in those wild regions, where she works upon a scale so formidable, that the earth had made a slip, or almost a precipitous descent, from the rock, and been hurled downwards, with the path, which was traced along the top, and with bushes, trees, or whatever grew upon it, into the channel of the stream; for such they could now discern the water beneath them to be, and not a lake or an arm of a lake, as they had hitherto supposed.

The immediate cause of this phenomenon might probably have been an earthquake, not unfrequent in that country. The bank of earth, now a confused mass of ruins inverted in its fall, showed some trees growing in a horizontal position, and others, which, having pitched on their heads in their descent, were at once inverted and shattered to pieces, and lay a sport to the streams of the river which they had heretofore covered with gloomy shadow. The gaunt precipice which remained behind, like the skeleton of some huge monster divested of its flesh, formed the wall of a fearful abyss, resembling the face of a newly-wrought quarry, more dismal of aspect from the rawness of its recent formation, and from its being as yet uncovered with any of the vegetation with which nature speedily mantles over the bare surface even of her sternest crags and precipices.

Besides remarking these appearances, which tended to show that this interruption of the road had been of recent occurrence, Arthur was able to observe, on the farther side of the river, higher up the valley, and rising out of the pine forest, interspersed with rocks, a square building of considerable height, like the ruins of a Gothic tower. He pointed out this remarkable object to Antonio, and demanded if he knew it; justly conjecturing that, from the peculiarity of the site, it was a landmark not easily to be forgotten by any who had seen it before. Accordingly, it was gladly and promptly recognised by the lad, who called cheerfully out, that the place was Geierstein, that is, as he explained it, the Rock of the Vultures. He knew it, he said, by the old tower, as well as by a huge pinnacle of rock which arose near it, almost in the form of a steeple, to the top of which the lammer-geier (one of the largest birds of prey known to exist) had in former days transported the child of an ancient lord of the castle. He proceeded to recount the vow which was made by the Knight of Geierstein to Our Lady of Einsiedlen;* and,

* [Einsiedeln, a celebrated Benedictine abbey, a few miles south of the Lake of Zurich.]

while he spoke, the castle, rocks, woods, and precipices again faded in mist. But as he concluded his wonderful narrative with the miracle which restored the infant again to its father's arms, he cried out suddenly, 'Look to yourselves —the storm!—the storm!' It came accordingly, and, sweeping the mist before it, again bestowed on the travellers a view of the horrors around them.

'Ay!' quoth Antonio triumphantly, as the gust abated, 'old Pontius loves little to hear of Our Lady of Einsiedlen; but she will keep her own with him—Ave Maria!'

'That tower,' said the young traveller, 'seems uninhabited. I can descry no smoke, and the battlement appears ruinous.'

'It has not been inhabited for many a day,' answered the guide. 'But I would I were at it, for all that. Honest Arnold Biederman, the Landamman' (chief magistrate) 'of the Canton of Unterwalden, dwells near, and, I warrant you, distressed strangers will not want the best that cupboard and cellar can find them, wherever he holds rule.'

'I have heard of him,' said the elder traveller, whom Antonio had been taught to call Seignor Philipson; 'a good and hospitable man, and one who enjoys deserved weight with his countrymen.'

'You have spoken him right, seignor,' answered the guide; 'and I would we could reach his house, where you should be sure of hospitable treatment, and a good direction for your next day's journey. But how we are to get to the Vulture's Castle, unless we had wings like the vulture, is a question hard to answer.'

Arthur replied by a daring proposal, which the reader will find in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

——Away with me—
The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me—
Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub—now, give me your hand.
* * * * * * *
The chalet will be gain'd within an hour.

MANFRED.

AFTER surveying the desolate scene as accurately as the stormy state of the atmosphere would permit, the younger of the travellers observed, 'In any other country, I should say the tempest begins to abate; but what to expect in this land of desolation, it were rash to decide. If the apostate spirit of Pilate be actually on the blast, these lingering and more distant howls seem to intimate that he is returning to his place of punishment. The pathway has sunk with the ground on which it was traced—I can see part of it lying down in the abyss, marking, as with a streak of clay, yonder mass of earth and stone. But I think it possible, with your permission, my father, that I could still scramble forward along the edge of the precipice till I come in sight of the habitation which the lad tells us of. If there be actually such a one, there must be an access to it somewhere; and if I cannot find the path out, I can at least make a signal to those who dwell near the Vulture's Nest yonder, and obtain some friendly guidance.'

'I cannot consent to your incurring such a risk,' said his father; 'let the lad go forward, if he can and will. He is mountain bred, and I will reward him richly.'

But Antonio declined the proposal absolutely and decidedly. 'I am mountain bred,' he said, 'but I am no chamois-hunter; and I have no wings to transport me from cliff to cliff, like a raven—gold is not worth life.'

'And God forbid,' said Seignor Philipson, 'that I should tempt thee to weigh them against each other!—Go on, then, my son—I follow thee.'

'Under your favour, dearest sir, no,' replied the young man; 'it is enough to endanger the life of one—and mine, far the most worthless, should, by all the rules of wisdom as well as nature, be put first in hazard.'

'No, Arthur,' replied his father in a determined voice; 'no, my son—I have survived much, but I will not survive thee.'

'I fear not for the issue, father, if you permit me to go alone; but I cannot—dare not —undertake a task so perilous, if you persist in attempting to share it, with no better aid than mine. While I endeavoured to make a new advance, I should be ever looking back to see how you might attain the station which I was about to leave—And bethink you, dearest father, that if I fall, I fall an unregarded thing, of as little moment as the stone or tree which has toppled headlong down before me. But you—should your foot slip, or your hand fail, bethink you what and how much must needs fall with you!'

'Thou art right, my child,' said the father. 'I still have that which binds me to life, even though I were to lose in thee all that is dear to me.—Our Lady and Our Lady's Knight bless thee and prosper thee, my child! Thy foot is young, thy hand is strong — thou hast not climbed Plynlimmon in vain. Be bold, but be wary — remember there is a man who, failing thee, has but one act of duty to bind him to the earth, and, that discharged, will soon follow thee.'

The young man accordingly prepared for his journey, and, stripping himself of his cumbrous cloak, showed his well-proportioned limbs in a jerkin of grey cloth, which sat close to his person. The father's resolution gave way when his son turned round to bid him farewell. He recalled his permission, and in a peremptory tone forbade him to proceed. But, without listening to the prohibition, Arthur had commenced his perilous adventure. Descending from the platform on which he stood, by the boughs of an old ash-tree, which thrust itself out of the cleft of a rock, the youth was enabled to gain, though at great risk, a narrow ledge, the very brink of the precipice, by creeping along which he hoped to pass on till he made himself heard or seen from the habitation of whose existence the guide had informed him. His situation, as he pursued this bold purpose, appeared so precarious, that even the hired attendant hardly dared to draw breath as he

gazed on him. The ledge which supported him seemed to grow so narrow as he passed along it, as to become altogether invisible, while, sometimes with his face to the precipice, sometimes looking forward, sometimes glancing his eyes upward, but never venturing to cast a look below, lest his brain should grow giddy at a sight so appalling, he wound his way onward. To his father and the attendant, who beheld his progress, it was less that of a man advancing in the ordinary manner, and resting by aught connected with the firm earth, than that of an insect crawling along the face of a perpendicular wall, of whose progressive movement we are indeed sensible, but cannot perceive the means of its support. And bitterly, most bitterly, did the miserable parent now lament that he had not persisted in his purpose to encounter the baffling and even perilous measure of retracing his steps to the habitation of the preceding night. He should then, at least, have partaken the fate of the son of his love.

Meanwhile, the young man's spirits were strongly braced for the performance of his perilous task. He laid a powerful restraint on his imagination, which in general was sufficiently active, and refused to listen, even for an instant, to any of the horrible insinuations by which fancy augments actual danger. He endeavoured manfully to reduce all around him to the scale of right reason, as the best support of true courage. 'This ledge of rock,' he urged to himself, 'is but narrow, yet it has breadth enough to support me; these cliffs and crevices in the surface are small and distant, but the one affords as secure a resting-place to my feet, the other as available a grasp to my hands, as if I stood on a platform of a cubit broad, and rested my arm on a balustrade of marble. My safety, therefore, depends on myself. If I move with decision, step firmly, and hold fast, what signifies how near I am to the mouth of an abyss?'

Thus estimating the extent of his danger by the measure of sound sense and reality, and supported by some degree of practice in such exercise, the brave youth went forward on his awful journey, step by step, winning his way with a caution, and fortitude, and presence of mind which alone could have saved him from instant destruction. At length he gained a point where a projecting rock formed the angle of the precipice, so far as it had been visible to him from the platform. This, therefore, was the critical point of his undertaking; but it was also the most perilous part of it. The rock projected more than six feet forward over the torrent, which he heard raging at the depth of a hundred yards beneath, with a noise like subterranean thunder. He examined the spot with the utmost care, and was led, by the existence of shrubs, grass, and even stunted trees, to believe that this rock marked the farthest extent of the slip or slide of earth, and that, could he but turn round the angle of which it was the termination, he might hope to attain the continuation of the path which had been so strangely interrupted by this convulsion of nature. But the crag jutted out so much as to afford no possibility of passing either under or around it; and as it rose several feet above the position which Arthur had attained, it was no easy matter to climb over it. This was, however, the course which he chose, as the only mode of surmounting what he hoped might prove the last obstacle to his voyage of discovery. A projecting tree afforded him the means of raising and swinging himself up to the top of the crag. But he had scarcely planted himself on it, had scarcely a moment to congratulate himself on seeing, amid a wild chaos of cliffs and wood, the gloomy ruins of Geierstein, with smoke arising, and indicating something like a human habitation beside them, when, to his extreme terror, he felt the huge cliff on which he stood tremble, stoop slowly forward, and gradually sink from its position. Projecting as it was, and shaken as its equilibrium had been by the most recent earthquake, it lay now so insecurely poised, that its balance was entirely destroyed, even by the addition of the young man's weight.

Aroused by the imminence of the danger, Arthur, by an instinctive attempt at self-preservation, drew cautiously back from the falling crag into the tree by which he had ascended, and turned his head back as if spell-bound, to watch the descent of the fatal rock from which he had just retreated. It tottered for two or three seconds, as if uncertain which way to fall; and had it taken a sidelong direction, must have dashed the adventurer from his place of refuge, or borne both the tree and him down headlong into the river. After a moment of horrible uncertainty, the power of gravitation determined a direct and forward descent. Down went the huge fragment, which must have weighed at least twenty tons, rending and splintering in its precipitate course the trees and bushes which it encountered, and settling at length in the channel of the torrent with a din equal to the discharge of a hundred pieces of artillery. The sound was re-echoed from bank to bank, from precipice to precipice, with emulative thunders; nor was the tumult silent till it rose into the region of eternal snows, which, equally insensible to terrestrial sounds and unfavourable to animal life, heard the roar in their majestic solitude, but suffered it to die away without a responsive voice.

What, in the meanwhile, were the thoughts of the distracted father, who saw the ponderous rock descend, but could not mark whether his only son had borne it company in its dreadful fall! His first impulse was to rush forward along the face of the precipice, which he had seen Arthur so lately traverse; and when the lad Antonio withheld him, by throwing his arms around him, he turned on the guide with the fury of a bear which had been robbed of her cubs.

'Unhand me, base peasant,' he exclaimed, 'or thou diest on the spot!'

'Alas!' said the poor boy, dropping on his knees before him, 'I too have a father!'

The appeal went to the heart of the traveller, who instantly let the lad go, and, holding up his hands and lifting his eyes towards heaven, said, in accents of the deepest agony, mingled with devout resignation, '*Fiat voluntas tua!*—he was my last, and loveliest, and best beloved, and

most worthy of my love; and yonder,' he added, 'yonder over the glen soar the birds of prey, who are to feast on his young blood.—But I will see him once more,' exclaimed the miserable parent, as the huge carrion vulture floated past him on the thick air,—'I will see my Arthur once more, ere the wolf and the eagle mangle him—I will see all of him that earth still holds. Detain me not—but abide here, and watch me as I advance. If I fall, as is most likely, I charge you to take the sealed papers, which you will find in the valise, and carry them to the person to whom they are addressed, with the least possible delay. There is money enough in the purse to bury me with my poor boy, and to cause masses be said for our souls, and yet leave you a rich recompense for your journey.'

The honest Swiss lad, obtuse in his understanding, but kind and faithful in his disposition, blubbered as his employer spoke, and, afraid to offer further remonstrance or opposition, saw his temporary master prepare himself to traverse the same fatal precipice, over the verge of which his ill-fated son had seemed to pass to the fate which, with all the wildness of a parent's anguish, his father was hastening to share.

Suddenly there was heard from beyond the fatal angle from which the mass of stone had been displaced by Arthur's rash ascent, the loud hoarse sound of one of those huge horns, made out of the spoils of the urus, or wild bull, of Switzerland, which in ancient times announced the terrors of the charge of these mountaineers, and, indeed, served them in war instead of all musical instruments.

'Hold, sir, hold!' exclaimed the Grison; 'yonder is a signal from Geierstein. Some one will presently come to our assistance, and show us the safer way to seek for your son—And look you — at yon green bush that is glimmering through the mist, Saint Antonio preserve me, as I see a white cloth displayed there!—it is just beyond the point where the rock fell.'

The father endeavoured to fix his eyes on the spot, but they filled so fast with tears, that they could not discern the object which the guide pointed out.—'It is all in vain,' he said, dashing the tears from his eyes—'I shall never see more of him than his lifeless remains!'

'You will—you will see him in life!' said the Grison; 'Saint Antonio wills it so—See, the white cloth waves again!'

'Some remnant of his garments,' said the despairing father,—'some wretched memorial of his fate.—No, my eyes see it not—I have beheld the fall of my house—would that the vultures of these crags had rather torn them from their sockets!'

'Yet look again,' said the Swiss; 'the cloth hangs not loose upon a bough—I can see that it is raised on the end of a staff, and is distinctly waved to and fro. Your son makes a signal that he is safe.'

'And if it be so,' said the traveller, clasping his hands together, 'blessed be the eyes that see it, and the tongue that tells it! If we find my son, and find him alive, this day shall be a lucky one for thee too.'

'Nay,' answered the lad, 'I only ask that you will abide still, and act by counsel, and I will hold myself quit for my services. Only it is not creditable to an honest lad to have people lose themselves by their own wilfulness; for the blame, after all, is sure to fall upon the guide, as if he could prevent old Pontius from shaking the mist from his brow, or banks of earth from slipping down into the valley at a time, or young harebrained gallants from walking upon precipices as narrow as the edge of a knife, or madmen, whose grey hairs might make them wiser, from drawing daggers like bravoes in Lombardy.'

Thus the guide ran on, and in that vein he might have long continued, for Seignor Philipson heard him not. Each throb of his pulse, each thought of his heart, was directed towards the object which the lad referred to as a signal of his son's safety. He became at length satisfied that the signal was actually waved by a human hand; and, as eager in the glow of reviving hope as he had of late been under the influence of desperate grief, he again prepared for the attempt of advancing towards his son, and assisting him, if possible, in regaining a place of safety. But the entreaties and reiterated assurances of his guide induced him to pause.

'Are you fit,' he said, 'to go on the crag? Can you repeat your Credo and Ave without missing or misplacing a word? for without that, our old men say your neck, had you a score of them, would be in danger.—Is your eye clear and your feet firm?—I trow the one streams like a fountain, and the other shakes like the aspen which overhangs it! Rest here till those arrive who are far more able to give your son help than either you or I are. I judge by the fashion of his blowing, that yonder is the horn of the goodman of Geierstein, Arnold Biederman. He hath seen your son's danger, and is even now providing for his safety and ours. There are cases in which the aid of one stranger, well acquainted with the country, is worth that of three brothers, who know not the crags.'

'But if yonder horn really sounded a signal,' said the traveller, 'how chanced it that my son replied not?'

'And if he did so, as is most likely he did,' rejoined the Grison, 'how should we have heard him? The bugle of Uri itself sounded amid these horrible dins of water and tempest like the reed of a shepherd-boy; and how think you we should hear the holloa of a man?'

'Yet methinks,' said Seignor Philipson, 'I do hear something amid this roar of elements which is like a human voice—but it is not Arthur's.'

'I wot well, no,' answered the Grison; 'that is a woman's voice. The maidens will converse with each other in that manner, from cliff to cliff, through storm and tempest, were there a mile between.'

'Now, Heaven be praised for this providential relief!' said Seignor Philipson; 'I trust we shall yet see this dreadful day safely ended. I will holloa in answer.'

He attempted to do so, but, inexperienced in the art of making himself heard in such a country, he pitched his voice in the same key with that of the roar of wave and wind; so that, even at twenty yards from the place where

he was speaking, it must have been totally indistinguishable from that of the elementary war around them. The lad smiled at his patron's ineffectual attempts, and then raised his voice himself in a high, wild, and prolonged scream, which, while produced with apparently much less effort than that of the Englishman, was nevertheless a distinct sound, separated from others by the key to which it was pitched, and was probably audible to a very considerable distance. It was presently answered by distant cries of the same nature, which gradually approached the platform, bringing renovated hope to the anxious traveller.

If the distress of the father rendered his condition an object of deep compassion, that of the son, at the same moment, was sufficiently perilous. We have already stated that Arthur Philipson had commenced his precarious journey along the precipice with all the coolness, resolution, and unshaken determination of mind which was most essential to a task where all must depend upon firmness of nerve. But the formidable accident which checked his onward progress was of a character so dreadful as made him feel all the bitterness of a death, instant, horrible, and, as it seemed, inevitable. The solid rock had trembled and rent beneath his footsteps, and although, by an effort rather mechanical than voluntary, he had withdrawn himself from the instant ruin attending its descent, he felt as if the better part of him, his firmness of mind and strength of body, had been rent away with the descending rock, as it fell thundering, with clouds of dust and smoke, into the torrents and whirlpools of the vexed gulf beneath. In fact, the seaman swept from the deck of a wrecked vessel, drenched in the waves, and battered against the rocks on the shore, does not differ more from the same mariner, when, at the commencement of the gale, he stood upon the deck of his favourite ship, proud of her strength and his own dexterity, than Arthur, when commencing his journey, from the same Arthur, while clinging to the decayed trunk of an old tree, from which, suspended between heaven and earth, he saw the fall of the crag which he had so nearly accompanied. The effects of his terror, indeed, were physical as well as moral, for a thousand colours played before his eyes; he was attacked by a sick dizziness, and deprived at once of the obedience of those limbs which had hitherto served him so admirably; his arms and hands, as if no longer at his own command, now clung to the branches of the tree with a cramp-like tenacity over which he seemed to possess no power, and now trembled in a state of such complete nervous relaxation as led him to fear that they were becoming unable to support him longer in his position.

An incident, in itself trifling, added to the distress occasioned by this alienation of his powers. All living things in the neighbourhood had, as might be supposed, been startled by the tremendous fall to which his progress had given occasion. Flights of owls, bats, and other birds of darkness, compelled to betake themselves to the air, had lost no time in returning into their bowers of ivy, or the harbour afforded them by the rifts and holes of the neighbouring rocks. One of this ill-omened flight chanced to be a lammer-geier, or Alpine vulture, a bird larger and more voracious than the eagle himself, and which Arthur had not been accustomed to see, or at least to look upon closely. With the instinct of most birds of prey, it is the custom of this creature, when gorged with food, to assume some station of inaccessible security, and there remain stationary and motionless for days together, till the work of digestion has been accomplished, and activity returns with the pressure of appetite. Disturbed from such a state of repose, one of these terrific birds had risen from the ravine to which the species gives its name, and, having circled unwillingly round, with a ghastly scream and a flagging wing, it had sunk down upon the pinnacle of a crag, not four yards from the tree in which Arthur held his precarious station. Although still in some degree stupefied by torpor, it seemed encouraged by the motionless state of the young man to suppose him dead, or dying, and sat there and gazed at him, without displaying any of that apprehension which the fiercest animals usually entertain from the vicinity of man.

As Arthur, endeavouring to shake off the incapacitating effects of his panic fear, raised his eyes to look gradually and cautiously around, he encountered those of the voracious and obscene bird, whose head and neck denuded of feathers, her eyes surrounded by an iris of an orange tawny colour, and a position more horizontal than erect, distinguished her as much from the noble carriage and graceful proportions of the eagle, as those of the lion place him in the ranks of creation above the gaunt, ravenous, grisly, yet dastard wolf.

As if arrested by a charm, the eyes of young Philipson remained bent on this ill-omened and ill-favoured bird, without his having the power to remove them. The apprehension of dangers ideal as well as real weighed upon his weakened mind, disabled as it was by the circumstances of his situation. The near approach of a creature, not more loathsome to the human race than averse to come within their reach, seemed as ominous as it was unusual. Why did it gaze on him with such glaring earnestness, projecting its disgusting form, as if presently to alight upon his person? The foul bird, was she the demon of the place to which her name referred; and did she come to exult that an intruder on her haunts seemed involved amid their perils, with little hope or chance of deliverance? Or was it a native vulture of the rocks, whose sagacity foresaw that the rash traveller was soon destined to become its victim? Could the creature, whose senses are said to be so acute, argue from circumstances the stranger's approaching death, and wait, like a raven or hooded crow by a dying sheep, for the earliest opportunity to commence her ravenous banquet? Was he doomed to feel its beak and talons before his heart's blood should cease to beat? Had he already lost the dignity of humanity, the awe which the being formed in the image of his Maker inspires into all inferior creatures?

Apprehensions so painful served more than all that reason could suggest, to renew in some degree the elasticity of the young man's mind.

By waving his handkerchief, using, however, the greatest precaution in his movements, he succeeded in scaring the vulture from his vicinity. It rose from its resting-place, screaming harshly and dolefully, and sailed on its expanded pinions to seek a place of more undisturbed repose, while the adventurous traveller felt a sensible pleasure at being relieved of its disgusting presence.

With more collected ideas, the young man, who could obtain, from his position, a partial view of the platform he had left, endeavoured to testify his safety to his father, by displaying, as high as he could, the banner by which he had chased off the vulture. Like them, too, he heard, but at a less distance, the burst of the great Swiss horn, which seemed to announce some near succour. He replied by shouting and waving his flag, to direct assistance to the spot where it was so much required; and, recalling his faculties, which had almost deserted him, he laboured mentally to recover hope, and with hope the means and motive for exertion.

A faithful Catholic, he eagerly recommended himself in prayer to Our Lady of Einsiedlen, and, making vows of propitiation, besought her intercession, that he might be delivered from his dreadful condition. 'Or, gracious Lady!' he concluded his orison, 'if it is my doom to lose my life like a hunted fox amidst this savage wilderness of tottering crags, restore at least my natural sense of patience and courage, and let not one who has lived like a man, though a sinful one, meet death like a timid hare!'

Having devoutly recommended himself to that protectress of whom the legends of the Catholic Church form a picture so amiable, Arthur, though every nerve still shook with his late agitation, and his heart throbbed with a violence that threatened to suffocate him, turned his thoughts and observation to the means of effecting his escape. But, as he looked around him, he became more and more sensible how much he was enervated by the bodily injuries and the mental agony which he had sustained during his late peril. He could not, by any effort of which he was capable, fix his giddy and bewildered eyes on the scene around him;—they seemed to reel till the landscape danced along with them, and a motley chaos of thickets and tall cliffs, which interposed between him and the ruinous Castle of Geierstein, mixed and whirled round in such confusion, that nothing, save the consciousness that such an idea was the suggestion of partial insanity, prevented him from throwing himself from the tree, as if to join the wild dance to which his disturbed brain had given motion.

'Heaven be my protection!' said the unfortunate young man, closing his eyes, in hopes, by abstracting himself from the terrors of his situation, to compose his too active imagination; 'my senses are abandoning me!'

He became still more convinced that this was the case, when a female voice, in a high-pitched but eminently musical accent, was heard at no great distance, as if calling to him. He opened his eyes once more, raised his head, and looked towards the place from whence the sounds seemed to come, though far from being certain that they existed saving in his own disordered imagination. The vision which appeared had almost confirmed him in the opinion that his mind was unsettled, and his senses in no state to serve him accurately.

Upon the very summit of a pyramidical rock that rose out of the depth of the valley, was seen a female figure, so obscured by mist, that only the outline could be traced. The form, reflected against the sky, appeared rather the undefined lineaments of a spirit than of a mortal maiden; for her person seemed as light, and scarcely more opaque, than the thin cloud that surrounded her pedestal. Arthur's first belief was that the Virgin had heard his vows, and had descended in person to his rescue; and he was about to recite his Ave Maria, when the voice again called to him with the singular shrill modulation of the mountain halloo, by which the natives of the Alps can hold conference with each other from one mountain ridge to another, across ravines of great depth and width.

While he debated how to address this unexpected apparition, it disappeared from the point which it at first occupied, and presently after became again visible, perched on the cliff out of which projected the tree in which Arthur had taken refuge. Her personal appearance, as well as her dress, made it then apparent that she was a maiden of those mountains, familiar with their dangerous paths. He saw that a beautiful young woman stood before him, who regarded him with a mixture of pity and wonder.

'Stranger,' she at length said, 'who are you, and whence come you?'

'I am a stranger, maiden, as you justly term me,' answered the young man, raising himself as well as he could. 'I left Lucerne this morning, with my father and a guide. I parted with them not three furlongs from hence. May it please you, gentle maiden, to warn them of my safety, for I know my father will be in despair upon my account?'

'Willingly,' said the maiden; 'but I think my uncle, or some one of my kinsmen, must have already found them, and will prove faithful guides. Can I not aid you?—are you wounded?—are you hurt? We were alarmed by the fall of a rock—ay, and yonder it lies, a mass of no ordinary size.'

As the Swiss maiden spoke thus, she approached so close to the verge of the precipice, and looked with such indifference into the gulf, that the sympathy which connects the actor and spectator upon such occasions brought back the sickness and vertigo from which Arthur had just recovered, and he sunk back into his former more recumbent posture with something like a faint groan.

'You are then ill?' said the maiden, who observed him turn pale. 'Where and what is the harm you have received?'

'None, gentle maiden, saving some bruises of little import; but my head turns, and my heart grows sick, when I see you so near the verge of the cliff.'

'Is that all?' replied the Swiss maiden.—'Know, stranger, that I do not stand on my uncle's hearth with more security than I have stood upon precipices, compared to which this is

a child's leap. You too, stranger, if, as I judge from the traces, you have come along the edge of the precipice which the earth-slide hath laid bare, ought to be far beyond such weakness, since surely you must be well entitled to call yourself a cragsman.'

'I might have called myself so half-an-hour since,' answered Arthur; 'but I think I shall hardly venture to assume the name in future.'

'Be not downcast,' said his kind adviser, 'for a passing qualm, which will at times cloud the spirit and dazzle the eyesight of the bravest and most experienced. Raise yourself upon the trunk of the tree, and advance closer to the rock out of which it grows. Observe the place well. It is easy for you, when you have attained the lower part of the projecting stem, to gain by one bold step the solid rock upon which I stand; after which there is no danger or difficulty worthy of mention to a young man, whose limbs are whole, and whose courage is active.'

'My limbs are indeed sound,' replied the youth; 'but I am ashamed to think how much my courage is broken. Yet I will not disgrace the interest you have taken in an unhappy wanderer, by listening longer to the dastardly suggestions of a feeling which till to-day has been a stranger to my bosom.'

The maiden looked on him anxiously and with much interest, as, raising himself cautiously, and moving along the trunk of the tree, which lay nearly horizontal from the rock, and seemed to bend as he changed his posture, the youth at length stood upright, within what, on level ground, had been but an extended stride to the cliff on which the Swiss maiden stood. But instead of being a step to be taken on the level and firm earth, it was one which must cross a dark abyss, at the bottom of which a torrent surged and boiled with incredible fury. Arthur's knees knocked against each other, his feet became of lead, and seemed no longer at his command; and he experienced, in a stronger degree than ever, that unnerving influence, which those who have been overwhelmed by it in a situation of like peril never can forget, and which others, happily strangers to its power, may have difficulty even in comprehending.

The young woman discerned his emotion, and foresaw its probable consequences. As the only mode in her power to restore his confidence, she sprung lightly from the rock to the stem of the tree, on which she alighted with the ease and security of a bird, and in the same instant back to the cliff; and extending her hand to the stranger, 'My arm,' she said, 'is but a slight balustrade; yet do but step forward with resolution, and you will find it as secure as the battlement of Berne.' But shame now overcame terror so much, that Arthur, declining assistance which he could not have accepted without feeling lowered in his own eyes, took heart of grace, and successfully achieved the formidable step which placed him upon the same cliff with his kind assistant.

To seize her hand and raise it to his lips, in affectionate token of gratitude and respect, was naturally the youth's first action; nor was it possible for the maiden to have prevented him from doing so, without assuming a degree of prudery foreign to her character, and occasioning a ceremonious debate upon a matter of no great consequence, where the scene of action was a rock scarce five feet long by three in width, and which looked down upon a torrent roaring some hundred feet below.

CHAPTER III.

> Cursed be the gold and silver, which persuade
> Weak man to follow far fatiguing trade.
> The lily, peace, outshines the silver store,
> And life is dearer than the golden ore;
> Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown,
> To every distant mart and wealthy town.
>
> HASSAN, OR THE CAMEL-DRIVER.

ARTHUR PHILIPSON and Anne of Geierstein, thus placed together in a situation which brought them into the closest possible contiguity, felt a slight degree of embarrassment; the young man, doubtless, from the fear of being judged a poltroon in the eyes of the maiden by whom he had been rescued, and the young woman, perhaps, in consequence of the exertion she had made, or a sense of being placed suddenly in a situation of such proximity to the youth whose life she had probably saved.

'And now, maiden,' said Arthur, 'I must repair to my father. The life which I owe to your assistance can scarce be called welcome to me, unless I am permitted to hasten to his rescue.'

He was here interrupted by another bugle-blast, which seemed to come from the quarter in which the elder Philipson and his guide had been left by their young and daring companion. Arthur looked in that direction; but the platform, which he had seen but imperfectly from the tree, when he was perched in that place of refuge, was invisible from the rock on which they now stood.

'It would cost me nothing to step back on yonder root,' said the young woman, 'to spy from thence whether I could see aught of your friends. But I am convinced they are under safer guidance than either yours or mine; for the horn announces that my uncle, or some of my young kinsmen, have reached them. They are by this time on their way to the Geierstein, to which, with your permission, I will become your guide; for you may be assured that my uncle Arnold will not allow you to pass farther to-day; and we shall but lose time by endeavouring to find your friends, who, situated where you say you left them, will reach the Geierstein sooner than we shall. Follow me, then, or I must suppose you weary of my guidance.'

'Sooner suppose me weary of the life which your guidance has in all probability saved,' replied Arthur, and prepared to attend her; at the same time taking a view of her dress and person, which confirmed the satisfaction he had in following such a conductor, and which we shall take the liberty to detail somewhat more minutely than he could do at that time.

An upper vest, neither so close as to display the person, a habit forbidden by the sumptuary laws of the canton, nor so loose as to be an encumbrance in walking or climbing, covered a

close tunic of a different colour, and came down beneath the middle of the leg, but suffered the ankle, in all its fine proportions, to be completely visible. The foot was defended by a sandal, the point of which was turned upwards, and the crossings and knots of the strings, which secured it on the front of the leg, were garnished with silver rings. The upper vest was gathered round the middle by a sash of party-coloured silk, ornamented with twisted threads of gold; while the tunic, open at the throat, permitted the shape and exquisite whiteness of a well-formed neck to be visible at the collar, and for an inch or two beneath. The small portion of the throat and bosom thus exposed was even more brilliantly fair than was promised by the countenance, which last bore some marks of having been freely exposed to the sun and air, by no means in a degree to diminish its beauty, but just so far as to show that the maiden possessed the health which is purchased by habits of rural exercise. Her long fair hair fell down in a profusion of curls on each side of a face whose blue eyes, lovely features, and dignified simplicity of expression, implied at once a character of gentleness, and of the self-relying resolution of a mind too virtuous to suspect evil, and too noble to fear it. Above these locks, beauty's natural and most beseeming ornament—or rather, I should say, amongst them—was placed the small bonnet, which, from its size, little answered the purpose of protecting the head, but served to exercise the ingenuity of the fair wearer, who had not failed, according to the prevailing custom of the mountain maidens, to decorate the tiny cap with a heron's feather, and the then unusual luxury of a small and thin chain of gold, long enough to encircle the cap four or five times, and having the ends secured under a broad medal of the same costly metal.

I have only to add, that the stature of the young person was something above the common size, and that the whole contour of her form, without being in the slightest degree masculine, resembled that of Minerva, rather than the proud beauties of Juno, or the yielding graces of Venus. The noble brow, the well-formed and active limbs, the firm and yet light step—above all, the total absence of anything resembling the consciousness of personal beauty, and the open and candid look, which seemed desirous of knowing nothing that was hidden, and conscious that she herself had nothing to hide, were traits not unworthy of the goddess of wisdom and of chastity.

The road which the young Englishman pursued, under the guidance of this beautiful young woman, was difficult and unequal, but could not be termed dangerous, at least in comparison to those precipices over which Arthur had recently passed. It was, in fact, a continuation of the path which the slip or slide of earth, so often mentioned, had interrupted; and although it had sustained damage in several places at the period of the same earthquake, yet there were marks of these having been already repaired in such a rude manner as made the way sufficient for the necessary intercourse of a people so indifferent as the Swiss to smooth or level paths. The maiden also gave Arthur to understand that the present road took a circuit for the purpose of gaining that on which he was lately travelling, and that if he and his companions had turned off at the place where this new track united with the old pathway, they would have escaped the danger which had attended their keeping the road by the verge of the precipice.

The path which they now pursued was rather averted from the torrent, though still within hearing of its sullen thunders, which seemed to increase as they ascended parallel to its course, till suddenly the road, turning short, and directing itself straight upon the old castle, brought them within sight of one of the most splendid and awful scenes of that mountainous region.

The ancient Tower of Geierstein, though neither extensive, nor distinguished by architectural ornament, possessed an air of terrible dignity by its position on the very verge of the opposite bank of the torrent, which, just at the angle of the rock on which the ruins are situated, falls sheer over a cascade of nearly a hundred feet in height, and then rushes down the defile, through a trough of living rock, which perhaps its waves have been deepening since time itself had a commencement. Facing, and at the same time looking down upon this eternal roar of waters, stood the old tower, built so close to the verge of the precipice, that the buttresses with which the architect had strengthened the foundation seemed a part of the solid rock itself, and a continuation of its perpendicular ascent. As usual throughout Europe in the feudal times, the principal part of the building was a massive square pile, the decayed summit of which was rendered picturesque by flanking turrets of different sizes and heights, some round, some angular, some ruinous, some tolerably entire, varying the outline of the building as seen against the stormy sky.

A projecting sallyport, descending by a flight of steps from the tower, had in former times given access to a bridge connecting the castle with that side of the stream on which Arthur Philipson and his fair guide now stood. A single arch, or rather one rib of an arch, consisting of single stones, still remained, and spanned the river immediately in front of the waterfall. In former times this arch had served for the support of a wooden drawbridge, of more convenient breadth, and of such length and weight as must have been rather unmanageable, had it not been lowered on some solid resting-place. It is true the device was attended with this inconvenience, that even when the drawbridge was up, there remained a possibility of approaching the castle gate by means of this narrow rib of stone. But as it was not above eighteen inches broad, and could only admit the daring foe who should traverse it to a doorway regularly defended by gate and portcullis, and having flanking turrets and projections, from which stones, darts, melted lead, and scalding water, might be poured down on the soldiery who should venture to approach Geierstein by this precarious access, the possibility of such an attempt was not considered as diminishing the security of the garrison.

In the time we treat of, the castle being entirely ruined and dismantled, and the door, drawbridge, and portcullis gone, the dilapidated

gateway, and the slender arch which connected the two sides of the stream, were used as a means of communication between the banks of the river, by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, whom habit had familiarized with the dangerous nature of the passage.

Arthur Philipson had, in the meantime, like a good bow when new strung, regained the elasticity of feeling and character which was natural to him. It was not, indeed, with perfect composure that he followed his guide, as she tripped lightly over the narrow arch, composed of rugged stones, and rendered wet and slippery with the perpetual drizzle of the mist issuing from the neighbouring cascade. Nor was it without apprehension that he found himself performing this perilous feat in the neighbourhood of the waterfall itself, whose deafening roar he could not exclude from his ears, though he took care not to turn his head towards its terrors, lest his brain should again be dizzied by the tumult of the waters as they shot forward from the precipice above, and plunged themselves into what seemed the fathomless gulf below. But notwithstanding these feelings of agitation, the natural shame to show cowardice where a beautiful young female exhibited so much indifference, and the desire to regain his character in the eyes of his guide, prevented Arthur from again giving way to the appalling feelings by which he had been overwhelmed a short time before. Stepping firmly on, yet cautiously supporting himself with his piked staff, he traced the light footsteps of his guide along the bridge of dread, and followed her through the ruined sallyport, to which they ascended by stairs which were equally dilapidated.

The gateway admitted them into a mass of ruins, formerly a sort of court-yard to the donjon, which rose in gloomy dignity above the wreck of what had been works destined for external defence, or buildings for internal accommodation. They quickly passed through these ruins, over which vegetation had thrown a wild mantle of ivy and other creeping shrubs, and issued from them through the main gate of the castle into one of those spots in which nature often embosoms her sweetest charms, in the midst of districts chiefly characterized by waste and desolation.

The castle, in this aspect also, rose considerably above the neighbouring ground, but the elevation of the site, which towards the torrent was an abrupt rock, was on this side a steep eminence, which had been scarped like a modern glacis, to render the building more secure. It was now covered with young trees and bushes, out of which the tower itself seemed to rise in ruined dignity. Beyond this hanging thicket the view was of a very different character. A piece of ground, amounting to more than a hundred acres, seemed scooped out of the rocks and mountains, which, retaining the same savage character with the tract in which the travellers had been that morning bewildered, enclosed, and as it were defended, a limited space of a mild and fertile character. The surface of this little domain was considerably varied, but its general aspect was a gentle slope to the south-west.

The principal object which it presented was a large house composed of huge logs, without any pretence to form or symmetry, but indicating, by the smoke which arose from it, as well as the extent of the neighbouring offices, and the improved and cultivated character of the fields around, that it was the abode, not of splendour certainly, but of ease and competence. An orchard of thriving fruit-trees extended to the southward of the dwelling. Groves of walnut and chestnut grew in stately array, and even a vineyard, of three or four acres, showed that the cultivation of the grape was understood and practised. It is now universal in Switzerland, but was, in those early days, almost exclusively confined to a few more fortunate proprietors, who had the rare advantage of uniting intelligence with opulent, or at least easy, circumstances.

There were fair ranges of pasture fields, into which the fine race of cattle, which constitute the pride and wealth of the Swiss mountaineers, had been brought down from the more Alpine grazings where they had fed during the summer, to be near shelter and protection when the autumnal storms might be expected. On some selected spots, the lambs of the last season fed in plenty and security, and in others, huge trees, the natural growth of the soil, were suffered to remain, from motives of convenience probably, that they might be at hand when timber was required for domestic use, but giving, at the same time, a woodland character to a scene otherwise agricultural. Through this mountain-paradise the course of a small brook might be traced, now showing itself to the sun, which had by this time dispelled the fogs, now intimating its course, by its gently sloping banks, clothed in some places with lofty trees, or concealing itself under thickets of hawthorn and nut bushes. This stream, by a devious and gentle course, which seemed to indicate a reluctance to leave this quiet region, found its way at length out of the sequestered domain, and, like a youth hurrying from the gay and tranquil sports of boyhood into the wild career of active life, finally united itself with the boisterous torrent, which, breaking down tumultuously from the mountains, shook the ancient Tower of Geierstein, as it rolled down the adjacent rock, and then rushed howling through the defile in which our youthful traveller had well-nigh lost his life.

Eager as the younger Philipson was to rejoin his father, he could not help pausing for a moment to wonder how so much beauty should be found amid such scenes of horror, and to look back on the Tower of Geierstein, and on the huge cliff from which it derived its name, as if to ascertain, by the sight of these distinguished landmarks, that he was actually in the neighbourhood of the savage wild where he had encountered so much danger and terror. Yet so narrow were the limits of this cultivated farm, that it hardly required such a retrospect to satisfy the spectator that the spot susceptible of human industry, and on which it seemed that a considerable degree of labour had been bestowed, bore a very small proportion to the wilderness in which it was situated. It was on all sides surrounded by

lofty hills, in some places rising into walls of rock, in others clothed with dark and savage forests of the pine and the larch, of primeval antiquity. Above these, from the eminence on which the tower was situated, could be seen the almost rosy hue in which an immense glacier threw back the sun; and, still higher over the frozen surface of that icy sea, arose, in silent dignity, the pale peaks of those countless mountains, on which the snow eternally rests.

What we have taken some time to describe, occupied young Philipson only for one or two hurried minutes; for on a sloping lawn, which was in front of the farm-house, as the mansion might be properly styled, he saw five or six persons, the foremost of whom, from his gait, his dress, and the form of his cap, he could easily distinguish as the parent whom he hardly expected at one time to have again beheld.

He followed, therefore, his conductress with a glad step, as she led the way down the steep ascent on which the ruined tower was situated. They approached the group whom Arthur had noticed, the foremost of which was his father, who hastily came forward to meet him, in company with another person, of advanced age, and stature well-nigh gigantic, and who, from his simple yet majestic bearing, seemed the worthy countryman of William Tell, Stauffacher,* Winkelried,† and other Swiss worthies, whose stout hearts and hardy arms had, in the preceding age, vindicated against countless hosts their personal liberty, and the independence of their country.

With a natural courtesy, as if to spare the father and son many witnesses to a meeting which must be attended with emotion, the Landamman himself, in walking forward with the elder Philipson, signed to those by whom he was attended, all of whom seemed young men, to remain behind:—They remained accordingly, examining, as it seemed, the guide Antonio upon the adventures of the strangers. Anne, the conductress of Arthur Philipson, had but time to say to him, 'Yonder old man is my uncle, Arnold Biederman, and these young men are my kinsmen,' when the former, with the elder traveller, was close before them. The Landamman, with the same propriety of feeling which he had before displayed, signed to his niece to move a little aside; yet while requiring from her an account of her morning's expedition, he watched the interview of the father and son with as much curiosity as his natural sense of complaisance permitted him to testify. It was of a character different from what he had expected.

We have already described the elder Philipson as a father devotedly attached to his son ready to rush on death when he had expected to lose him, and equally overjoyed at heart, doubtless, to see him again restored to his affections. It might have been therefore expected that the father and son would have rushed into each other's arms, and such probably was the scene which Arnold Biederman expected to have witnessed.

But the English traveller, in common with many of his countrymen, covered keen and quick feelings with much appearance of coldness and reserve, and thought it a weakness to give unlimited sway even to the influence of the most amiable and most natural emotions. Eminently handsome in youth, his countenance, still fine in his more advanced years, had an expression which intimated an unwillingness either to yield to passion or encourage confidence. His pace, when he first beheld his son, had been quickened by the natural wish to meet him; but he slackened it as they drew near to each other, and when they met, said in a tone rather of censure and admonition than affection,—'Arthur, may the saints forgive the pain thou hast this day given me.'

'Amen,' said the youth. 'I must need pardon, since I have given you pain. Believe, however, that I acted for the best.'

'It is well, Arthur, that in acting for the best, according to your forward will, you have not encountered the worst.'

'That I have not,' answered the son, with the same devoted and patient submission, 'is owing to this maiden,' pointing to Anne, who stood at a few paces' distance, desirous perhaps of avoiding to witness the reproof of the father, which might seem to her rather ill-timed and unreasonable.

'To the maiden my thanks shall be rendered,' said his father, 'when I can study how to pay them in an adequate manner; but is it well or comely, think you, that you should receive from a maiden the succour which it is your duty as a man to extend to the weaker sex?'

Arthur held down his head and blushed deeply, while Arnold Biederman, sympathizing with his feelings, stepped forward and mingled in the conversation.

'Never be abashed, my young guest, that you have been indebted for aught of counsel or assistance to a maiden of Unterwalden. Know that the freedom of their country owes no less to the firmness and wisdom of her daughters than to that of her sons.—And you, my elder guest, who have, I judge, seen many years and various lands, must have often known examples how the strong are saved by the help of the weak, the proud by the aid of the humble.'

'I have at least learned,' said the Englishman, 'to debate no point unnecessarily with the host who has kindly harboured me;' and after one glance at his son, which seemed to kindle with the fondest affection, he resumed, as the party turned back towards the house, a conversation which he had been maintaining with his new acquaintance before Arthur and the maiden had joined them.

Arthur had in the meantime an opportunity of observing the figure and features of their Swiss landlord, which, I have already hinted, exhibited a primeval simplicity mixed with a certain rude dignity, arising out of its masculine and unaffected character.

* [Perhaps the most active in founding the Swiss Confederation.]

† [At the battle of Sempach the Swiss were unable for a long time to break the firm, serried line of spears presented by the Austrian forces; but at length Arnold Winkelried, commending his wife and children to his countrymen's care, gathered up in his arms as many spears as he could clasp, and buried them in his bosom. Through the breach thus made, the Swiss strode to victory.]

The dress did not greatly differ in form from the habit of the female which we have described. It consisted of an upper frock, shaped like the modern shirt, and only open at the bosom, worn above a tunic or under doublet. But the man's vest was considerably shorter in the skirts, which did not come lower down than the kilt of the Scottish Highlander; a species of boots or buskins rose above the knee, and the person was thus entirely clothed. A bonnet made of the fur of the marten, and garnished with a silver medal, was the only part of the dress which displayed anything like ornament; the broad belt which gathered the garment together was of buff leather, secured by a large brass buckle.

But the figure of him who wore this homely attire, which seemed almost wholly composed of the fleeces of the mountain sheep, and the spoils of animals of the chase, would have commanded respect wherever the wearer had presented himself, especially in those warlike days, when men were judged of according to the promising or unpromising qualities of their thews and sinews. To those who looked at Arnold Biederman in this point of view, he displayed the size and form, the broad shoulders and prominent muscles, of a Hercules. But to such as looked rather at his countenance, the steady, sagacious features, open front, large blue eyes, and deliberate resolution which it expressed, more resembled the character of the fabled King of Gods and Men.* He was attended by several sons and relatives, young men, among whom he walked, receiving, as his undeniable due, respect and obedience, similar to that which a herd of deer are observed to render to the monarch stag.

While Arnold Biederman walked and spoke with the elder stranger, the young men seemed closely to scrutinize Arthur, and occasionally interrogated in whispers their relation Anne, receiving from her brief and impatient answers, which rather excited than appeased the vein of merriment in which the mountaineers indulged, very much, as it seemed to the young Englishman, at the expense of their guest. To feel himself exposed to derision was not softened by the reflection that in such a society it would probably be attached to all who could not tread on the edge of a precipice with a step as firm and undismayed as if they walked the street of a city. However unreasonable ridicule may be, it is always unpleasing to be subjected to it, but more particularly is it distressing to a young man, where beauty is a listener. It was some consolation to Arthur that he thought the maiden certainly did not enjoy the jest, and seemed by word and look to reprove the rudeness of her companions; but this, he feared, was only from a sense of humanity.

'She, too, must despise me,' he thought, 'though civility, unknown to these ill-taught boors, has enabled her to conceal contempt under the guise of pity. She can but judge of me from that which she has seen—if she could know me better' (such was his proud thought), 'she might perhaps rank me more highly.'

* [Zeus or Jupiter.]

As the travellers entered the habitation of Arnold Biederman, they found preparations made in a large apartment, which served the purpose of general accommodation, for a homely but plentiful meal. A glance round the walls showed the implements of agriculture and the chase; but the eyes of the elder Philipson rested upon a leathern corselet, a long heavy halberd, and a two-handed sword, which were displayed as a sort of trophy. Near these, but covered with dust, unfurbished and neglected, hung a helmet, with a visor, such as was used by knights and men-at-arms. The golden garland or coronal twisted around it, though sorely tarnished, indicated noble birth and rank; and the crest, which was a vulture of the species which gave name to the old castle and its adjacent cliff, suggested various conjectures to the English guest, who, acquainted in a great measure with the history of the Swiss revolution, made little doubt that in this relic he saw some trophy of the ancient warfare between the inhabitants of these mountains and the feudal lord to whom they had of yore appertained.

A summons to the hospitable board disturbed the train of the English merchant's reflections, and a large company, comprising the whole inhabitants of every description that lived under Biederman's roof, sat down to a plentiful repast of goat's flesh, fish, preparations of milk of various kinds, cheese, and, for the upper mess, the venison of a young chamois. The Landamman himself did the honours of the table with great kindness and simplicity, and urged the strangers to show, by their appetite, that they thought themselves as welcome as he desired to make them. During the repast, he carried on a conversation with his elder guest, while the younger people at table, as well as the menials, ate in modesty and silence. Ere the dinner was finished, a figure crossed on the outside of the large window which lighted the eating-hall, the sight of which seemed to occasion a lively sensation among such as observed it.

'Who passed?' said old Biederman to those seated opposite to the window.

'It is our cousin, Rudolph of Donnerhugel,' answered one of Arnold's sons eagerly.

The annunciation seemed to give great pleasure to the younger part of the company, especially the sons of the Landamman; while the head of the family only said, with a grave, calm voice,—'Your kinsman is welcome—tell him so, and let him come hither.'

Two or three arose for this purpose, as if there had been a contention among them who should do the honours of the house to the new guest. He entered presently; a young man, unusually tall, well-proportioned, and active, with a quantity of dark brown locks curling around his face, together with moustaches of the same, or rather a still darker hue. His cap was small, considering the quantity of his thickly-clustering hair, and rather might be said to hang upon one side of his head than to cover it. His clothes were of the same form and general fashion as those of Arnold, but made of much finer cloth, the manufacture of the German loom, and ornamented in a rich and fanciful manner. One sleeve of his vest was dark green, curiously laced

and embroidered with devices in silver, while the rest of the garment was scarlet. His sash was twisted and netted with gold, and besides answering the purpose of a belt, by securing the upper garment round his waist, sustained a silver-hilted poniard. His finery was completed by boots, the tips of which were so long as to turn upwards with a peak, after a prevailing fashion in the Middle Ages. A golden chain hung round his neck, and sustained a large medallion of the same metal.

This young gallant was instantly surrounded by the race of Biederman, among whom he appeared to be considered as the model upon which the Swiss youth ought to build themselves, and whose gait, opinions, dress, and manners all ought to follow who would keep pace with the fashion of the day, in which he reigned an acknowledged and unrivalled example.

By two persons in the company, however, it seemed to Arthur Philipson that this young man was received with less distinguished marks of regard than those with which he was hailed by the general voice of the youths present. Arnold Biederman himself was at least no way warm in welcoming the young Bernese, for such was Rudolph's country. The young man drew from his bosom a sealed packet, which he delivered to the Landamman with demonstrations of great respect, and seemed to expect that Arnold, when he had broken the seal and perused the contents, would say something to him on the subject. But the patriarch only bade him be seated and partake of their meal, and Rudolph found a place accordingly next to Anne of Geierstein, which was yielded to him by one of the sons of Arnold with ready courtesy.

It seemed also to the observant young Englishman that the new-comer was received with marked coldness by the maiden, to whom he appeared eager and solicitous to pay his compliments, by whose side he had contrived to seat himself at the well-furnished board, and to whom he seemed more anxious to recommend himself, than to partake of the food which it offered. He observed the gallant whisper her, and look towards him. Anne gave a very brief reply, but one of the young Biedermans, who sat on his other hand, was probably more communicative, as the youths both laughed, and the maiden again seemed disconcerted, and blushed with displeasure.

'Had I either of these sons of the mountain,' thought young Philipson, 'upon six yards of level greensward, if there be so much flat ground in this country, methinks I were more likely to spoil their mirth than to furnish food for it. It is as marvellous to see such conceited boors under the same roof with so courteous and amiable a damsel, as it would be to see one of their shaggy bears dance a rigadoon with a maiden like the daughter of our host. Well, I need not concern myself more than I can help about her beauty or their breeding, since morning will separate me from them for ever.'

As these reflections passed through the young guest's mind, the father of the family called for a cup of wine, and, having required the two strangers to pledge him in a maple cup of considerable size, he sent a similar goblet to Rudolph Donnerhugel. 'Yet you,' he said, 'kinsman, are used to more highly-flavoured wine than the half-ripened grapes of Geierstein can supply.—Would you think it, Sir Merchant,' he continued, addressing Philipson, 'there are burghers of Berne, who send for wine, for their own drinking, both to France and Germany?'

'My kinsman disapproves of that,' replied Rudolph; 'yet every place is not blessed with vineyards like Geierstein, which produces all that heart and eye can desire.' This was said with a glance at his fair companion, who did not appear to take the compliment, while the envoy of Berne proceeded:—'But our wealthier burghers, having some superfluous crowns, think it no extravagance to barter them for a goblet of better wine than our own mountains can produce. But we will be more frugal when we have at our disposal tuns of the wine of Burgundy, for the mere trouble of transporting them.'

'How mean you by that, cousin Rudolph?' said Arnold Biederman.

'Methinks, respected kinsman,' answered the Bernese, 'your letters must have told you that our Diet is likely to declare war against Burgundy?'

'Ah! and you know, then, the contents of my letters?' said Arnold; 'another mark how times are changed at Berne, and with the Diet of Switzerland. When did all her grey-haired statesmen die, that our allies should have brought beardless boys into their councils?'

'The Senate of Berne, and the Diet of the Confederacy,' said the young man, partly abashed, partly in vindication of what he had before spoken, 'allow the young men to know their purposes, since it is they by whom they must be executed. The head which thinks may well confide in the hand that strikes.'

'Not till the moment of dealing the blow, young man,' said Arnold Biederman sternly. 'What kind of councillor is he who talks loosely the secrets of State affairs before women and strangers? Go, Rudolph, and all of ye, and try by manly exercises which is best fitted to serve your country, rather than give your judgment upon her measures.—Hold, young man,' he continued, addressing Arthur, who had arisen; 'this does not apply to you, who are unused to mountain travel, and require rest after it.'

'Under your favour, sir, not so,' said the elder stranger. 'We hold in England that the best refreshment after we have been exhausted by one species of exercise, is to betake ourselves to another; as riding, for example, affords more relief to one fatigued by walking, than a bed of down would. So, if your young men will permit, my son will join their exercises.'

'He will find them rough playmates,' answered the Switzer; 'but be it at your pleasure.'

The young men went out accordingly to the open lawn in front of the house. Anne of Geierstein, and some females of the household, sat down on a bank to judge which performed best, and shouts, loud laughing, and all that announces the riot of juvenile spirits occupied by manly sports, was soon after heard by the two seniors, as they sat together in the hall. The master of the house resumed the wine-flask, and, having filled the cup of his guest, poured the remainder into his own.

'At an age, worthy stranger,' he said, 'when the blood grows colder, and the feelings heavier, a moderate cup of wine brings back light thoughts, and makes the limbs supple. Yet I almost wish that Noah had never planted the grape, when of late years I have seen with my own eyes my countrymen swill wine like very Germans, till they were like gorged swine, incapable of sense, thought, or motion.'

'It is a vice,' said the Englishman, 'which I have observed gains ground in your country, where within a century I have heard it was totally unknown.'

'It was so,' said the Swiss, 'for wine was seldom made at home, and never imported from abroad; for indeed none possessed the means of purchasing that, or aught else, which our valleys produce not. But our wars and our victories have gained us wealth as well as fame; and in the poor thoughts of one Switzer at least, we had been better without both, had we not also gained liberty by the same exertion. It is something, however, that commerce may occasionally send into our remote mountains a sensible visitor like yourself, worthy guest, whose discourse shows him to be a man of sagacity and discernment; for though I love not the increasing taste for trinkets and gew-gaws which you merchants introduce, yet I acknowledge that we simple mountaineers learn from men like you more of the world around us than we could acquire by our own exertions. You are bound, you say, to Bâle, and thence to the Duke of Burgundy's leaguer?'

'I am so, my worthy host,' said the merchant, 'that is, providing I can perform my journey with safety.'

'Your safety, good friend, may be assured, if you list to tarry for two or three days; for in that space I shall myself take the journey, and with such an escort as will prevent any risk of danger. You will find in me a sure and faithful guide, and I shall learn from you much of other countries, which it concerns me to know better than I do. Is it a bargain?'

'The proposal is too much to my advantage to be refused,' said the Englishman; 'but may I ask the purpose of your journey?'

'I chid yonder boy but now,' answered Biederman, 'for speaking on public affairs without reflection, and before the whole family; but our tidings and my errand need not be concealed from a considerate person like you, who must indeed soon learn it from public rumour. You know doubtless the mutual hatred which subsists between Louis XI. of France and Charles of Burgundy, whom men call the Bold; and, having seen these countries, as I understand from your former discourse, you are probably well aware of the various contending interests which, besides the personal hatred of the sovereigns, make them irreconcilable enemies. Now Louis, whom the world cannot match for craft and subtlety, is using all his influence, by distributions of large sums amongst some of the councillors of our neighbours of Berne, by pouring treasures into the exchequer of that State itself, by holding out the bait of emolument to the old men, and encouraging the violence of the young, to urge the Bernese into a war with the Duke. Charles, on the other hand, is acting, as he frequently does, exactly as Louis could have wished. Our neighbours and allies of Berne do not, like us of the Forest Cantons, confine themselves to pasture or agriculture, but carry on considerable commerce; which the Duke of Burgundy has in various instances interrupted, by the exactions and violence of his officers in the frontier towns, as is doubtless well known to you.'

'Unquestionably,' answered the merchant; 'they are universally regarded as vexatious.'

'You will not then be surprised that, solicited by the one sovereign, and aggrieved by the other, proud of past victories, and ambitious of additional power, Berne and the City Cantons of our Confederacy, whose representatives, from their superior wealth and better education, have more to say in our Diet than we of the Forests, should be bent upon war, from which it has hitherto happened that the Republic has always derived victory, wealth, and increase of territory.'

'Ay, worthy host, and of glory,' said Philipson, interrupting him with some enthusiasm; 'I wonder not that the brave youths of your States are willing to thrust themselves upon new wars, since their past victories have been so brilliant and so far-famed.'

'You are no wise merchant, kind guest,' answered the host, 'if you regard success in former desperate undertakings as an encouragement to future rashness. Let us make a better use of past victories. When we fought for our liberties, God blessed our arms; but will he do so if we fight either for aggrandizement or for the gold of France?'

'Your doubt is just,' said the merchant, more sedately; 'but suppose you draw the sword to put an end to the vexatious exactions of Burgundy?'

'Hear me, good friend,' answered the Switzer; 'it may be that we of the Forest Cantons think too little of those matters of trade, which so much engross the attention of the burghers of Berne. Yet we will not desert our neighbours and allies in a just quarrel; and it is well-nigh settled that a deputation shall be sent to the Duke of Burgundy to request redress. In this embassy the General Diet now assembled at Berne have requested that I should take some share; and hence the journey in which I propose that you should accompany me.'

'It will be much to my satisfaction to travel in your company, worthy host,' said the Englishman. 'But, as I am a true man, methinks your port and figure resemble an envoy of defiance rather than a messenger of peace.'

'And I too might say,' replied the Switzer, 'that your language and sentiments, my honoured guest, rather belong to the sword than the measuring wand.'

'I was bred to the sword, worthy sir, before I took the cloth-yard in my hand,' replied Philipson, smiling, 'and it may be I am still more partial to my old trade than wisdom would altogether recommend.'

'I thought so,' said Arnold; 'but then you fought most likely under your country's banners against a foreign and national enemy; and in that case I will admit that war has something in it which elevates the heart above the due sense it should entertain of the calamity inflicted

and endured by God's creatures on each side. But the warfare in which I was engaged had no such gilding. It was the miserable war of Zurich, where Switzers levelled their pikes against the bosoms of their own countrymen; and quarter was asked and refused in the same kindly mountain language. From such remembrances your warlike recollections are probably free.'

The merchant hung down his head and pressed his forehead with his hand, as one to whom the most painful thoughts were suddenly recalled.

'Alas!' he said, 'I deserve to feel the pain which your words inflict. What nation can know the woes of England that has not felt them—what eye can estimate them which has not seen a land torn and bleeding with the strife of two desperate factions; battles fought in every province; plains heaped with slain, and scaffolds drenched in blood! Even in your quiet valleys, methinks, you may have heard of the Civil Wars of England?'

'I do indeed bethink me,' said the Switzer, 'that England had lost her possessions in France during many years of bloody internal wars concerning the colour of a rose—was it not?—But these are ended.'

'For the present,' answered Philipson, 'it would seem so.'

As he spoke, there was a knock at the door; the master of the house said 'Come in;' the door opened, and, with the reverence which was expected from young persons towards their elders in those pastoral regions, the fine form of Anne of Geierstein presented itself.

CHAPTER IV.

> And now the well-known bow the master bore,
> Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;
> Whilst some deriding, 'How he turns the bow!
> Some other like it sure the man must know:
> Or else would copy—or in bows he deals;
> Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals.'
>
> POPE'S HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

THE fair maiden approached with the half-bashful, half-important look which sits so well on a young housekeeper, when she is at once proud and ashamed of the matronly duties she is called upon to discharge, and whispered something in her uncle's ear.

'And could not the idle-pated boys have brought their own errand—what is it they want that they cannot ask themselves, but must send thee to beg it for them? Had it been anything reasonable, I should have heard it dinned into my ears by forty voices, so modest are our Swiss youths become now-a-days.' She stooped forward, and again whispered in his ear, as he fondly stroked her curling tresses with his ample hand, and replied, 'The bow of Buttisholz, my dear? why, the youths surely are not grown stronger since last year, when none of them could bend it? But yonder it hangs with its three arrows. Who is the wise champion that is challenger at a game where he is sure to be foiled?'

'It is this gentleman's son, sir,' said the maiden, 'who, not being able to contend with my cousins in running, leaping, hurling the bar, or pitching the stone, has challenged them to ride, or to shoot with the English long-bow.'

'To ride,' said the venerable Swiss, 'were difficult, where there are no horses, and no level ground to career upon if there were. But an English bow he shall have, since we happen to possess one. Take it to the young men, my niece, with the three arrows, and say to them from me, that he who bends it will do more than William Tell, or the renowned Stauffacher, could have done.'

As the maiden went to take the weapon from the place where it hung amid the group of arms which Philipson had formerly remarked, the English merchant observed, 'that were the minstrels of his land to assign her occupation, so fair a maiden should be bow-bearer to none but the little blind god Cupid.'

'I will have nothing of the blind god Cupid,' said Arnold hastily, yet half laughing at the same time; 'we have been deafened with the foolery of minstrels and strolling minnesingers, ever since the wandering knaves have found there were pence to be gathered among us. A Swiss maiden should only sing Albert Tschudi's ballads, or the merry lay of the going out and return of the cows to and from the mountain pastures.'

While he spoke, the damsel had selected from the arms a bow of extraordinary strength, considerably above six feet in length, with three shafts of a cloth-yard long. Philipson asked to look at the weapons, and examined them closely. 'It is a tough piece of yew,' he said. 'I should know it, since I have dealt in such commodities in my time; but when I was of Arthur's age I could have bent it as easily as a boy bends a willow.'

'We are too old to boast like boys,' said Arnold Biederman, with something of a reproving glance at his companion. 'Carry the bow to thy kinsmen, Anne, and let him who can bend it say he beat Arnold Biederman.' As he spoke, he turned his eyes on the spare, yet muscular figure of the Englishman, then again glanced down on his own stately person.

'You must remember, good my host,' said Philipson, 'that weapons are wielded not by strength, but by art and sleight of hand. What most I wonder at, is to see in this place a bow made by Matthew of Doncaster, a bowyer who lived at least a hundred years ago, remarkable for the great toughness and strength of the weapons which he made, and which are now become somewhat unmanageable, even by an English yeoman.'

'How are you assured of the maker's name, worthy guest?' replied the Swiss.

'By old Matthew's mark,' answered the Englishman, 'and his initials cut upon the bow. I wonder not a little to find such a weapon here, and in such good preservation.'

'It has been regularly waxed, oiled, and kept in good order,' said the Landamman, 'being preserved as a trophy of a memorable day. It would but grieve you to recount its early history, since it was taken in a day fatal to your country.'

'My country,' said the Englishman composedly, 'has gained so many victories, that her children

may well afford to hear of a single defeat. But I knew not that the English ever warred in Switzerland.'

'Not precisely as a nation,' answered Biederman; 'but it was in my grandsire's days, that a large body of roving soldiers, composed of men from almost all countries, but especially Englishmen, Normans, and Gascons, poured down on the Argau, and the districts adjacent. They were headed by a great warrior called Ingelram de Couci,* who pretended some claims upon the Duke of Austria; to satisfy which he ravaged indifferently the Austrian territory and that of our Confederacy. His soldiers were hired warriors—Free Companions they called themselves—that seemed to belong to no country, and were as brave in the fight as they were cruel in their depredations. Some pause in the constant wars betwixt France and England had deprived many of those bands of their ordinary employment, and, battle being their element, they came to seek it among our valleys. The air seemed on fire with the blaze of their armour, and the very sun was darkened at the flight of their arrows. They did us much evil, and we sustained the loss of more than one battle. But we met them at Buttisholz, and mingled the blood of many a rider (noble as they were called and esteemed) with that of their horses. The huge mound that covers the bones of man and steed is still called the English Barrow.'

Philipson was silent for a minute or two, and then replied, 'Then let them sleep in peace. If they did wrong, they paid for it with their lives; and that is all the ransom that mortal man can render for his transgressions.—Heaven pardon their souls!'

'Amen,' replied the Landamman, 'and those of all brave men!—My grandsire was at the battle, and was held to have demeaned himself like a good soldier; and this bow has been ever since carefully preserved in our family. There is a prophecy about it, but I hold it not worthy of remark.'

Philipson was about to inquire further, but was interrupted by a loud cry of surprise and astonishment from without.

'I must out,' said Biederman, 'and see what these wild lads are doing. It is not now as formerly in this land, when the young dared not judge for themselves, till the old man's voice had been heard.'

He went forth from the lodge, followed by his guest. The company who had witnessed the games were all talking, shouting, and disputing in the same breath; while Arthur Philipson stood a little apart from the rest, leaning on the unbent bow with apparent indifference. At the sight of the Landamman all were silent.

'What means this unwonted clamour?' he said, raising a voice to which all were accustomed to listen with reverence.—'Rudiger,' addressing the eldest of his sons, 'has the young stranger bent the bow?'

'He has, father,' said Rudiger; 'and he has hit the mark. Three such shots were never shot by William Tell.'

'It was chance—pure chance,' said the young Swiss from Berne. 'No human skill could have done it, much less a puny lad, baffled in all besides that he attempted among us.'

'But what *has* been done?' said the Landamman.—'Nay, speak not all at once!—Anne of Geierstein, thou hast more sense and breeding than these boys—tell me how the game has gone.' The maiden seemed a little confused at this appeal, but answered with a composed and downcast look—

'The mark was, as usual, a pigeon to a pole. All the young men, except the stranger, had practised at it with the cross-bow and long-bow without hitting it. When I brought out the bow of Buttisholz, I offered it first to my kinsmen. None would accept of it, saying, respected uncle, that a task too great for you must be far too difficult for them.'

'They said well,' answered Arnold Biederman. 'And the stranger, did he string the bow?'

'He did, my uncle; but first he wrote something on a piece of paper, and placed it in my hands.'

'And did he shoot and hit the mark?' continued the surprised Switzer.

'He first,' said the maiden, 'removed the pole a hundred yards farther than the post where it stood.'

'Singular!' said the Landamman; 'that is double the usual distance.'

'He then drew the bow,' continued the maiden, 'and shot off, one after another, with incredible rapidity, the three arrows which he had stuck into his belt. The first cleft the pole, the second cut the string, the third killed the poor bird as it rose into the air.'

'By Saint Mary of Einsiedlen,' said the old man, looking up in amaze, 'if your eyes really saw this, they saw such archery as was never before witnessed in the Forest States!'

'I say nay to that, my revered kinsman,' replied Rudolph Donnerhugel, whose vexation was apparent; 'it was mere chance, if not illusion or witchery.'

'What say'st thou of it thyself, Arthur?' said his father, half smiling; 'was thy success by chance or skill?'

'My father,' said the young man, 'I need not tell you that I have done but an ordinary feat for an English bowman. Nor do I speak to gratify that misproud and ignorant young man. But to our worthy host and his family I make answer. This youth charges me with having deluded men's eyes, or hit the mark by chance. For illusion, yonder is the pierced pole, the severed string, and the slain bird, they will endure sight and handling; and besides, if that fair maiden will open the note which I put into her hand, she will find evidence to assure you that even before I drew the bow I had fixed upon the three marks which I designed to aim at.'

'Produce the scroll, good niece,' said her uncle, 'and end the controversy.'

'Nay, under your favour, my worthy host,' said Arthur, 'it is but some foolish rhymes addressed to the maiden's own eye.'

* [In 1374-75, Enguerrand de Coucy, who had married Isabella, the daughter of Edward III. of England, made an incursion into Switzerland to possess himself of certain territories there, which he claimed as part of the dowry of his mother, an Austrian princess, but he was defeated by the Swiss in December 1375.]

'And under your favour, sir,' said the Landamman, 'whatsoever is fit for my niece's eyes, may greet my ears.'

He took the scroll from the maiden, who blushed deeply when she resigned it. The character in which it was written was so fine, that the Landamman in surprise exclaimed, 'No clerk of Saint Gall could have written more fairly.—Strange,' he again repeated, 'that a hand which could draw so true a bow, should have the cunning to form characters so fair.' He then exclaimed anew, 'Ha! verses, by Our Lady! What, have we minstrels disguised as traders?' He then opened the scroll, and read the following lines:—

> If I hit mast, and line, and bird,
> An English archer keeps his word.
> Ah! maiden, didst thou aim at me,
> A single glance were worth the three.

'Here is rare rhyming, my worthy guest,' said the Landamman, shaking his head; 'fine words to make foolish maidens fain. But do not excuse it; it is your country fashion, and we know how to treat it as such.' And without further allusion to the concluding couplet, the reading of which threw the poet, as well as the object of the verses, into some discomposure, he added gravely, 'You must now allow, Rudolph Donnerhugel, that the stranger has fairly attained the three marks which he proposed to himself.'

'That he has attained them is plain,' answered the party to whom the appeal was made; 'but that he has done this fairly may be doubted, if there are such things as witchery and magic in this world.'

'Shame, shame, Rudolph!' said the Landamman; 'can spleen and envy have weight with so brave a man as you, from whom my sons ought to learn temperance, forbearance, and candour, as well as manly courage and dexterity?'

The Bernese coloured high under this rebuke, to which he ventured not to attempt a reply.

'To your sports till sunset, my children,' continued Arnold; 'while I and my worthy friend occupy our time with a walk, for which the evening is now favourable.'

'Methinks,' said the English merchant, 'I should like to visit the ruins of yonder castle, situated by the waterfall. There is something of melancholy dignity in such a scene which reconciles us to the misfortunes of our own time, by showing that our ancestors, who were perhaps more intelligent or more powerful, have nevertheless, in their days, encountered cares and distresses similar to those which we now groan under.'

'Have with you, my worthy sir,' replied his host; 'there will be time also upon the road to talk of things that you should know.'

The slow step of the two elderly men carried them by degrees from the limits of the lawn, where shout and laugh and halloo were again revived. Young Philipson, whose success as an archer had obliterated all recollection of former failure, made other attempts to mingle in the manly pastimes of the country, and gained a considerable portion of applause. The young men, who had but lately been so ready to join in ridiculing him, now began to consider him as a person to be looked up and appealed to; while Rudolph Donnerhugel saw with resentment that he was no longer without a rival in the opinion of his male cousins, perhaps of his kinswoman also. The proud young Swiss reflected with bitterness that he had fallen under the Landamman's displeasure, declined in reputation with his companions, of whom he had been hitherto the leader, and even hazarded a more mortifying disappointment, all, as his swelling heart expressed it, through the means of a stranger stripling, of neither blood nor fame, who could not step from one rock to another without the encouragement of a girl.

In this irritated mood he drew near the young Englishman, and, while he seemed to address him on the chances of the sports which were still proceeding, he conveyed, in a whisper, matter of a far different tendency. Striking Arthur's shoulder with the frank bluntness of a mountaineer, he said aloud, 'Yonder bolt of Ernest whistled through the air like a falcon when she stoops down the wind!' and then proceeded in a deep, low voice, 'You merchants sell gloves—do you ever deal in single gauntlets, or only in pairs?'

'I *sell* no single glove,' said Arthur, instantly apprehending him, and sufficiently disposed to resent the scornful looks of the Bernese champion during the time of their meal, and his having but lately imputed his successful shooting to chance or sorcery,—'I *sell* no single glove, sir, but never refuse to exchange one.'

'You are apt, I see,' said Rudolph; 'look at the players while I speak, or our purpose will be suspected—You are quicker, I say, of apprehension than I expected. If we exchange our gloves, how shall each redeem his own?'

'With our good swords,' said Arthur Philipson.

'In armour, or as we stand?'

'Even as we stand,' said Arthur. 'I have no better garment of proof than this doublet—no other weapon than my sword; and these, Sir Switzer, I hold enough for the purpose.—Name time and place.'

'The old castle-court at Geierstein,' replied Rudolph; 'the time sunrise;—but we are watched.—I have lost my wager, stranger,' he added, speaking aloud, and in an indifferent tone of voice, 'since Ulrick has made a cast beyond Ernest.—There is my glove, in token I shall not forget the flask of wine.'

'And there is mine,' said Arthur, 'in token I will drink it with you merrily.'

Thus, amid the peaceful though rough sports of their companions, did these two hot-headed youths contrive to indulge their hostile inclinations towards each other, by settling a meeting of deadly purpose.

CHAPTER V.

> ——— I was one
> Who loved the greenwood bank and lowing herd,
> The russet prize, the lowly peasant's life,
> Season'd with sweet content, more than the halls
> Where revellers feast to fever-height. Believe me,
> There ne'er was poison mix'd in maple bowl.
>
> ANONYMOUS.

LEAVING the young persons engaged with their sports, the Landamman of Unterwalden

and the elder Philipson walked on in company, conversing chiefly on the political relations of France, England, and Burgundy, until the conversation was changed as they entered the gate of the old castle-yard of Geierstein, where arose the lonely and dismantled keep, surrounded by the ruins of other buildings.

'This has been a proud and a strong habitation in its time,' said Philipson.

'They were a proud and powerful race who held it,' replied the Landamman. 'The Counts of Geierstein have a history which runs back to the times of the old Helvetians, and their deeds are reported to have matched their antiquity. But all earthly grandeur has an end, and free men tread the ruins of their feudal castle, at the most distant sight of whose turrets serfs were formerly obliged to veil their bonnets, if they would escape the chastisement of contumacious rebels.'

'I observe,' said the merchant, 'engraved on a stone under yonder turret, the crest, I conceive, of the last family, a vulture perched on a rock, descriptive, doubtless, of the word Geierstein.'

'It is the ancient cognisance of the family,' replied Arnold Biederman, 'and, as you say, expresses the name of the castle, being the same with that of the knights who so long held it.'

'I also remarked in your hall,' continued the merchant, 'a helmet bearing the same crest or cognisance. It is, I suppose, a trophy of the triumph of the Swiss peasants over the nobles of Geierstein, as the English bow is preserved in remembrance of the battle of Buttisholz?'

'And you, fair sir,' replied the Landamman, 'would, I perceive, from the prejudices of your education, regard the one victory with as unpleasant feeling as the other?—Strange, that the veneration for rank should be rooted even in the minds of those who have no claim to share it! But clear up your downcast brows, my worthy guest, and be assured that though many a proud baron's castle, when Switzerland threw off the bonds of feudal slavery, was plundered and destroyed by the just vengeance of an incensed people, such was not the lot of Geierstein. The blood of the old possessors of these towers still flows in the veins of him by whom these lands are occupied.'

'What am I to understand by that, Sir Landamman?' said Philipson. 'Are not you yourself the occupant of this place?'

'And you think, probably,' answered Arnold, 'because I live like the other shepherds, wear homespun grey, and hold the plough with my own hands, I cannot be descended from a line of ancient nobility? This land holds many such gentle peasants, Sir Merchant; nor is there a more ancient nobility than that of which the remains are to be found in my native country. But they have voluntarily resigned the oppressive part of their feudal power, and are no longer regarded as wolves amongst the flock, but as sagacious mastiffs, who attend the sheep in time of peace, and are prompt in their defence when war threatens our community.'

'But,' repeated the merchant, who could not yet reconcile himself to the idea that his plain and peasant-seeming host was a man of distinguished birth, 'you bear not the name, worthy sir, of your fathers—They were, you say, the Counts of Geierstein, and you are'——

'Arnold Biederman, at your command,' answered the magistrate. 'But know,—if the knowledge can make you sup with more sense of dignity or comfort,—I need but put on yonder old helmet, or, if that were too much trouble, I have only to stick a falcon's feather into my cap, and call myself Arnold, Count of Geierstein. No man could gainsay me—though whether it would become my lord Count to drive his bullocks to the pasture, and whether his Excellency the High and Well-born could, without derogation, sow a field or reap it, are questions which should be settled beforehand. I see you are confounded, my respected guest, at my degeneracy; but the state of my family is very soon explained.

'My lordly fathers ruled this same domain of Geierstein, which in their time was very extensive, much after the mode of feudal barons—that is, they were sometimes the protectors and patrons, but oftener the oppressors, of their subjects. But when my grandfather, Heinrich of Geierstein, flourished, he not only joined the Confederates to repel Ingelram de Couci and his roving bands, as I already told you, but when the wars with Austria were renewed, and many of his degree joined the host of the Emperor Leopold, my ancestor adopted the opposite side, fought in front of the Confederates, and contributed by his skill and valour to the decisive victory at Sempach, in which Leopold lost his life, and the flower of Austrian chivalry fell around him. My father, Count Williewald, followed the same course, both from inclination and policy. He united himself closely with the State of Unterwalden, became a citizen of the Confederacy, and distinguished himself so much that he was chosen Landamman of the Republic. He had two sons,—myself and a younger brother, Albert; and possessed, as he felt himself, of a species of double character, he was desirous, perhaps unwisely (if I may censure the purpose of a deceased parent), that one of his sons should succeed him in his lordship of Geierstein, and the other support the less ostentatious, though not in my thought less honourable, condition of a free citizen of Unterwalden, possessing such influence among his equals in the canton as might be acquired by his father's merits and his own. When Albert was twelve years old, our father took us on a short excursion to Germany, where the form, pomp, and magnificence which we witnessed made a very different impression on the mind of my brother and on my own. What appeared to Albert the consummation of earthly splendour, seemed to me a weary display of tiresome and useless ceremonials. Our father explained his purpose, and offered to me, as his eldest son, the large estate belonging to Geierstein, reserving such a portion of the most fertile ground as might make my brother one of the wealthiest citizens in a district where competence is esteemed wealth. The tears gushed from Albert's eyes—"And must my brother," he said, "be a noble Count, honoured and followed by vassals and attendants, and I a home-spun peasant among the grey-bearded shepherds of Unterwalden?—No, father—I respect your will—but I will not sacrifice my own

rights. Geierstein is a fief held of the Empire, and the laws entitle me to my equal half of the lands. If my brother be Count of Geierstein, I am not the less Count Albert of Geierstein; and I will appeal to the Emperor, rather than that the arbitrary will of one ancestor, though he be my father, shall cancel in me the rank and rights which I have derived from a hundred." My father was greatly incensed. "Go," he said, "proud boy, give the enemy of thy country a pretext to interfere in her affairs—appeal to the will of a foreign prince from the pleasure of thy father. Go, but never again look me in the face, and dread my eternal malediction!" Albert was about to reply with vehemence, when I entreated him to be silent and hear me speak. I had, I said, all my life loved the mountain better than the plain; had been more pleased to walk than to ride; more proud to contend with shepherds in their sports than with nobles in the lists; and happier in the village dance than among the feasts of the German nobles. "Let me, therefore," I said, "be a citizen of the Republic of Unterwalden; you will relieve me of a thousand cares; and let my brother Albert wear the coronet and bear the honours of Geierstein." After some further discussion, my father was at length contented to adopt my proposal, in order to attain the object which he had so much at heart. Albert was declared heir of his castle and his rank, by the title of Count Albert of Geierstein," and I was placed in possession of these fields and fertile meadows amidst which my house is situated, and my neighbours called me Arnold Biederman.'

'And if Biederman,' said the merchant, 'means, as I understand the word, a man of worth, candour, and generosity, I know none on whom the epithet could be so justly conferred. Yet let me observe, that I praise the conduct which, in your circumstances, I could not have bowed my spirit to practise. Proceed, I pray you, with the history of your house, if the recital be not painful to you.'

'I have little more to say,' replied the Landamman. 'My father died soon after the settlement of his estate in the manner I have told you. My brother had other possessions in Swabia* and Westphalia, and seldom visited his paternal castle, which was chiefly occupied by a seneschal, a man so obnoxious to the vassals of the family, that, but for the protection afforded by my near residence and relationship with his lord, he would have been plucked out of the Vulture's Nest and treated with as little ceremony as if he had been the vulture himself. Neither, to say the truth, did my brother's occasional visits to Geierstein afford his vassals much relief, or acquire any popularity for himself. He heard with the ears and saw with the eyes of his cruel and interested steward, Ital Schreckenwald, and would not listen even to my interference and admonition. Indeed, though he always demeaned himself with personal kindness towards me, I believe he considered me as a dull and poor-spirited clown, who had disgraced my noble blood by my mean propensities. He showed contempt on every occasion for the prejudices of his countrymen, and particularly by wearing a peacock's feather in public, and causing his followers to display the same badge, though the cognisance of the House of Austria, and so unpopular in this country, that men have been put to death for no better reason than for carrying it in their caps. In the meantime I was married to my Bertha, now a saint in heaven, by whom I had six stately sons, five of whom you saw surrounding my table this day. Albert also married. His wife was a lady of rank in Westphalia, but his bridal bed was less fruitful; he had only one daughter, Anne of Geierstein. Then came on the wars between the city of Zurich and our Forest Cantons, in which so much blood was shed, and when our brethren of Zurich were so ill-advised as to embrace the alliance of Austria. Their Emperor strained every nerve to avail himself of the favourable opportunity afforded by the disunion of the Swiss, and engaged all with whom he had influence to second his efforts. With my brother he was but too successful; for Albert not only took arms in the Emperor's cause, but admitted into the strong fortress of Geierstein a band of Austrian soldiers, with whom the wicked Ital Schreckenwald laid waste the whole country, excepting my little patrimony.'

'It came to a severe pass with you, my worthy host,' said the merchant, 'since you were to decide against the cause of your country or that of your brother.'

'I did not hesitate,' continued Arnold Biederman. 'My brother was in the Emperor's army, and I was not therefore reduced to act personally against him; but I denounced war against the robbers and thieves with whom Schreckenwald had filled my father's house. It was waged with various fortune. The seneschal, during my absence, burned down my house, and slew my youngest son, who died, alas! in defence of his father's hearth. It is little to add that my lands were wasted and my flocks destroyed. On the other hand, I succeeded, with help of a body of the peasants of Unterwalden, in storming the Castle of Geierstein. It was offered back to me by the Confederates; but I had no desire to sully the fair cause in which I had assumed arms, by enriching myself at the expense of my brother; and besides, to have dwelt in that guarded hold would have been a penance to me, the sole protectors of whose house of late years had been a latch and a shepherd's cur. The castle was therefore dismantled, as you see, by order of the elders of the canton; and I even think that, considering the uses it was too often put to, I look with more pleasure on the rugged remains of Geierstein than I ever did when it was entire, and apparently impregnable.'

'I can understand your feelings,' said the Englishman, 'though I repeat, my virtue would not perhaps have extended so far beyond the circle of my family affections. Your brother, what said he to your patriotic exertions?'

'He was, as I learned,' answered the Landamman, 'dreadfully incensed, having no doubt been informed that I had taken his castle with a view to my own aggrandizement. He even swore he would renounce my kindred, seek me through the battle, and slay me with his own hand. We

* [An old division or duchy of the German Empire, coinciding with the modern Würtemberg, the southern part of Baden, and parts of Bavaria and Switzerland.]

were, in fact, both at the battle of Freyenbach, but my brother was prevented from attempting the execution of his vindictive purpose by a wound from an arrow, which occasioned his being carried out of the *mêlée*. I was afterwards in the bloody and melancholy fight at Mount Herzel, and that other onslaught at the Chapel of Saint Jacob, which brought our brethren of Zurich to terms, and reduced Austria once more to the necessity of making peace with us. After this war of thirteen years,* the Diet passed sentence of banishment for life on my brother Albert, and would have deprived him of his possessions, but forbore in consideration of what they thought my good service. When the sentence was intimated to the Count of Geierstein, he returned an answer of defiance; yet a singular circumstance showed us not long afterwards that he retained an attachment to his country, and amidst his resentment against me, his brother, did justice to my unaltered affection for him.'

'I would pledge my credit,' said the merchant, 'that what follows relates to yonder fair maiden, your niece?'

'You guess rightly,' said the Landamman. 'For some time we heard, though indistinctly (for we have, as you know, but little communication with foreign countries), that my brother was high in favour at the court of the Emperor, but latterly that he had fallen under suspicion, and in the course of some of those revolutions common at the courts of princes, had been driven into exile. It was shortly after this news, and, as I think, more than seven years ago, that I was returning from hunting on the farther side of the river, had passed the narrow bridge as usual, and was walking through the court-yard which we have lately left' (for their walk was now turned homeward), 'when a voice said in the German language, "Uncle, have compassion upon me!" As I looked around, I beheld a girl of ten years approach timidly from the shelter of the ruins, and kneel down at my feet. "Uncle, spare my life," she said, holding up her little hands in the act of supplication, while mortal terror was painted upon her countenance.—"Am I your uncle, little maiden?" said I; "and if I am, why should you fear me?"—"Because you are the head of the wicked and base clowns who delight to spill noble blood," replied the girl, with a courage which surprised me.—"What is your name, my little maiden?" said I; "and who, having planted in your mind opinions so unfavourable to your kinsman, has brought you hither to see if he resembles the picture you have received of him?"—"It was Ital Schreckenwald that brought me hither," said the girl, only half comprehending the nature of my question.—"Ital Schreckenwald?" I repeated, shocked at the name of a wretch I have so much reason to hate. A voice from the ruins, like that of a sullen echo from the grave, answered, "Ital Schreckenwald!" and the caitiff issued from his place of concealment, and stood before me with that singular indifference to danger which he unites to his atrocity of character. I had my spiked mountain-staff in my hand—What should I have done—or what would you have done, under like circumstances?'

'I would have laid him on the earth, with his skull shivered like an icicle!' said the Englishman fiercely.

'I had well-nigh done so,' replied the Swiss; 'but he was unarmed, a messenger from my brother, and therefore no object of revenge. His own undismayed and audacious conduct contributed to save him. "Let the vassal of the noble and high-born Count of Geierstein hear the words of his master, and let him look that they are obeyed," said the insolent ruffian. "Doff thy cap and listen; for though the voice is mine, the words are those of the noble Count."—"God and man know," replied I, "if I owe my brother respect or homage—it is much if, in respect for him, I defer paying to his messenger the meed I dearly owe him. Proceed with thy tale, and rid me of thy hateful presence."—"Albert, Count of Geierstein, thy lord and my lord," proceeded Schreckenwald, "having on his hand wars, and other affairs of weight, sends his daughter, the Countess Anne, to thy charge, and graces thee so far as to entrust to thee her support and nurture, until it shall suit his purposes to require her back from thee; and he desires that thou apply to her maintenance the rents and profits of the lands of Geierstein, which thou hast usurped from him."—"Ital Schreckenwald," I replied, "I will not stop to ask if this mode of addressing me be according to my brother's directions, or thine own insolent pleasure. If circumstances have, as thou sayest, deprived my niece of her natural protector, I will be to her as a father, nor shall she want aught which I have to give her. The lands of Geierstein are forfeited to the State, the castle is ruinous, as thou seest, and it is much of thy crimes that the house of my fathers is desolate. But where I dwell Anne of Geierstein shall dwell, as my children fare shall she fare, and she shall be to me as a daughter. And now thou hast thine errand—Go hence, if thou lovest thy life; for it is unsafe parleying with the father, when thy hands are stained with the blood of the son." The wretch retired as I spoke, but took his leave with his usual determined insolence of manner.—"Farewell," he said, "Count of the Plough and Harrow—farewell, noble companion of paltry burghers!" He disappeared, and released me from the strong temptation under which I laboured, and which urged me to stain with his blood the place which had witnessed his cruelty and his crimes. I conveyed my niece to my house, and soon convinced her that I was her sincere friend. I inured her, as if she had been my daughter, to all our mountain exercises; and while she excels in these the damsels of the district, there burst from her such sparkles of sense and courage, mingled with delicacy, as belong not—I must needs own the truth—to the simple maidens of these wild hills, but relish of a nobler stem and higher breeding. Yet they are so happily mixed with simplicity and courtesy, that Anne of Geierstein is justly considered as the pride of the district; nor do I doubt but that, if she should make a worthy choice of a husband, the State would assign her a large dower out of her father's possessions, since it is not our maxim to punish the child for the faults of the parent.'

'It will naturally be your anxious desire, my

* [It lasted from 1436 to 1450.]

worthy host,' replied the Englishman, 'to secure to your niece, in whose praises I have deep cause to join with a grateful voice, such a suitable match as her birth and expectations, but above all her merit, demand.'

'It is, my good guest,' said the Landamman, 'that which hath often occupied my thoughts. The over-near relationship prohibits what would have been my most earnest desire, the hope of seeing her wedded to one of my own sons. This young man, Rudolph Donnerhugel, is brave and highly esteemed by his fellow-citizens, but more ambitious and more desirous of distinction than I would desire for my niece's companion through life. His temper is violent, though his heart, I trust, is good. But I am like to be unpleasantly released from all care on this score, since my brother, having, as it seemed, forgotten Anne for seven years and upwards, has, by a letter which I have lately received, demanded that she shall be restored to him. You can read, my worthy sir, for your profession requires it. See, here is the scroll, coldly worded, but far less unkindly than his unbrotherly message by Ital Schreckenwald—Read it, I pray you, aloud.'

The merchant read accordingly:

'Brother,—I thank you for the care you have taken of my daughter, for she has been in safety when she would otherwise have been in peril, and kindly used when she would have been in hardship. I now entreat you to restore her to me, and trust that she will come with the virtues which become a woman in every station, and a disposition to lay aside the habits of a Swiss villager, for the graces of a high-born maiden.—Adieu. I thank you once more for your care, and would repay it were it in my power; but you need nothing I can give, having renounced the rank to which you were born, and made your nest on the ground, where the storm passes over you.—I rest your brother,

Geierstein.

'It is addressed "To Count Arnold of Geierstein, called Arnold Biederman." A postscript requires you to send the maiden to the court of the Duke of Burgundy.—This, good sir, appears to me the language of a haughty man, divided betwixt the recollection of old offence and recent obligation. The speech of his messenger was that of a malicious vassal, desirous of venting his own spite under pretence of doing his lord's errand.'

'I so receive both,' replied Arnold Biederman.

'And do you intend,' continued the merchant, 'to resign this beautiful and interesting creature to the conduct of her father, wilful as he seems to be, without knowing what his condition is, or what his power of protecting her?'

The Landamman hastened to reply. 'The tie which unites the parent to the child is the earliest and the most hallowed that binds the human race. The difficulty of her travelling in safety has hitherto prevented my attempting to carry my brother's instructions into execution. But, as I am now likely to journey in person towards the court of Charles, I have determined that Anne shall accompany me; and as I will myself converse with my brother, whom I have not seen for many years, I shall learn his purpose respecting his daughter, and it may be I may prevail on Albert to suffer her to remain under my charge.—And now, sir, having told you of my family affairs at some greater length than was necessary, I must crave your attention, as a wise man, to what further I have to say. You know the disposition which young men and women naturally have to talk, jest, and sport with each other, out of which practice arise often more serious attachments, which they call loving *par amours*. I trust, if we are to travel together, you will so school your young man as to make him aware that Anne of Geierstein cannot, with propriety on her part, be made the object of his thoughts or attentions.'

The merchant coloured with resentment, or something like it. 'I asked not to join your company, Sir Landamman—it was you who requested mine,' he said; 'if my son and I have since become in any respect the objects of your suspicion, we will gladly pursue our way separately.'

'Nay, be not angry, worthy guest,' said the Landamman; 'we Switzers do not rashly harbour suspicions; and that we may not harbour them, we speak respecting the circumstances out of which they might arise, more plainly than is the wont of more civilised countries. When I proposed to you to be my companion on the journey, to speak the truth, though it may displease a father's ear, I regarded your son as a soft, faint-hearted youth, who was, as yet at least, too timid and milky-blooded to attract either respect or regard from the maidens. But a few hours have presented him to us in the character of such a one as is sure to interest them. He has accomplished the emprise of the bow, long thought unattainable, and with which a popular report connects an idle prophecy. He has wit to make verses, and knows doubtless how to recommend himself by other accomplishments which bind young persons to each other, though they are lightly esteemed by men whose beards are mixed with grey, like yours, friend merchant, and mine own. Now, you must be aware that, since my brother broke terms with me, simply for preferring the freedom of a Swiss citizen to the tawdry and servile condition of a German courtier, he will not approve of any one looking towards his daughter who hath not the advantage of noble blood, or who hath, what he would call, debased himself by attention to merchandise, to the cultivation of land—in a word, to any art that is useful. Should your son love Anne of Geierstein, he prepares for himself danger and disappointment. And, now you know the whole,—I ask you, Do we travel together or apart?'

'Even as you list, my worthy host,' said Philipson, in an indifferent tone; 'for me, I can but say that such an attachment as you speak of would be as contrary to my wishes as to those of your brother, or what I suppose are your own. Arthur Philipson has duties to perform totally inconsistent with his playing the gentle bachelor to any maiden in Switzerland, take Germany to boot, whether of high or low degree. He is an obedient son, besides—hath never seriously disobeyed my commands, and I will have an eye upon his motions.'

'Enough, my friend,' said the Landamman; 'we travel together, then, and I willingly keep my original purpose, being both pleased and instructed by your discourse.'

Then, changing the conversation, he began to ask whether his acquaintance thought that the league entered into by the King of England and the Duke of Burgundy would continue stable. 'We hear much,' continued the Swiss, 'of the immense army with which King Edward proposes the recovery of the English dominions in France.'

'I am well aware,' said Philipson, 'that nothing can be so popular in my country as the invasion of France, and the attempt to reconquer Normandy, Maine, and Gascony, the ancient appanages of our English crown. But I greatly doubt whether the voluptuous usurper who now calls himself King will be graced by Heaven with success in such an adventure. This Fourth Edward is brave indeed, and has gained every battle in which he drew his sword, and they have been many in number. But since he reached, through a bloody path, to the summit of his ambition, he has shown himself rather a sensual debauchee than a valiant knight; and it is my firm belief that not even the chance of recovering all the fair dominions which were lost during the civil wars excited by his ambitious house, will tempt him to exchange the soft beds of London, with sheets of silk and pillows of down, and the music of a dying lute to lull him to rest, for the turf of France and the *réveillé* of an alarm trumpet.'

'It is the better for us should it prove so,' said the Landamman; 'for if England and Burgundy were to dismember France, as in our fathers' days was nearly accomplished, Duke Charles would then have leisure to exhaust his long-hoarded vengeance against our Confederacy.'

As they conversed thus, they attained once more the lawn in front of Arnold Biederman's mansion, where the contention of the young men had given place to the dance performed by the young persons of both sexes. The dance was led by Anne of Geierstein and the youthful stranger; which, although it was the most natural arrangement, where the one was a guest, and the other represented the mistress of the family, occasioned the Landamman's exchanging a glance with the elder Philipson, as if it had held some relation to the suspicions he had recently expressed.

But so soon as her uncle and his elder guest appeared, Anne of Geierstein took the earliest opportunity of a pause to break off the dance, and to enter into conversation with her kinsman, as if on the domestic affairs under her attendance. Philipson observed that his host listened seriously to his niece's communication; and, nodding in his frank manner, seemed to intimate that her request should receive a favourable consideration.

The family were presently afterwards summoned to attend the evening meal, which consisted chiefly of the excellent fish afforded by the neighbouring streams and lakes. A large cup, containing what was called the *schlaf-trunk*, or sleeping drink, then went round, which was first quaffed by the master of the household, then modestly tasted by the maiden, next pledged by the two strangers, and finally emptied by the rest of the company. Such were then the sober manners of the Swiss, afterwards much corrupted by their intercourse with more luxurious regions. The guests were conducted to the sleeping apartments, where Philipson and young Arthur occupied the same couch, and shortly after the whole inhabitants of the household were locked in sound repose.

CHAPTER VI.

When we two meet, we meet like rushing torrents;
Like warring winds, like flames from various points,
That mate each other's fury—there is nought
Of elemental strife, were fiends to guide it,
Can match the wrath of man.

FRENAUD.

THE elder of our two travellers, though a strong man and familiar with fatigue, slept sounder and longer than usual on the morning which was now beginning to dawn, but his son Arthur had that upon his mind which early interrupted his repose.

The encounter with the bold Switzer, a chosen man of a renowned race of warriors, was an engagement which, in the opinion of the period in which he lived, was not to be delayed or broken. He left his father's side, avoiding as much as possible the risk of disturbing him, though even in that case the circumstance would not have excited any attention, as he was in the habit of rising early, in order to make preparations for the day's journey, to see that the guide was on his duty, and that the mule had his provender, and to discharge similar offices which might otherwise have given trouble to his father. The old man, however, fatigued with the exertions of the preceding day, slept, as we have said, more soundly than his wont, and Arthur, arming himself with his good sword, sallied out to the lawn in front of the Landamman's dwelling, amid the magic dawn of a beautiful harvest morning in the Swiss mountains.

The sun was just about to kiss the top of the most gigantic of that race of Titans, though the long shadows still lay on the rough grass, which crisped under the young man's feet, with a strong intimation of frost. But Arthur looked not round on the landscape, however lovely, which lay waiting one flash from the orb of day to start into brilliant existence. He drew the belt of his trusty sword, which he was in the act of fastening when he left the house, and ere he had secured the buckle he was many paces on his way towards the place where he was to use it.

It was still the custom of that military period to regard a summons to combat as a sacred engagement, preferable to all others which could be formed; and stifling whatever inward feelings of reluctance Nature might oppose to the dictates of fashion, the step of a gallant to the place of encounter was required to be as free and ready as if he had been going to a bridal. I do not know whether this alacrity was altogether real on the part of Arthur Philipson; but if it were otherwise, neither his look nor pace betrayed the secret.

Having hastily traversed the fields and groves which separated the Landamman's residence from the old Castle of Geierstein, he entered the court-yard from the side where the castle overlooked the land; and nearly in the same instant his almost gigantic antagonist, who looked yet more tall and burly by the pale morning light than he had seemed the preceding evening, appeared ascending from the precarious bridge beside the torrent, having reached Geierstein by a different route from that pursued by the Englishman.

The young champion of Berne had hanging along his back one of those huge two-handed swords, the blade of which measured five feet, and which were wielded with both hands. These were almost universally used by the Swiss; for, besides the impression which such weapons were calculated to make upon the array of the German men-at-arms, whose armour was impenetrable to lighter swords, they were also well calculated to defend mountain passes, where the great bodily strength and agility of those who bore them enabled the combatants, in spite of their weight and length, to use them with much address and effect. One of these gigantic swords hung round Rudolph Donnerhugel's neck, the point rattling against his heel, and the handle extending itself over his left shoulder, considerably above his head. He carried another in his hand.

'Thou art punctual,' he called out to Arthur Philipson, in a voice which was distinctly heard above the roar of the waterfall, which it seemed to rival in sullen force. 'But I judged thou wouldst come without a two-handed sword. There is my kinsman Ernest's,' he said, throwing on the ground the weapon which he carried, with the hilt towards the young Englishman. 'Look, stranger, that thou disgrace it not, for my kinsman will never forgive me if thou dost. Or thou mayst have mine if thou likest it better.'

The Englishman looked at the weapon with some surprise, to the use of which he was totally unaccustomed.

'The challenger,' he said, 'in all countries where honour is known, accepts the arms of the challenged.'

'He who fights on a Swiss mountain, fights with a Swiss brand,' answered Rudolph. 'Think you our hands are made to handle penknives?'

'Nor are ours made to wield scythes,' said Arthur; and muttered betwixt his teeth, as he looked at the sword, which the Swiss continued to offer him—'*Usum non habeo*, I have not proved the weapon.'

'Do you repent the bargain you have made?' said the Swiss; 'if so, cry craven, and return in safety. Speak plainly, instead of prattling Latin like a clerk or a shaven monk.'

'No, proud man,' replied the Englishman, 'I ask thee no forbearance. I thought but of a combat between a shepherd and a giant, in which God gave the victory to him who had worse odds of weapons than falls to my lot to-day. I will fight as I stand; my own good sword shall serve my need now, as it has done before.'

'Content!—But blame not me who offered the equality of weapons,' said the mountaineer. 'And now hear me. This is a fight for life or death—yon waterfall sounds the alarum for our conflict.—Yes, old bellower,' he continued, looking back, 'it is long since thou hast heard the noise of battle;—and look at it ere we begin, stranger, for if you fall, I will commit your body to its waters.'

'And if thou fall'st, proud Swiss,' answered Arthur, 'as well I trust thy presumption leads to destruction, I will have thee buried in the church at Einsiedlen, where the priests shall sing masses for thy soul—thy two-handed sword shall be displayed above thy grave, and a scroll shall tell the passenger, Here lies a bear's cub of Berne, slain by Arthur the Englishman.'

'The stone is not in Switzerland, rocky as it is,' said Rudolph scornfully, 'that shall bear that inscription. Prepare thyself for battle.'

The Englishman cast a calm and deliberate glance around the scene of action—a court-yard, partly open, partly encumbered with ruins, in less and larger masses.

'Methinks,' said he to himself, 'a master of his weapon, with the instructions of Bottaferma of Florence in his remembrance, a light heart, a good blade, a firm hand, and a just cause, might make up a worse odds than two feet of steel.'

Thinking thus, and imprinting on his mind, as much as the time would permit, every circumstance of the locality around him which promised advantage in the combat, and taking his station in the middle of the court-yard, where the ground was entirely clear, he flung his cloak from him, and drew his sword.

Rudolph had at first believed that his foreign antagonist was an effeminate youth, who would be swept from before him at the first flourish of his tremendous weapon. But the firm and watchful attitude assumed by the young man reminded the Swiss of the deficiencies of his own unwieldy implement, and made him determined to avoid any precipitation which might give advantage to an enemy who seemed both daring and vigilant. He unsheathed his huge sword, by drawing it over the left shoulder, an operation which required some little time, and might have offered formidable advantage to his antagonist had Arthur's sense of honour permitted him to begin the attack ere it was completed. The Englishman remained firm, however, until the Swiss, displaying his bright brand to the morning sun, made three or four flourishes as if to prove its weight and the facility with which he wielded it—then stood firm within sword-stroke of his adversary, grasping his weapon with both hands, and advancing it a little before his body, with the blade pointed straight upwards. The Englishman, on the contrary, carried his sword in one hand, holding it across his face in a horizontal position, so as to be at once ready to strike, thrust, or parry.

'Strike, Englishman!' said the Switzer, after they had confronted each other in this manner for about a minute.

'The longest sword should strike first,' said Arthur; and the words had not left his mouth when the Swiss sword rose, and descended with a rapidity which, the weight and size of the weapon considered, appeared portentous. No parry, however dexterously interposed, could have baffled the ruinous descent of that dread-

ful weapon, by which the champion of Berne had hoped at once to begin the battle and end it. But young Philipson had not over-estimated the justice of his own eye or the activity of his limbs. Ere the blade descended, a sudden spring to one side carried him from beneath its heavy sway, and before the Swiss could again raise his sword aloft, he received a wound, though a slight one, upon the left arm. Irritated at the failure and at the wound, the Switzer heaved up his sword once more, and, availing himself of a strength corresponding to his size, he discharged towards his adversary a succession of blows, downright, athwart, horizontal, and from left to right, with such surprising strength and velocity, that it required all the address of the young Englishman, by parrying, shifting, eluding, or retreating, to evade a storm, of which every individual blow seemed sufficient to cleave a solid rock. The Englishman was compelled to give ground, now backwards, now swerving to the one side or the other, now availing himself of the fragments of the ruins, but watching all the while, with the utmost composure, the moment when the strength of his enraged enemy might become somewhat exhausted, or when by some improvident or furious blow he might again lay himself open to a close attack. The latter of these advantages had nearly occurred, for, in the middle of his headlong charge, the Switzer stumbled over a large stone concealed among the long grass, and, ere he could recover himself, received a severe blow across the head from his antagonist. It lighted upon his bonnet, the lining of which enclosed a small steel cap, so that he escaped unwounded, and, springing up, renewed the battle with unabated fury, though it seemed to the young Englishman with breath somewhat short, and blows dealt with more caution.

They were still contending with equal fortune, when a stern voice, rising over the clash of swords as well as the roar of waters, called out in a commanding tone, 'On your lives, forbear!'

The two combatants sunk the points of their swords, not very sorry, perhaps, for the interruption of a strife which must otherwise have had a deadly termination. They looked round, and the Landamman stood before them, with anger frowning on his broad and expressive forehead.

'How now, boys?' he said; 'are you guests of Arnold Biederman, and do you dishonour his house by acts of violence more becoming the wolves of the mountains, than beings to whom the great Creator has given a form after his own likeness, and an immortal soul to be saved by penance and repentance?'

'Arthur,' said the elder Philipson, who had come up at the same time with their host, 'what frenzy is this? Are your duties of so light and heedless a nature, as to give time and place for quarrels and combats with every idle boor who chances to be boastful at once and bull-headed?'

The young men, whose strife had ceased at the entrance of these unexpected spectators, stood looking at each other, and resting on their swords.

'Rudolph Donnerhugel,' said the Landamman, 'give thy sword to me—to me, the owner of this ground, the master of this family, and magistrate of the canton.'

'And which is more,' answered Rudolph submissively, 'to you, who are Arnold Biederman, at whose command every native of these mountains draws his sword or sheathes it.'

He gave his two-handed sword to the Landamman.

'Now, by my honest word,' said Biederman, 'it is the same with which thy father Stephen fought so gloriously at Sempach, abreast with the famous De Winkelried! Shame it is that it should be drawn on a helpless stranger.—And you, young sir,' continued the Swiss, addressing Arthur, while his father said at the same time, 'Young man, yield up your sword to the Landamman.'

'It shall not need, sir,' replied the young Englishman, 'since, for my part, I hold our strife at an end. This gallant gentleman called me hither, on a trial, as I conceive, of courage; I can give my unqualified testimony to his gallantry and swordmanship; and as I trust he will say nothing to the shame of my manhood, I think our strife has lasted long enough for the purpose which gave rise to it.'

'Too long for me,' said Rudolph frankly; 'the green sleeve of my doublet, which I wore of that colour out of my love to the Forest Cantons, is now stained into as dirty a crimson as could have been done by any dyer in Ypres or Ghent. But I heartily forgive the brave stranger who has spoiled my jerkin, and given its master a lesson he will not soon forget. Had all Englishmen been like your guest, worthy kinsman, methinks the mound at Buttisholz had hardly risen so high.'

'Cousin Rudolph,' said the Landamman, smoothing his brow as his kinsman spoke, 'I have ever thought thee as generous as thou art harebrained and quarrelsome; and you, my young guest, may rely that when a Swiss says the quarrel is over, there is no chance of its being renewed. We are not like the men of the valleys to the eastward, who nurse revenge as if it were a favourite child. And now, join hands, my children, and let us forget this foolish feud.'

'Here is my hand, brave stranger,' said Donnerhugel; 'thou hast taught me a trick of fence, and when we have broken our fast, we will, by your leave, to the forest, where I will teach you a trick of woodcraft in return. When your foot hath half the experience of your hand, and your eye hath gained a portion of the steadiness of your heart, you will not find many hunters to match you.'

Arthur, with all the ready confidence of youth, readily embraced a proposition so frankly made, and, before they reached the house, various subjects of sport were eagerly discussed between them, with as much cordiality as if no disturbance of their concord had taken place.

'Now this,' said the Landamman, 'is as it should be. I am ever ready to forgive the headlong impetuosity of our youth, if they will be but manly and open in their reconciliation, and bear their heart on their tongue, as a true Swiss should.'

'These two youths had made but wild work of it, however,' said Philipson, 'had not your

care, my worthy host, learned of their rendezvous, and called me to assist in breaking their purpose. May I ask how it came to your knowledge so opportunely?'

'It was e'en through means of my domestic fairy,' answered Arnold Biederman, 'who seems born for the good luck of my family,—I mean my niece Anne, who had observed a glove exchanged betwixt the two young braggadocios, and heard them mention Geierstein and break of day. O sir, it is much to see a woman's sharpness of wit! it would have been long enough ere any of my thick-headed sons had shown themselves so apprehensive.'

'I think I see our propitious protectress peeping at us from yonder high ground,' said Philipson; 'but it seems as if she would willingly observe us without being seen in return.'

'Ay,' said the Landamman, 'she has been looking out to see that there has been no hurt done; and now, I warrant me, the foolish girl is ashamed of having shown such a laudable degree of interest in a matter of the kind.'

'Methinks,' said the Englishman, 'I would willingly return my thanks, in your presence, to the fair maiden to whom I have been so highly indebted.'

'There can be no better time than the present,' said the Landamman; and he sent through the groves the maiden's name, in one of those shrilly accented tones which we have already noticed.

Anne of Geierstein, as Philipson had before observed, was stationed upon a knoll at some distance, and concealed, as she thought, from notice, by a screen of brushwood. She started at her uncle's summons, therefore, but presently obeyed it; and avoiding the young men, who passed on foremost, she joined the Landamman and Philipson by a circuitous path through the woods.

'My worthy friend and guest would speak with you, Anne,' said the Landamman, so soon as the morning greeting had been exchanged. The Swiss maiden coloured over brow as well as cheek, when Philipson, with a grace which seemed beyond his calling, addressed her in these words:—

'It happens sometimes to us merchants, my fair young friend, that we are unlucky enough not to possess means for the instant defraying of our debts; but he is justly held amongst us as the meanest of mankind who does not acknowledge them. Accept, therefore, the thanks of a father, whose son your courage, only yesterday, saved from destruction, and whom your prudence has, this very morning, rescued from a great danger. And grieve me not by refusing to wear these ear-rings,' he added, producing a small jewel-case, which he opened as he spoke; 'they are, it is true, only of pearls, but they have not been thought unworthy the ears of a countess'——

'And must, therefore,' said the old Landamman, 'show misplaced on the person of a Swiss maiden of Unterwalden; for such and no more is my niece Anne while she resides in my solitude. Methinks, good Master Philipson, you display less than your usual judgment in matching the quality of your gifts with the rank of her on whom they are bestowed—as a merchant, too, you should remember that large guerdons will lighten your gains.'

'Let me crave your pardon, my good host,' answered the Englishman, 'while I reply, that at least I have consulted my own sense of the obligation under which I labour, and have chosen, out of what I have at my free disposal, that which I thought might best express it. I trust the host whom I have found hitherto so kind will not prevent this young maiden from accepting what is at least not unbecoming the rank she is born to; and you will judge me unjustly if you think me capable of doing either myself or you the wrong of offering any token of a value beyond what I can well spare.' The Landamman took the jewel-case into his own hand.

'I have ever set my countenance,' he said, 'against gaudy gems, which are leading us daily farther astray from the simplicity of our fathers and mothers.—And yet,' he added, with a good-humoured smile, and holding one of the ear-rings close to his relation's face, 'the ornaments do set off the wench rarely, and they say girls have more pleasure in wearing such toys than grey-haired men can comprehend. Wherefore, dear Anne, as thou hast deserved a dearer trust in a greater matter, I refer thee entirely to thine own wisdom, to accept of our good friend's costly present, and wear it or not as thou thinkest fit.'

'Since such is your pleasure, my best friend and kinsman,' said the young maiden, blushing as she spoke, 'I will not give pain to our valued guest by refusing what he desires so earnestly that I should accept; but, by his leave, good uncle, and yours, I will bestow these splendid ear-rings on the shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedlen, to express our general gratitude to her protecting favour, which has been around us in the terrors of yesterday's storm, and the alarms of this morning's discord.'

'By Our Lady, the wench speaks sensibly!' said the Landamman; 'and her wisdom has applied the bounty well, my good guest, to bespeak prayers for thy family and mine, and for the general peace of Unterwalden.—Go to, Anne, thou shalt have a necklace of jet at next shearing-feast, if our fleeces bear any price in the market.'

CHAPTER VII.

Let him who will not proffer'd peace receive,
Be sated with the plagues which war can give;
And well thy hatred of the peace is known,
If now thy soul reject the friendship shown.
HOOLE'S TASSO.

THE confidence betwixt the Landamman and the English merchant appeared to increase during the course of a few busy days, which occurred before that appointed for the commencement of their journey to the court of Charles of Burgundy. The state of Europe, and of the Helvetian Confederacy, has been already alluded to; but, for the distinct explanation of our story, may be here briefly recapitulated.

In the interval of a week, whilst the English

travellers remained at Geierstein, meetings or diets were held, as well of the City Cantons of the Confederacy, as of those of the Forest. The former, aggrieved by the taxes imposed on their commerce by the Duke of Burgundy, rendered yet more intolerable by the violence of the agents whom he employed in such oppression, were eager for war, in which they had hitherto uniformly found victory and wealth. Many of them were also privately instigated to arms by the largesses of Louis XI., who spared neither intrigues nor gold to effect a breach betwixt these dauntless Confederates and his formidable enemy, Charles the Bold.

On the other hand, there were many reasons which appeared to render it impolitic for the Switzers to engage in war with one of the most wealthy, most obstinate, and most powerful princes in Europe,—for such unquestionably was Charles of Burgundy,—without the existence of some strong reason affecting their own honour and independence. Every day brought fresh intelligence from the interior, that Edward the Fourth of England had entered into a strict and intimate alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Duke of Burgundy, and that it was the purpose of the English king, renowned for his numerous victories over the rival House of Lancaster, by which, after various reverses, he had obtained undisputed possession of the throne, to re-assert his claims to those provinces of France so long held by his ancestors. It seemed as if this alone were wanting to his fame; and that, having subdued his internal enemies, he now turned his eyes to the regaining of those rich and valuable foreign possessions which had been lost during the administration of the feeble Henry VI., and the civil discords so dreadfully prosecuted in the wars of the White and Red Roses. It was universally known that throughout England generally the loss of the French provinces was felt as a national degradation; and that not only the nobility, who had in consequence been deprived of the large fiefs which they had held in Normandy, Gascony, Maine, and Anjou, but the warlike gentry, accustomed to gain both fame and wealth at the expense of France, and the fiery yeomanry, whose bows had decided so many fatal battles, were as eager to renew the conflict, as their ancestors of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt had been to follow their sovereign to the fields of victory, on which their deeds had conferred deathless renown.

The latest and most authentic intelligence bore that the King of England was on the point of passing to France in person (an invasion rendered easy by his possession of Calais), with an army superior in numbers and discipline to any with which an English monarch had ever before entered that kingdom; that all the hostile preparations were completed, and that the arrival of Edward might instantly be expected; whilst the powerful co-operation of the Duke of Burgundy, and the assistance of numerous disaffected French noblemen in the provinces which had been so long under the English dominion, threatened a fearful issue of the war to Louis XI., sagacious, wise, and powerful as that prince unquestionably was.

It would no doubt have been the wisest policy of Charles of Burgundy, when thus engaging in an alliance against his most formidable neighbour, and hereditary as well as personal enemy, to have avoided all cause of quarrel with the Helvetian Confederacy, a poor but most warlike people, who already had been taught by repeated successes to feel that their hardy infantry could, if necessary, engage on terms of equality, or even of advantage, the flower of that chivalry which had hitherto been considered as forming the strength of European battle. But the measures of Charles, whom fortune had opposed to the most astucious and politic monarch of his time, were always dictated by passionate feeling and impulse, rather than by a judicious consideration of the circumstances in which he stood. Haughty, proud, and uncompromising, though neither destitute of honour nor generosity, he despised and hated what he termed the paltry associations of herdsmen and shepherds, united with a few towns which subsisted chiefly by commerce; and instead of courting the Helvetian Cantons, like his crafty enemy, or at least affording them no ostensible pretence of quarrel, he omitted no opportunity of showing the disregard and contempt in which he held their upstart consequence, and of evincing the secret longing which he entertained to take vengeance upon them for the quantity of noble blood which they had shed, and to compensate the repeated successes they had gained over the feudal lords, of whom he imagined himself the destined avenger.

The Duke of Burgundy's possessions in the Alsatian territory afforded him many opportunities for wreaking his displeasure upon the Swiss League. The little castle and town of Ferette, lying within ten or eleven miles of Bâle, served as a thoroughfare to the traffic of Berne and Soleure, the two principal towns of the Confederation. In this place the duke posted a governor, or seneschal, who was also an administrator of the revenue, and seemed born on purpose to be the plague and scourge of his republican neighbours.

Archibald von Hagenbach was a German noble, whose possessions lay in Swabia, and was universally esteemed one of the fiercest and most lawless of that frontier nobility, known by the name of Robber-knights, and Robber-counts. These dignitaries, because they held their fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire, claimed as complete sovereignty within their territories of a mile square, as any reigning prince of Germany in his more extended dominions. They levied tolls and taxes on strangers, and imprisoned, tried, and executed those who, as they alleged, had committed offences within their petty domains. But especially, and in further exercise of their seignorial privileges, they made war on each other, and on the Free Cities of the Empire, attacking and plundering without mercy the caravans, or large trains of waggons, by which the internal commerce of Germany was carried on.

A succession of injuries done and received by Archibald of Hagenbach, who had been one of the fiercest sticklers for this privilege of *faustrecht*, or club-law, as it may be termed,

had ended in his being obliged, though somewhat advanced in life, to leave a country where his tenure of existence was become extremely precarious, and to engage in the service of the Duke of Burgundy, who willingly employed him, as he was a man of high descent and proved valour, and not the less, perhaps, that he was sure to find in a man of Hagenbach's fierce, rapacious, and haughty disposition, the unscrupulous executioner of whatsoever severities it might be his master's pleasure to enjoin.

The traders of Berne and Soleure accordingly made loud and violent complaints of Hagenbach's exactions. The impositions laid on commodities which passed through his district of La Ferette, to whatever place they might be ultimately bound, were arbitrarily increased, and the merchants and traders who hesitated to make instant payment of what was demanded were exposed to imprisonment and personal punishment. The commercial towns of Germany appealed to the duke against this iniquitous conduct on the part of the Governor of La Ferette, and requested of his Grace's goodness that he would withdraw Von Hagenbach from their neighbourhood; but the duke treated their complaints with contempt. The Swiss League carried their remonstrances higher, and required that justice should be done on the Governor of La Ferette, as having offended against the law of nations; but they were equally unable to attract attention or obtain redress.

At length the Diet of the Confederation determined to send the solemn deputation which has been repeatedly mentioned. One or two of these envoys joined with the calm and prudent Arnold Biederman, in the hope that so solemn a measure might open the eyes of the duke to the wicked injustice of his representative; others among the deputies, having no such peaceful views, were determined, by this resolute remonstrance, to pave the way for hostilities.

Arnold Biederman was an especial advocate for peace, while its preservation was compatible with national independence and the honour of the Confederacy; but the younger Philipson soon discovered that the Landamman alone, of all his family, cherished these moderate views. The opinion of his sons had been swayed and seduced by the impetuous eloquence and overbearing influence of Rudolph of Donnerhugel, who, by some feats of peculiar gallantry, and the consideration due to the merit of his ancestors, had acquired an influence in the councils of his native canton, and with the youth of the League in general, beyond what was usually yielded by these wise republicans to men of his early age. Arthur, who was now an acceptable and welcome companion of all their hunting parties and other sports, heard nothing among the young men but anticipations of war, rendered delightful by the hopes of booty and of distinction, which were to be obtained by the Switzers. The feats of their ancestors against the Germans had been so wonderful as to realize the fabulous victories of romance; and while the present race possessed the same hardy limbs and the same inflexible courage, they eagerly anticipated the same distinguished success, When the Governor of La Ferette was mentioned in the conversation, he was usually spoken of as the Bandog of Burgundy, or the Alsatian Mastiff; and intimations were openly given that if his course were not instantly checked by his master, and he himself withdrawn from the frontiers of Switzerland, Archibald of Hagenbach would find his fortress no protection from the awakened indignation of the wronged inhabitants of Soleure, and particularly of those of Berne.

This general disposition to war among the young Switzers was reported to the elder Philipson by his son, and led him at one time to hesitate whether he ought not rather to resume all the inconveniences and dangers of a journey accompanied only by Arthur, than run the risk of the quarrels in which he might be involved by the unruly conduct of these fierce mountain youths, after they should have left their own frontiers. Such an event would have had, in a peculiar degree, the effect of destroying every purpose of his journey; but, respected as Arnold Biederman was by his family and countrymen, the English merchant concluded, upon the whole, that his influence would be able to restrain his companions until the great question of peace or war should be determined, and especially until they should have discharged their commission by obtaining an audience of the Duke of Burgundy, and after this he should be separated from their society, and not liable to be engaged in any responsibility for their ulterior measures.

After a delay of about ten days, the deputation commissioned to remonstrate with the duke on the aggressions and exactions of Archibald of Hagenbach, at length assembled at Geierstein, from whence the members were to journey forth together. They were three in number, besides the young Bernese, and the Landamman of Unterwalden. One was, like Arnold, a proprietor from the Forest Cantons, wearing a dress scarcely handsomer than that of a common herdsman, but distinguished by the beauty and size of his long silvery beard. His name was Nicholas Bonstetten. Melchior Sturmthal, banner-bearer of Berne, a man of middle age, and a soldier of distinguished courage, with Adam Zimmerman, a burgess of Soleure, who was considerably older, completed the number of the envoys.

Each was dressed after his best fashion; but notwithstanding that the severe eye of Arnold Biederman censured one or two silver beltbuckles, as well as a chain of the same metal, which decorated the portly person of the burgess of Soleure, it seemed that a powerful and victorious people, for such the Swiss were now to be esteemed, were never represented by an embassy of such patriarchal simplicity. The deputies travelled on foot, with their piked staves in their hands, like pilgrims bound for some place of devotion. Two mules, which bore their little stock of baggage, were led by young lads, sons or cousins of members of the embassy, who had obtained permission, in this manner, to get such a glance of the world beyond the mountains as this journey promised to afford.

But although their retinue was small, so far as respected either state or personal attendance and

accommodation, the dangerous circumstances of the times, and the very unsettled state of the country beyond their own territories, did not permit men charged with affairs of such importance to travel without a guard. Even the danger arising from the wolves, which, when pinched by the approach of winter, have been known to descend from their mountain fastnesses into open villages, such as those the travellers might choose to quarter in, rendered the presence of some escort necessary; and the bands of deserters from various services, who formed parties of banditti on the frontiers of Alsatia and Germany, combined to recommend such a precaution.

Accordingly, about twenty of the selected youth from the various Swiss cantons, including Rudiger, Ernest, and Sigismund, Arnold's three eldest sons, attended upon the deputation; they did not, however, observe any military order, or march close or near to the patriarchal train. On the contrary, they formed hunting parties of five or six together, who explored the rocks, woods, and passes of the mountains, through which the envoys journeyed. Their slower pace allowed the active young men, who were accompanied by their large shaggy dogs, full time to destroy wolves and bears, or occasionally to surprise a chamois among the cliffs; while the hunters, even while in pursuit of their sport, were careful to examine such places as might afford opportunity for ambush, and thus ascertained the safety of the party whom they escorted more securely than if they had attended close on their train. A peculiar note on the huge Swiss bugle, before described, formed of the horn of the mountain-bull, was the signal agreed upon for collecting in a body should danger occur. Rudolph Donnerhugel, so much younger than his brethren in the same important commission, took the command of this mountain body-guard, whom he usually accompanied in their sportive excursions. In point of arms they were well provided, bearing two-handed swords, long partisans and spears, as well as both cross and long bows, short cutlasses, and huntsmen's knives. The heavier weapons, as impeding their activity, were carried with the baggage, but were ready to be assumed on the slightest alarm.

Arthur Philipson, like his late antagonist, naturally preferred the company and sports of the younger men, to the grave conversation and slow pace of the fathers of the mountain commonwealth. There was, however, one temptation to loiter with the baggage, which, had other circumstances permitted, might have reconciled the young Englishman to forego the opportunities of sport which the Swiss youth so eagerly sought after, and endure the slow pace and grave conversation of the elders of the party. In a word, Anne of Geierstein, accompanied by a Swiss girl, her attendant, travelled in the rear of the deputation.

The two females were mounted upon asses, whose slow step hardly kept pace with the baggage mules; and it may be fairly suspected that Arthur Philipson, in requital of the important services which he had received from that beautiful and interesting young woman, would have deemed it no extreme hardship to have afforded her occasionally his assistance on the journey, and the advantage of his conversation to relieve the tediousness of the way. But he dared not presume to offer attentions which the customs of the country did not seem to permit, since they were not attempted by any of the maiden's cousins, or even by Rudolph Donnerhugel, who certainly had hitherto appeared to neglect no opportunity to recommend himself to his fair cousin. Besides, Arthur had reflection enough to be convinced that, in yielding to the feelings which impelled him to cultivate the acquaintance of this amiable young person, he would certainly incur the serious displeasure of his father, and probably also that of her uncle, by whose hospitality they had profited, and whose safe-conduct they were in the act of enjoying.

The young Englishman, therefore, pursued the same amusements which interested the other young men of the party, managing only, as frequently as their halts permitted, to venture upon offering to the maiden such marks of courtesy as could afford no room for remark or censure. And his character as a sportsman being now well established, he sometimes permitted himself, even when the game was afoot, to loiter in the vicinity of the path on which he could at least mark the flutter of the grey wimple of Anne of Geierstein, and the outline of the form which it shrouded. This indolence, as it seemed, was not unfavourably construed by his companions, being only accounted an indifference to the less noble or less dangerous game; for when the object was a bear, wolf, or other animal of prey, no spear, cutlass, or bow of the party, not even those of Rudolph Donnerhugel, were so prompt in the chase as those of the young Englishman.

Meantime, the elder Philipson had other and more serious subjects of consideration. He was a man, as the reader must have already seen, of much acquaintance with the world, in which he had acted parts different from that which he now sustained. Former feelings were recalled and awakened, by the view of sports familiar to his early years. The clamour of the hounds, echoing from the wild hills and dark forests through which they travelled; the sight of the gallant young huntsmen, appearing, as they brought the object of their chase to bay, amid airy cliffs and profound precipices, which seemed impervious to the human foot; the sounds of halloo and horn reverberating from hill to hill, had more than once well-nigh impelled him to take a share in the hazardous but animating amusement, which, next to war, was then in most parts of Europe the most serious occupation of life. But the feeling was transient, and he became yet more deeply interested in studying the manners and opinions of the persons with whom he was travelling.

They seemed to be all coloured with the same downright and blunt simplicity which characterized Arnold Biederman, although it was in none of them elevated by the same dignity of thought or profound sagacity. In speaking of the political state of their country, they affected no secrecy; and although, with the exception of Rudolph, their own young men were not admitted into their councils, the exclusion seemed

only adopted with a view to the necessary subordination of youth to age, and not for the purpose of observing any mystery. In the presence of the elder Philipson, they freely discussed the pretensions of the Duke of Burgundy, the means which their country possessed of maintaining her independence, and the firm resolution of the Helvetian League to bid defiance to the utmost force the world could bring against it, rather than submit to the slightest insult. In other respects their views appeared wise and moderate, although both the Banneret of Berne, and the consequential burgher of Soleure, seemed to hold the consequences of war more lightly than they were viewed by the cautious Landamman of Unterwalden and his venerable companion, Nicholas Bonstetten, who subscribed to all his opinions.

It frequently happened that, quitting these subjects, the conversation turned on such as were less attractive to their fellow-traveller. The signs of the weather, the comparative fertility of recent seasons, the most advantageous mode of managing their orchards and rearing their crops, though interesting to the mountaineers themselves, gave Philipson slender amusement; and notwithstanding that the excellent Meinherr Zimmerman of Soleure would fain have joined with him in conversation respecting trade and merchandise, yet the Englishman, who dealt in articles of small bulk and considerable value, and traversed sea and land to carry on his traffic, could find few mutual topics to discuss with the Swiss trader, whose commerce only extended into the neighbouring districts of Burgundy and Germany, and whose goods consisted of coarse woollen cloths, fustian, hides, peltry, and such ordinary articles.

But ever and anon, while the Switzers were discussing some paltry interests of trade, or describing some process of rude cultivation, or speaking of blights in grain, and the murrain amongst cattle, with all the dull minuteness of petty farmers and traders met at a country fair, a well-known spot would recall the name and story of a battle in which some of them had served (for there were none of the party who had not been repeatedly in arms), and the military details, which in other countries were only the theme of knights and squires who had acted their part in them, or of learned clerks who laboured to record them, were, in this singular region, the familiar and intimate subjects of discussion with men whose peaceful occupations seemed to place them at an immeasurable distance from the profession of a soldier. This led the Englishman to think of the ancient inhabitants of Rome, where the plough was so readily exchanged for the sword, and the cultivation of a rude farm for the management of public affairs. He hinted this resemblance to the Landamman, who was naturally gratified with the compliment to his country, but presently replied,—'May Heaven continue among us the homebred virtues of the Romans, and preserve us from their lust of conquest and love of foreign luxuries!'

The slow pace of the travellers, with various causes of delay which it is unnecessary to dwell upon occasioned the deputation spending two nights on the road before they reached Bâle. The small towns or villages in which they quartered received them with such marks of respectful hospitality as they had the means to bestow, and their arrival was a signal for a little feast, with which the heads of the community uniformly regaled them.

On such occasions, while the elders of the village entertained the deputies of the Confederation, the young men of the escort were provided for by those of their own age, several of whom, usually aware of their approach, were accustomed to join in the chase of the day, and made the strangers acquainted with the spots where game was most plenty.

These feasts were never prolonged to excess, and the most special dainties which composed them were kids, lambs, and game, the produce of the mountains. Yet it seemed both to Arthur Philipson and his father that the advantages of good cheer were more prized by the Banneret of Berne and the burgess of Soleure, than by their host the Landamman and the deputy of Schwytz. There was no excess committed, as we have already said; but the deputies first mentioned obviously understood the art of selecting the choicest morsels, and were connoisseurs in the good wine, chiefly of foreign growth, with which they freely washed it down. Arnold was too wise to censure what he had no means of amending; he contented himself by observing in his own person a rigorous diet, living indeed almost entirely upon vegetables and fair water, in which he was closely imitated by the old grey-bearded Nicholas Bonstetten, who seemed to make it his principal object to follow the Landamman's example in everything.

It was, as we have already said, the third day after the commencement of their journey, before the Swiss deputation reached the vicinity of Bâle, in which city, then one of the largest in the south-western extremity of Germany, they proposed taking up their abode for the evening, nothing doubting a friendly reception. The town, it is true, was not then, nor till about thirty years afterwards, a part of the Swiss Confederation, to which it was only joined in 1501; but it was a Free Imperial City, connected with Berne, Soleure, Lucerne, and other towns of Switzerland, by mutual interests and constant intercourse. It was the object of the deputation to negotiate, if possible, a peace, which could not be more useful to themselves than to the city of Bâle, considering the interruptions of commerce which must be occasioned by a rupture between the Duke of Burgundy and the Cantons, and the great advantage which that city would derive by preserving a neutrality, situated as it was betwixt these two hostile powers.

They anticipated, therefore, as welcome a reception from the authorities of Bâle as they had received while in the bounds of their own Confederation, since the interests of that city were so deeply concerned in the objects of their mission.—The next chapter will show how far these expectations were realized.

CHAPTER VIII.

They saw that city, welcoming the Rhine,
As from his mountain heritage he bursts,
As purposed proud Orgetorix of yore,
Leaving the desert region of the hills,
To lord it o'er the fertile plains of Gaul.
HELVETIA.

THE eyes of the English travellers, wearied with a succession of wild mountainous scenery, now gazed with pleasure upon a country still indeed irregular and hilly in its surface, but capable of high cultivation, and adorned with corn-fields and vineyards. The Rhine, a broad and large river, poured its grey stream in a huge sweep through the landscape, and divided into two portions the city of Bâle, which is situated on its banks. The southern part, to which the path of the Swiss deputies conducted them, displayed the celebrated cathedral, and the lofty terrace which runs in front of it, and seemed to remind the travellers that they now approached a country in which the operations of man could make themselves distinguished even among the works of nature, instead of being lost, as the fate of the most splendid efforts of human labour must have been, among those tremendous mountains which they had so lately traversed.

They were yet a mile from the entrance of the city, when the party was met by one of the magistrates, attended by two or three citizens mounted on mules, the velvet housings of which expressed wealth and quality. They greeted the Landamman of Unterwalden and his party in a respectful manner, and the latter prepared themselves to hear, and make a suitable reply to, the hospitable invitation which they naturally expected to receive.

The message of the community of Bâle was, however, diametrically opposite to what they had anticipated. It was delivered with a good deal of diffidence and hesitation by the functionary who met them, and who certainly, while discharging his commission, did not appear to consider it as the most respectable which he might have borne. There were many professions of the most profound and fraternal regard for the cities of the Helvetian League, with whom the orator of Bâle declared his own State to be united in friendship and interests. But he ended by intimating that, on account of certain cogent and weighty reasons, which should be satisfactorily explained at more leisure, the Free City of Bâle could not, this evening, receive within its walls the highly-respected deputies who were travelling, at the command of the Helvetian Diet, to the court of the Duke of Burgundy.

Philipson marked with much interest the effect which this most unexpected intimation produced on the members of the embassage. Rudolph Donnerhugel, who had joined their company as they approached Bâle, appeared less surprised than his associates, and, while he remained perfectly silent, seemed rather anxious to penetrate their sentiments, than disposed to express his own. It was not the first time the sagacious merchant had observed that this bold and fiery young man could, when his purposes required it, place a strong constraint upon the natural impetuosity of his temper. For the others, the Banneret's brow darkened; the face of the burgess of Soleure became flushed like the moon when rising in the north-west; the grey-bearded deputy of Schwytz looked anxiously on Arnold Biederman; and the Landamman himself seemed more moved than was usual in a person of his equanimity. At length he replied to the functionary of Bâle, in a voice somewhat altered by his feelings:—

'This is a singular message to the deputies of the Swiss Confederacy, bound as we are upon an amicable mission, on which depends the interest of the good citizens of Bâle, whom we have always treated as our good friends, and who still profess to be so. The shelter of their roofs, the protection of their walls, the wonted intercourse of hospitality, is what no friendly State hath a right to refuse to the inhabitants of another.'

'Nor is it with their will that the community of Bâle refuse it, worthy Landamman,' replied the magistrate. 'Not you alone, and your worthy associates, but your escort, and your very beasts of burden, should be entertained with all the kindness which the citizens of Bâle could bestow—But we act under constraint.'

'And by whom exercised?' said the Banneret, bursting out into passion. 'Has the Emperor Sigismund profited so little by the example of his predecessors'——

'The Emperor,' replied the delegate of Bâle, interrupting the Banneret, 'is a well-intentioned and peaceful monarch, as he has been ever; but—there are Burgundian troops, of late, marched into the Sundgau,* and messages have been sent to our State from Count Archibald of Hagenbach.'

'Enough said,' replied the Landamman. 'Draw not farther the veil from a weakness for which you blush. I comprehend you entirely. Bâle lies too near the citadel of La Ferette to permit its citizens to consult their own inclinations.—Brother, we see where your difficulty lies—we pity you—and we forgive your inhospitality.'

'Nay, but hear me to an end, worthy Landamman,' answered the magistrate. 'There is here in the vicinity an old hunting-seat of the Counts of Falkenstein, called Graffs-lust,† which, though ruinous, yet may afford better lodgings than the open air, and is capable of some defence—though Heaven forbid that any one should dare to intrude upon your repose! And hark ye hither, my worthy friends;—if you find in the old place some refreshment, as wine, beer, and the like, use them without scruple, for they are there for your accommodation.'

'I do not refuse to occupy a place of security,' said the Landamman; 'for although the causing us to be excluded from Bâle may be only done in the spirit of petty insolence and malice, yet it may also, for what we can tell, be connected with some purpose of violence. Your provisions we thank you for; but we will not, with my consent, feed at the cost of friends who are ashamed to own us unless by stealth.'

* [The Sundgau was the upper or southern portion of Alsace.]

† Graffs-lust, *i.e.* Count's-delight.

'One thing more, my worthy sir,' said the official of Bâle—'You have a maiden in company, who, I presume to think, is your daughter. There is but rough accommodation where you are going, even for men; for women there is little better, though what we could we have done to arrange matters as well as may be. But rather let your daughter go with us back to Bâle, where my dame will be a mother to her till next morning, when I will bring her to your camp in safety. We promised to shut our gates against the men of the Confederacy, but the women were not mentioned.'

'You are subtle casuists, you men of Bâle,' answered the Landamman; 'but know that, from the time in which the Helvetians sallied forth to encounter Cæsar down to the present hour, the women of Switzerland, in the press of danger, have had their abode in the camp of their fathers, brothers, and husbands, and sought no further safety than they might find in the courage of their relations. We have enough of men to protect our women, and my niece shall remain with us, and take the fate which Heaven may send us.'

'Adieu, then, worthy friend,' said the magistrate of Bâle; 'it grieves me to part with you thus, but evil fate will have it so. Yonder grassy avenue will conduct you to the old hunting-seat, where Heaven send that you may pass a quiet night; for, apart from other risks, men say that these ruins have no good name. Will you yet permit your niece, since such the young person is, to pass to Bâle for the night in my company?'

'If we are disturbed by beings like ourselves,' said Arnold Biederman, 'we have strong arms and heavy partisans; if we should be visited, as your words would imply, by those of a different description, we have, or should have, good consciences, and confidence in Heaven.—Good friends, my brethren on this embassy, have I spoken your sentiments as well as mine own?'

The other deputies intimated their assent to what their companion had said, and the citizens of Bâle took a courteous farewell of their guests, endeavouring, by the excess of civility, to atone for their deficiency in effective hospitality. After their departure, Rudolph was the first to express his sense of their pusillanimous behaviour, on which he had been silent during their presence. 'Coward dogs!' he said; 'may the Butcher of Burgundy flay the very skins from them with his exactions, to teach them to disown old friendships, rather than abide the lightest blast of a tyrant's anger!'

'And not even their own tyrant either,' said another of the group,—for several of the young men had gathered round their seniors, to hear the welcome which they expected from the magistrates of Bâle.

'No,' replied Ernest, one of Arnold Biederman's sons, 'they do not pretend that their own prince the Emperor hath interfered with them; but a word of the Duke of Burgundy, which should be no more to them than a breath of wind from the west, is sufficient to stir them to such brutal inhospitality. It were well to march to the city, and compel them at the sword's point to give us shelter.'

A murmur of applause arose amongst the youth around, which awakened the displeasure of Arnold Biederman.

'Did I hear,' he said, 'the tongue of a son of mine, or was it that of a brutish lanzknecht,* who has no pleasure but in battle or violence? Where is the modesty of the youth of Switzerland, who were wont to wait the signal for action till it pleased the elders of the canton to give it, and were as gentle as maidens till the voice of their patriarchs bade them be bold as lions?'

'I meant no harm, father,' said Ernest, abashed with this rebuke, 'far less any slight towards you; but I must needs say'——

'Say not a word, my son,' replied Arnold, 'but leave our camp to-morrow by break of day; and, as thou takest thy way back to Geierstein, to which I command thine instant return, remember that he is not fit to visit strange countries, who cannot rule his tongue before his own countrymen, and to his own father.'

The Banneret of Berne, the burgess of Soleure, even the long-bearded deputy from Schwytz, endeavoured to intercede for the offender, and obtain a remission of his banishment; but it was in vain.

'No, my good friends and brethren, no,' replied Arnold. 'These young men require an example; and though I am grieved in one sense that the offence has chanced within my own family, yet I am pleased in another light that the delinquent should be one over whom I can exercise full authority, without suspicion of partiality. Ernest, my son, thou hast heard my commands: Return to Geierstein with the morning's light, and let me find thee an altered man when I return thither.'

The young Swiss, who was evidently much hurt and shocked at this public affront, placed one knee on the ground and kissed his father's right hand, while Arnold, without the slightest sign of anger, bestowed his blessing upon him; and Ernest, without a word of remonstrance, fell into the rear of the party. The deputation then proceeded down the avenue which had been pointed out to them, and at the bottom of which arose the massy ruins of Graffs-lust; but there was not enough of daylight remaining to discern their exact form. They could observe as they drew nearer, and as the night became darker, that three or four windows were lighted up, while the rest of the front remained obscured in gloom. When they arrived at the place, they perceived it was surrounded by a large and deep moat, the sullen surface of which reflected, though faintly, the glimmer of the lights within.

CHAPTER IX.

Francisco. Give you good-night.
Marcellus. O, farewell, honest soldier.
Who hath relieved you?
Fran. Give you good-night; Bernardo hath my place.
HAMLET.

THE first occupation of our travellers was to find the means of crossing the moat; and they were

* A private soldier of the German infantry.

not long of discovering the *tête-du-pont* on which the drawbridge, when lowered, had formerly rested. The bridge itself had been long decayed, but a temporary passage of fir-trees and planks had been constructed, apparently very lately, which admitted them to the chief entrance of the castle. On entering it, they found a wicket opening under the archway, which, glimmering with light, served to guide them to a hall prepared evidently for their accommodation as well as circumstances had admitted of.

A large fire of well-seasoned wood burned blithely in the chimney, and had been maintained so long there that the air of the hall, notwithstanding its great size and somewhat ruinous aspect, felt mild and genial. There was also at the end of the apartment a stack of wood, large enough to maintain the fire had they been to remain there a week. Two or three long tables in the hall stood covered and ready for their reception; and, on looking more closely, several large hampers were found in a corner, containing cold provisions of every kind, prepared with great care, for their immediate use. The eyes of the good burgess of Soleure twinkled when he beheld the young men in the act of transferring the supper from the hampers, and arranging it on the table.

'Well,' said he, 'these poor men of Bâle have saved their character; since, if they have fallen short in welcome, they have abounded in good cheer.'

'Ah, friend!' said Arnold Biederman, 'the absence of the landlord is a great deduction from the entertainment. Better half an apple from the hand of your host, than a bridal feast without his company.'

'We owe them the less for their banquet,' said the Banneret. 'But from the doubtful language they held, I should judge it meet to keep a strong guard to-night, and even that some of our young men should, from time to time, patrol around the old ruins. The place is strong and defensible, and so far our thanks are due to those who have acted as our quartermasters. We will, however, with your permission, my honoured brethren, examine the house within, and then arrange regular guards and patrols.—To your duty, then, young men, and search these ruins carefully,—they may, perchance, contain more than ourselves; for we are now near one who, like a pilfering fox, moves more willingly by night than by day, and seeks his prey amidst ruins and wildernesses rather than in the open field.'

All agreed to this proposal. The young men took torches, of which a good provision had been left for their use, and made a strict search through the ruins.

The greater part of the castle was much more wasted and ruinous than the portion which the citizens of Bâle seemed to have destined for the accommodation of the embassy. Some parts were roofless, and the whole desolate. The glare of light—the gleam of arms—the sound of the human voice, and echoes of mortal tread, startled from their dark recesses bats, owls, and other birds of ill omen, the usual inhabitants of such time-worn edifices, whose flight through the desolate chambers repeatedly occasioned alarm amongst those who heard the noise without seeing the cause, and shouts of laughter when it became known. They discovered that the deep moat surrounded their place of retreat on all sides, and of course that they were in safety against any attack which could be made from without, except it was attempted by the main entrance, which it was easy to barricade, and guard with sentinels. They also ascertained by strict search, that though it was possible an individual might be concealed amid such a waste of ruins, yet it was altogether impossible that any number which might be formidable to so large a party as their own, could have remained there without a certainty of discovery. These particulars were reported to the Banneret, who directed Donnerhugel to take charge of a body of six of the young men, such as he should himself choose, to patrol on the outside of the building till the first cock-crowing, and at that hour to return to the castle, when the same number were to take the duty till morning dawned, and then be relieved in their turn. Rudolph declared his own intention to remain on guard the whole night; and as he was equally remarkable for vigilance as for strength and courage, the external watch was considered as safely provided for, it being settled that, in case of any sudden rencontre, the deep and hoarse sound of the Swiss bugle should be the signal for sending support to the patrolling party.

Within side the castle, the precautions were taken with equal vigilance. A sentinel, to be relieved every two hours, was appointed to take post at the principal gate, and other two kept watch on the other side of the castle, although the moat appeared to insure safety in that quarter.

These precautions being taken, the remainder of the party sat down to refresh themselves, the deputies occupying the upper part of the hall, while those of their escort modestly arranged themselves in the lower end of the same large apartment. Quantities of hay and straw, which were left piled in the wide castle, were put to the purpose for which undoubtedly they had been destined by the citizens of Bâle, and, with the aid of cloaks and mantles, were judged excellent good bedding by a hardy race, who, in war or the chase, were often well satisfied with a much worse night's lair.

The attention of the Bâlese had even gone so far as to provide for Anne of Geierstein separate accommodation, more suitable to her use than that assigned to the men of the party. An apartment, which had probably been the buttery of the castle, entered from the hall, and had also a doorway leading out into a passage connected with the ruins; but this last had hastily, yet carefully, been built up with large hewn stones taken from the ruins; without mortar, indeed, or any other cement, but so well secured by their own weight, that an attempt to displace them must have alarmed not only any one who might be in the apartment itself, but also those who were in the hall adjacent, or indeed in any part of the castle. In the small room thus carefully arranged and secured, there were two pallet-beds and a large fire, which blazed on the

hearth, and gave warmth and comfort to the apartment. Even the means of devotion were not forgotten, a small crucifix of bronze being hung over a table, on which lay a breviary.

Those who first discovered this little place of retreat, came back loud in praise of the delicacy of the citizens of Bâle, who, while preparing for the general accommodation of the strangers, had not failed to provide separately and peculiarly for that of their female companion.

Arnold Biederman felt the kindness of this conduct. 'We should pity our friends of Bâle, and not nourish resentment against them,' he said. 'They have stretched their kindness towards us as far as their personal apprehensions permitted; and that is saying no small matter for them, my masters, for no passion is so unutterably selfish as that of fear.—Anne, my love, thou art fatigued. Go to the retreat provided for you, and Lizette shall bring you from this abundant mass of provisions what will be fittest for your evening meal.'

So saying, he led his niece into the little bedroom, and, looking round with an air of complacency, wished her good repose; but there was something on the maiden's brow which seemed to augur that her uncle's wishes would not be fulfilled. From the moment she had left Switzerland, her looks had become clouded; her intercourse with those who approached her had grown more brief and rare; her whole appearance was marked with secret anxiety or secret sorrow. This did not escape her uncle, who naturally imputed it to the pain of parting from him, which was probably soon to take place, and to her regret at leaving the tranquil spot in which so many years of her youth had been spent.

But Anne of Geierstein had no sooner entered the apartment, than her whole frame trembled violently, and, the colour leaving her cheeks entirely, she sunk down on one of the pallets, where, resting her elbows on her knees, and pressing her hands on her forehead, she rather resembled a person borne down by mental distress, or oppressed by some severe illness, than one who, tired with a journey, was in haste to betake herself to needful rest. Arnold was not quick-sighted as to the many sources of female passion. He saw that his niece suffered; but imputing it only to the causes already mentioned, augmented by the hysterical effects often produced by fatigue, he gently blamed her for having departed from her character of a Swiss maiden ere she was yet out of reach of a Swiss breeze of wind.

'Thou must not let the dames of Germany or Flanders think that our daughters have degenerated from their mothers; else must we fight the battles of Sempach and Laupen over again, to convince the Emperor, and this haughty Duke of Burgundy, that our men are of the same mettle with their forefathers. And as for our parting, I do not fear it. My brother is a Count of the Empire, indeed, and therefore he must needs satisfy himself that everything over which he possesses any title shall be at his command, and sends for thee to prove his right of doing so. But I know him well: he will no sooner be satisfied that he may command thy attendance at pleasure, than he will concern himself about thee no more. Thee? Alas! poor thing, in what couldst thou aid his courtly intrigues and ambitious plans? No, no—thou art not for the noble Count's purpose, and must be content to trudge back to rule the dairy at Geierstein, and be the darling of thine old peasant-like uncle.'

'Would to God we were there even now!' said the maiden, in a tone of wretchedness which she strove in vain to conceal or suppress.

'That may hardly be till we have executed the purpose which brought us hither,' said the literal Landamman. 'But lay thee on thy pallet, Anne—take a morsel of food and three drops of wine, and thou wilt wake to-morrow, as gay as on a Swiss holiday when the pipe sounds the *réveillé*.'

Anne was now able to plead a severe headache, and declining all refreshment, which she declared herself incapable of tasting, she bade her uncle good-night. She then desired Lizette to get some food for herself, cautioning her, as she returned, to make as little noise as possible, and not to break her repose if she should have the good fortune to fall asleep. Arnold Biederman then kissed his niece, and returned to the hall, where his colleagues in office were impatient to commence an attack on the provisions which were in readiness; to which the escort of young men, diminished by the patrols and sentinels, were no less disposed than their seniors.

The signal of assault was given by the deputy from Schwytz, the eldest of the party, pronouncing in patriarchal form a benediction over the meal. The travellers then commenced their operations with a vivacity which showed that the uncertainty whether they should get any food, and the delays which had occurred in arranging themselves in their quarters, had infinitely increased their appetites. Even the Landamman, whose moderation sometimes approached to abstinence, seemed that night in a more genial humour than ordinary. His friend of Schwytz, after his example, ate, drank, and spoke more than usual; while the rest of the deputies pushed their meal to the verge of a carousal. The elder Philipson marked the scene with an attentive and anxious eye, confining his applications to the wine-cup to such pledges as the politeness of the times called upon him to reply to. His son had left the hall just as the banquet began, in the manner which we are now to relate.

Arthur had proposed to himself to join the youths who were to perform the duty of sentinels within, or patrols on the outside of their place of repose, and had indeed made some arrangement for that purpose with Sigismund, the third of the Landamman's sons. But while about to steal a parting glance at Anne of Geierstein, before offering his service as he proposed, there appeared on her brow such a deep and solemn expression, as diverted his thoughts from every other subject, excepting the anxious doubts as to what could possibly have given rise to such a change. The placid openness of brow; the eye which expressed conscious and fearless innocence; the lips which, seconded by a look as frank as her words, seemed ever ready to speak, in kindness and in confidence, that which the heart dic-

tated, were for the moment entirely changed in character and expression, and in a degree and manner for which no ordinary cause could satisfactorily account. Fatigue might have banished the rose from the maiden's beautiful complexion, and sickness or pain might have dimmed her eye and clouded her brow. But the look of deep dejection with which she fixed her eyes at times on the ground, and the startled and terrified glance which she cast around her at other intervals, must have had their rise in some different source. Neither could illness or weariness explain the manner in which her lips were contracted or compressed together, like one who makes up her mind to act or behold something that is fearful, or account for the tremor which seemed at times to steal over her insensibly, though by a strong effort she was able at intervals to throw it off. For this change of expression there must be in the heart some deeply melancholy and afflicting cause. What could that cause be?

It is dangerous for youth to behold beauty in the pomp of all her charms, with every look bent upon conquest—more dangerous to see her in the hour of unaffected and unapprehensive ease and simplicity, yielding herself to the graceful whim of the moment, and as willing to be pleased as desirous of pleasing. There are minds which may be still more affected by gazing on beauty in sorrow, and feeling that pity, that desire of comforting the lovely mourner, which the poet has described as so nearly akin to love. But to a spirit of that romantic and adventurous cast which the Middle Ages frequently produced, the sight of a young and amiable person evidently in a state of terror and suffering, which had no visible cause, was perhaps still more impressive than beauty, in her pride, her tenderness, or her sorrow. Such sentiments, it must be remembered, were not confined to the highest ranks only, but might then be found in all classes of society which were raised above the mere peasant or artisan. Young Philipson gazed on Anne of Geierstein with such intense curiosity, mingled with pity and tenderness, that the bustling scene around him seemed to vanish from his eyes, and leave no one in the noisy hall save himself and the object of his interest.

What could it be that so evidently oppressed and almost quailed a spirit so well balanced and a courage so well tempered, when, being guarded by the swords of the bravest men perhaps to be found in Europe, and lodged in a place of strength, even the most timid of her sex might have found confidence? Surely, if an attack were to be made upon them, the clamour of a conflict in such circumstances could scarce be more terrific than the roar of those cataracts which he had seen her despise? At least, he thought, she ought to be aware that there is ONE who is bound by friendship and gratitude to fight to the death in her defence. Would to Heaven, he continued in the same reverie, it were possible to convey to her, without sign or speech, the assurance of my unalterable resolution to protect her in the worst of perils!—As such thoughts streamed through his mind, Anne raised her eyes in one of those fits of deep feeling which seemed to overwhelm her; and while she cast them round the hall, with a look of apprehension, as if she expected to see amid the well-known companions of her journey some strange and unwelcome apparition, they encountered the fixed and anxious gaze of young Philipson. They were instantly bent on the ground, while a deep blush showed how much she was conscious of having attracted his attention by her previous deportment.

Arthur, on his part, with equal consciousness, blushed as deeply as the maiden herself, and drew himself back from her observation. But when Anne rose up, and was escorted by her uncle to her bedchamber, in the manner we have already mentioned, it seemed to Philipson as if she had carried with her from the apartment the lights with which it was illuminated, and left it in the twilight melancholy of some funeral hall. His deep musings were pursuing the subject which occupied them thus anxiously, when the manly voice of Donnerhugel spoke close in his ear—

'What, comrade, has our journey to-day fatigued you so much that you go to sleep upon your feet?'

'Now, Heaven forbid, Hauptman,' said the Englishman, starting from his reverie, and addressing Rudolph by his name (signifying captain, or literally head-man), which the youth of the expedition had by unanimous consent bestowed on him,—'Heaven forbid I should sleep, if there be aught like action in the wind.'

'Where dost thou propose to be at cock-crow?' said the Swiss.

'Where duty shall call me, or your experience, noble Hauptman, shall appoint,' replied Arthur.—'But, with your leave, I purposed to take Sigismund's guard on the bridge till midnight or morning dawn. He still feels the sprain which he received in his spring after yonder chamois, and I persuaded him to take some uninterrupted rest, as the best mode of restoring his strength.'

'He will do well to keep his counsel, then,' again whispered Donnerhugel; 'the old Landamman is not a man to make allowances for mishaps, when they interfere with duty. Those who are under his orders should have as few brains as a bull, as strong limbs as a bear, and be as impassible as lead or iron to all the casualties of life and all the weaknesses of humanity.'

Arthur replied in the same tone:—'I have been the Landamman's guest for some time, and have seen no specimens of any such rigid discipline.'

'You are a stranger,' said the Swiss, 'and the old man has too much hospitality to lay you under the least restraint. You are a volunteer, too, in whatever share you choose to take in our sports or our military duty; and therefore, when I ask you to walk abroad with me at the first cock-crowing, it is only in the event that such exercise shall entirely consist with your own pleasure.'

'I consider myself as under your command for the time,' said Philipson; 'but, not to bandy courtesy, at cock-crow I shall be relieved from my watch on the drawbridge, and will be by that time glad to exchange the post for a more extended walk.'

'Do you not choose more of this fatiguing and probably unnecessary duty than may befit your strength?' said Rudolph.

'I take no more than you do,' said Arthur, 'as you propose not to take rest till morning.'

'True,' answered Donnerhugel, 'but I am a Swiss.'

'And I,' answered Philipson quickly, 'am an Englishman.'

'I did not mean what I said in the sense you take it,' said Rudolph, laughing; 'I only meant that I am more interested in this matter than you can be, who are a stranger to the cause in which we are personally engaged.'

'I am a stranger, no doubt,' replied Arthur; 'but a stranger who has enjoyed your hospitality, and who therefore claims a right, while with you, to a share in your labours and dangers.'

'Be it so,' said Rudolph Donnerhugel. 'I shall have finished my first rounds at the hour when the sentinels at the castle are relieved, and shall be ready to recommence them in your good company.'

'Content,' said the Englishman. 'And now I will to my post, for I suspect Sigismund is blaming me already, as oblivious of my promise.'

They hastened together to the gate, where Sigismund willingly yielded up his weapon and his guard to young Philipson, confirming the idea sometimes entertained of him, that he was the most indolent and least spirited of the family of Geierstein. Rudolph could not suppress his displeasure.

'What would the Landamman say,' he demanded, 'if he saw thee thus quietly yield up post and partisan to a stranger?'

'He would say I did well,' answered the young man, nothing daunted; 'for he is for ever reminding us to let the stranger have his own way in everything; and English Arthur stands on this bridge by his own wish, and no asking of mine.—Therefore, kind Arthur, since thou wilt barter warm straw and a sound sleep for frosty air and a clear moonlight, I make thee welcome with all my heart. Hear your duty: You are to stop all who enter, or attempt to enter, or till they give the password. If they are strangers, you must give alarm. But you will suffer such of our friends as are known to you to pass outwards without challenge or alarm, because the deputation may find occasion to send messengers abroad.'

'A murrain on thee, thou lazy losel!' said Rudolph—'Thou art the only sluggard of thy kin.'

'Then am I the only wise man of them all,' said the youth.—'Hark ye, brave Hauptman, ye have supped this evening,—have ye not?'

'It is a point of wisdom, ye owl,' answered the Bernese, 'not to go into the forest fasting.'

'If it is wisdom to eat when we are hungry,' answered Sigismund, 'there can be no folly in sleeping when we are weary.' So saying, and after a desperate yawn or two, the relieved sentinel halted off, giving full effect to the sprain of which he complained.

'Yet there is strength in those loitering limbs, and valour in that indolent and sluggish spirit,' said Rudolph to the Englishman. 'But it is time that I, who censure others, should betake me to my own task.—Hither, comrades of the watch, hither.'

The Bernese accompanied these words with a whistle, which brought from within six young men, whom he had previously chosen for the duty, and who, after a hurried supper, now waited his summons. One or two of them had large bloodhounds or lyme-dogs, which, though usually employed in the pursuit of animals of chase, were also excellent for discovering ambuscades, in which duty their services were now to be employed. One of these animals was held in a leash, by the person who, forming the advance of the party, went about twenty yards in front of them; a second was the property of Donnerhugel himself, who had the creature singularly under command. Three of his companions attended him closely, and the two others followed, one of whom bore a horn of the Bernese wild bull, by way of bugle. This little party crossed the moat by the temporary bridge, and moved on to the verge of the forest, which lay adjacent to the castle, and the skirts of which were most likely to conceal any ambuscade that could be apprehended. The moon was now up, and near the full, so that Arthur, from the elevation on which the castle stood, could trace their slow, cautious march, amid the broad silver light, until they were lost in the depths of the forest.

When this object had ceased to occupy his eyes, the thoughts of his lonely watch again returned to Anne of Geierstein, and to the singular expression of distress and apprehension which had that evening clouded her beautiful features. Then the blush which had chased, for the moment, paleness and terror from her countenance, at the instant his eyes encountered hers—was it anger—was it modesty—was it some softer feeling, more gentle than the one, more tender than the other? Young Philipson, who, like Chaucer's Squire, was 'as modest as a maid,' almost trembled to give to that look the favourable interpretation which a more self-satisfied gallant would have applied to it without scruple. No hue of rising or setting day was ever so lovely in the eyes of the young man, as that blush was in his recollection; nor did ever enthusiastic visionary, or poetical dreamer, find out so many fanciful forms in the clouds, as Arthur divined various interpretations from the indications of interest which had passed over the beautiful countenance of the Swiss maiden.

In the meantime, the thought suddenly burst on his reverie, that it could little concern him what was the cause of the perturbation she had exhibited. They had met at no distant period for the first time,—they must soon part for ever. She could be nothing more to him than the remembrance of a beautiful vision, and he could have no other part in her memory save as a stranger from a foreign land, who had been a sojourner for a season in her uncle's house, but whom she could never expect to see again. When this idea intruded on the train of romantic visions which agitated him, it was like the sharp stroke of the harpoon, which awakens the whale from slumbering torpidity into violent action. The gateway in which the young soldier kept his watch seemed suddenly too narrow for him. He rushed across the temporary bridge, and hastily

traversed a short space of ground in front of the *tête-du-pont*, or defensive work, on which its outer extremity rested.

Here for a time he paced the narrow extent to which he was confined by his duty as a sentinel, with long and rapid strides, as if he had been engaged by vow to take the greatest possible quantity of exercise upon that limited space of ground. His exertion, however, produced the effect of in some degree composing his mind, recalling him to himself, and reminding him of the numerous reasons which prohibited his fixing his attention, much more his affections, upon this young person, however fascinating she was.

I have surely, he thought, as he slackened his pace, and shouldered his heavy partisan, sense enough left to recollect my condition and my duties—to think of my father, to whom I am all in all—and to think also on the dishonour which must accrue to me, were I capable of winning the affections of a frank-hearted and confiding girl, to whom I could never do justice by dedicating my life to return them. 'No,' he said to himself; 'she will soon forget me, and I will study to remember her no otherwise than I would a pleasing dream, which hath for a moment crossed a night of perils and dangers, such as my life seems doomed to be.'

As he spoke he stopped short in his walk, and as he rested on his weapon a tear rose unbidden to his eye, and stole down his cheek without being wiped away. But he combated this gentler mood of passion as he had formerly battled with that which was of a wilder and more desperate character. Shaking off the dejection and sinking of spirit which he felt creeping upon him, he resumed, at the same time, the air and attitude of an attentive sentinel, and recalled his mind to the duties of his watch, which, in the tumult of his feelings, he had almost forgotten. But what was his astonishment, when, as he looked out on the clear landscape, there passed from the bridge towards the forest, crossing him in the broad moonlight, the living and moving likeness of Anne of Geierstein!

CHAPTER X.

We know not when we sleep nor when we wake
Visions distinct and perfect cross our eye,
Which to the slumberer seem realities;
And while they waked, some men have seen such sights
As set at nought the evidence of sense,
And left them well persuaded they were dreaming.
ANONYMOUS.

THE apparition of Anne of Geierstein crossed her lover—her admirer, at least, we must call him—within shorter time than we can tell the story. But it was distinct, perfect, and undoubted. In the very instant when the young Englishman, shaking off his fond despondency, raised his head to look out upon the scene of his watch, she came from the nearer end of the bridge, crossing the path of the sentinel, upon whom she did not even cast a look, and passed with a rapid yet steady pace towards the verge of the woodland.

It would have been natural, though Arthur had been directed not to challenge persons who left the castle, but only such as might approach it, that he should nevertheless, had it only been in mere civility, have held some communication, however slight, with the maiden as she crossed his post. But the suddenness of her appearance took from him for the instant both speech and motion. It seemed as if his own imagination had raised up a phantom, presenting to his outward senses the form and features which engrossed his mind; and he was silent, partly at least from the idea that what he gazed upon was immaterial, and not of this world.

It would have been no less natural that Anne of Geierstein should have in some manner acknowledged the person who had spent a considerable time under the same roof with her, had been often her partner in the dance, and her companion in the field; but she did not evince the slightest token of recognition, nor even look towards him as she passed; her eye was on the wood, to which she advanced swiftly and steadily, and she was hidden by its boughs ere Arthur had recollected himself sufficiently to determine what to do.

His first feeling was anger at himself for suffering her to pass unquestioned, when it might well chance that, upon any errand which called her forth at so extraordinary a time and place, he might have been enabled to afford her assistance, or at least advice. This sentiment was for a short time so predominant, that he ran towards the place where he had seen the skirt of her dress disappear, and, whispering her name as loud as the fear of alarming the castle permitted, conjured her to return, and hear him but for a few brief moments. No answer, however, was returned; and when the branches of the trees began to darken over his head and to intercept the moonlight, he recollected that he was leaving his post, and exposing his fellow-travellers, who were trusting in his vigilance, to the danger of surprise.

He hastened, therefore, back to the castle gate, with matter for deeper and more inextricable doubt and anxiety than had occupied him during the commencement of his watch. He asked himself in vain, with what purpose that modest young maiden, whose manners were frank, but whose conduct had always seemed so delicate and reserved, could sally forth at midnight like a damsel-errant in romance, when she was in a strange country and suspicious neighbourhood; yet he rejected, as he would have shrunk from blasphemy, any interpretation which could have thrown censure upon Anne of Geierstein. No, nothing was she capable of doing for which a friend could have to blush. But, connecting her previous agitation with the extraordinary fact of her leaving the castle, alone and defenceless, at such an hour, Arthur necessarily concluded that it must argue some cogent reason, and, as was most likely, of an unpleasant nature.—'I will watch her return,' he internally uttered, 'and if she will give me an opportunity, I will convey to her the assurance that there is one faithful bosom in her neighbourhood, which is bound in honour and gratitude to pour out every drop of its blood, if by doing so it can protect her from the slightest inconvenience. This

is no silly flight of romance, for which common sense has a right to reproach me; it is only what I ought to do, what I must do, or forego every claim to be termed a man of honesty or honour.'

Yet scarce did the young man think himself anchored on a resolution which seemed unobjectionable, than his thoughts were again adrift. He reflected that Anne might have a desire to visit the neighbouring town of Bâle, to which she had been invited the day before, and where her uncle had friends. It was indeed an uncommon hour to select for such a purpose; but Arthur was aware that the Swiss maidens feared neither solitary walks nor late hours, and that Anne would have walked among her own hills by moonlight much farther than the distance betwixt their place of encampment and Bâle, to see a sick friend, or for any similar purpose. To press himself on her confidence, then, might be impertinence, not kindness; and as she had passed him without taking the slightest notice of his presence, it was evident she did not mean voluntarily to make him her confidant; and probably she was involved in no difficulties where his aid could be useful. In that case, the duty of a gentleman was to permit her to return as she had gone forth, unnoticed and unquestioned, leaving it with herself to hold communication with him or not as she should choose.

Another idea, belonging to the age, also passed through his mind, though it made no strong impression upon it. This form, so perfectly resembling Anne of Geierstein, might be a deception of the sight, or it might be one of those fantastic apparitions, concerning which there were so many tales told in all countries, and of which Switzerland and Germany had, as Arthur well knew, their full share. The internal and undefinable feelings which restrained him from accosting the maiden, as might have been natural for him to have done, are easily explained, on the supposition that his mortal frame shrunk from an encounter with a being of a different nature. There had also been some expressions of the magistrate of Bâle, which might apply to the castle's being liable to be haunted by beings from another world. But though the general belief in such ghostly apparitions prevented the Englishman from being positively incredulous on the subject, yet the instructions of his father, a man of great intrepidity and distinguished good sense, had taught him to be extremely unwilling to refer anything to supernatural interferences, which was capable of explanation by ordinary rules; and he therefore shook off, without difficulty, any feeling of superstitious fear which for an instant connected itself with his nocturnal adventure. He resolved finally to suppress all disquieting conjecture on the subject, and to await firmly, if not patiently, the return of the fair vision, which, if it should not fully explain the mystery, seemed at least to afford the only chance of throwing light upon it.

Fixed, therefore, in purpose, he traversed the walk which his duty permitted, with his eyes fixed on the part of the forest where he had seen the beloved form disappear, and forgetful for the moment that his watch had any other purpose than to observe her return. But from this abstraction of mind he was roused by a distant sound in the forest, which seemed the clash of armour. Recalled at once to a sense of his duty, and its importance to his father and his fellow-travellers, Arthur planted himself on the temporary bridge, where a stand could best be made, and turned both eyes and ears to watch for approaching danger. The sound of arms and footsteps came nearer—spears and helmets advanced from the greenwood glade, and twinkled in the moonlight. But the stately form of Rudolph Donnerhugel, marching in front, was easily recognised, and announced to our sentinel the return of the patrol. Upon their approach to the bridge, the challenge, and interchange of sign and countersign, which is usual on such occasions, took place in due form; and as Rudolph's party filed off one after another into the castle, he commanded them to wake their companions, with whom he intended to renew the patrol, and at the same time to send a relief to Arthur Philipson, whose watch on the bridge was now ended. This last fact was confirmed by the deep and distant toll of the minster clock from the town of Bâle, which, prolonging its sullen sound over field and forest, announced that midnight was past.

'And now, comrade,' continued Rudolph to the Englishman, 'have the cold air and long watch determined thee to retire to food and rest, or dost thou still hold the intention of partaking our rounds?'

In very truth, it would have been Arthur's choice to have remained in the place where he was, for the purpose of watching Anne of Geierstein's return from her mysterious excursion. He could not easily have found an excuse for this, however, and he was unwilling to give the haughty Donnerhugel the least suspicion that he was inferior in hardihood, or in the power of enduring fatigue, to any of the tall mountaineers, whose companion he chanced to be for the present. He did not, therefore, indulge even a moment's hesitation; but while he restored the borrowed partisan to the sluggish Sigismund, who came from the castle yawning and stretching himself like one whose slumbers had been broken by no welcome summons when they were deepest and sweetest, he acquainted Rudolph that he retained his purpose of partaking in his reconnoitring duty. They were speedily joined by the rest of the patrolling party, amongst whom was Rudiger, the eldest son of the Landamman of Unterwalden; and when, led by the Bernese champion, they had reached the skirts of the forest, Rudolph commanded three of them to attend Rudiger Biederman.

'Thou wilt make thy round to the left side,' said the Bernese; 'I will draw off to the right—see thou keepest a good look-out, and we will meet merrily at the place appointed. Take one of the hounds with you. I will keep Wolffanger, who will open on a Burgundian as readily as on a bear.'

Rudiger moved off with his party to the left, according to the directions received; and Rudolph, having sent forward one of his number in front, and stationed another in the rear, commanded the third to follow himself and Arthur Philipson, who thus constituted the main body

of the patrol. Having intimated to their immediate attendant to keep at such distance as to allow them freedom of conversation, Rudolph addressed the Englishman with the familiarity which their recent friendship had created.—'And now, King Arthur, what thinks the Majesty of England of our Helvetian youth? Could they win guerdon in tilt or tourney, thinkest thou, noble prince? Or would they rank but amongst the coward knights of Cornouailles?' *

'For tilt and tourney I cannot answer,' said Arthur, summoning up his spirits to reply, 'because I never beheld one of you mounted on a steed, or having spear in rest. But if strong limbs and stout hearts are to be considered, I would match you Swiss gallants with those of any country in the universe, where manhood is to be looked for, whether it be in heart or hand.'

'Thou speakest us fair; and, young Englishman,' said Rudolph, 'know that we think as highly of thee, of which I will presently afford thee a proof. Thou talkedst but now of horses. I know but little of them; yet I judge thou wouldst not buy a steed which thou hadst only seen covered with trappings, or encumbered with saddle and bridle, but wouldst desire to look at him when stripped and in his natural state of freedom?'

'Ay, marry, would I,' said Arthur. 'Thou hast spoken on that as if thou hadst been born in a district called Yorkshire, which men call the merriest part of merry England.'

'Then I tell thee,' said Rudolph Donnerhugel, 'that thou hast seen our Swiss youth but half, since thou hast observed them as yet only in their submissive attendance upon the elders of their cantons, or, at most, in their mountain sports, which, though they may show men's outward strength and activity, can throw no light on the spirit and disposition by which that strength and activity are to be guided and directed in matters of high enterprise.'

The Swiss probably designed that these remarks should excite the curiosity of the stranger. But the Englishman had the image, look, and form of Anne of Geierstein, as she had passed him in the silent hours of his watch, too constantly before him, to enter willingly upon a subject of conversation totally foreign to what agitated his mind. He therefore only compelled himself to reply in civility, that he had no doubt his esteem for the Swiss, both aged and young, would increase in proportion with his more intimate knowledge of the nation.

He was then silent; and Donnerhugel, disappointed, perhaps, at having failed to excite his curiosity, walked also in silence by his side. Arthur, meanwhile, was considering with himself whether he should mention to his companion the circumstance which occupied his own mind, in the hope that the kinsman of Anne of Geierstein, and ancient friend of her house, might be able to throw some light on the subject.

But he felt within his mind an insurmountable objection to converse with the Swiss on a subject in which Anne was concerned. That Rudolph made pretensions to her favour could hardly be doubted; and though Arthur, had the question been put to him, must in common consistency have resigned all competition on the subject, still he could not bear to think on the possibility of his rival's success, and would not willingly have endured to hear him pronounce her name.

Perhaps it was owing to this secret irritability that Arthur, though he made every effort to conceal and to overcome the sensation, still felt a secret dislike to Rudolph Donnerhugel, whose frank but somewhat coarse familiarity was mingled with a certain air of protection and patronage, which the Englishman thought was by no means called for. He met the openness of the Bernese, indeed, with equal frankness, but he was ever and anon tempted to reject or repel the tone of superiority by which it was accompanied. The circumstances of their duel had given the Swiss no ground for such triumph; nor did Arthur feel himself included in that roll of the Swiss youth, over whom Rudolph exercised domination, by general consent. So little did Philipson relish this affectation of superiority, that the poor jest, that termed him King Arthur, although quite indifferent to him when applied by any of the Biedermans, was rather offensive when Rudolph took the same liberty; so that he often found himself in the awkward condition of one who is internally irritated, without having any outward manner of testifying it with propriety. Undoubtedly, the root of all this tacit dislike to the young Bernese was a feeling of rivalry; but it was a feeling which Arthur dared not avow even to himself. It was sufficiently powerful, however, to suppress the slight inclination he had felt to speak with Rudolph on the passage of the night which had most interested him; and as the topic of conversation introduced by his companion had been suffered to drop, they walked on side by side in silence, 'with the beard on the shoulder,' as the Spaniard says—looking round, that is, on all hands; and thus performing the duty of a vigilant watch.

At length, after they had walked nearly a mile through forest and field, making a circuit around the ruins of Graffs-lust, of such an extent as to leave no room for an ambush betwixt them and the place, the old hound, led by the vidette who was foremost, stopped, and uttered a low growl.

'How now, Wolf-fanger!' said Rudolph, advancing.—'What, old fellow! dost thou not know friends from foes? Come, what sayest thou, on better thoughts?—Thou must not lose character in thy old age—try it again.'

The dog raised his head, snuffed the air all around, as if he understood what his master had said, then shook his head and tail, as if answering to his voice.

'Why, there it is now,' said Donnerhugel, patting the animal's shaggy back; 'second thoughts are worth gold; thou seest it is a friend after all.'

The dog again shook his tail, and moved forward with the same unconcern as before. Rudolph fell back into his place, and his companion said to him—

'We are about to meet Rudiger and our com-

* The chivalry of Cornwall are generally undervalued in the Norman-French romances. The cause is difficult to discover.

panions, I suppose, and the dog hears their footsteps, though we cannot.'

'It can scarcely yet be Rudiger,' said the Bernese; 'his walk around the castle is of a wider circumference than ours. Some one approaches, however, for Wolf-fanger is again dissatisfied—Look sharply out on all sides.'

As Rudolph gave his party the word to be on the alert, they reached an open glade, in which were scattered, at considerable distance from each other, some old pine-trees of gigantic size, which seemed yet huger and blacker than ordinary, from their broad sable tops and shattered branches being displayed against the clear and white moonlight.

'We shall here at least,' said the Swiss, 'have the advantage of seeing clearly whatever approaches. But I judge,' said he, after looking around for a minute, 'it is but some wolf or deer that has crossed our path, and the scent disturbs the hound.—Hold—stop—yes, it must be so; he goes on.'

The dog accordingly proceeded, after having given some signs of doubt, uncertainty, and even anxiety. Apparently, however, he became reconciled to what had disturbed him, and proceeded once more in the ordinary manner.

'This is singular!' said Arthur Philipson; 'and, to my thinking, I saw an object close by yonder patch of thicket, where, as well as I can guess, a few thorn and hazel bushes surround the stems of four or five large trees.'

'My eye has been on that very thicket for these five minutes past, and I saw nothing,' said Rudolph.

'Nay, but,' answered the young Englishman, 'I saw the object, whatever it was, while you were engaged in attending to the dog. And, by your permission, I will forward and examine the spot.'

'Were you, strictly speaking, under my command,' said Donnerhugel, 'I would command you to keep your place. If they be foes, it is essential that we should remain together. But you are a volunteer in our watch, and therefore may use your freedom.'

'I thank you,' answered Arthur, and sprang quickly forward.

He felt, indeed, at the moment, that he was not acting courteously as an individual, nor perhaps correctly as a soldier; and that he ought to have rendered obedience, for the time, to the captain of the party in which he had enlisted himself. But, on the other hand, the object which he had seen, though at a distance and imperfectly, seemed to bear a resemblance to the retiring form of Anne of Geierstein, as she had vanished from his eyes, an hour or two before, under the cover of the forest; and his ungovernable curiosity to ascertain whether it might not be the maiden in person, allowed him to listen to no other consideration.

Ere Rudolph had spoken out his few words of reply, Arthur was half-way to the thicket. It was, as it had seemed at a distance, of small extent, and not fitted to hide any person who did not actually couch down amongst the dwarf bushes and underwood. Anything white, also, which bore the human size and form, must, he thought, have been discovered among the dark red stems and swarthy-coloured bushes which were before him. These observations were mingled with other thoughts. If it was Anne of Geierstein whom he had a second time seen, she must have left the more open path, desirous probably of avoiding notice; and what right or title had he to direct upon her the observation of the patrol? He had, he thought, observed that in general the maiden rather repelled than encouraged the attentions of Rudolph Donnerhugel; or, where it would have been discourteous to have rejected them entirely, that she endured without encouraging them. What, then, could be the propriety of his intruding upon her private walk, singular, indeed, from time and place, but which, on that account, she might be more desirous to keep secret from the observation of one who was disagreeable to her? Nay, was it not possible that Rudolph might derive advantage to his otherwise unacceptable suit, by possessing the knowledge of something which the maiden desired to be concealed?

As these thoughts pressed upon him, Arthur made a pause, with his eyes fixed on the thicket, from which he was now scarce thirty yards distant; and although scrutinizing it with all the keen accuracy which his uncertainty and anxiety dictated, he was actuated by a strong feeling that it would be wisest to turn back to his companions, and report to Rudolph that his eyes had deceived him.

But while he was yet undecided whether to advance or return, the object which he had seen became again visible on the verge of the thicket, and advanced straight towards him, bearing, as on the former occasion, the exact dress and figure of Anne of Geierstein! This vision — for the time, place, and suddenness of the appearance made it seem rather an illusion than a reality— struck Arthur with surprise which amounted to terror. The figure passed within a spear's length, unchallenged by him, and giving not the slightest sign of recognition; and, directing its course to the right hand of Rudolph, and the two or three who were with him, was again lost among the broken ground and bushes.

Once more the young man was reduced to a state of the most inextricable doubt; nor was he roused from the stupor into which he was thrown, till the voice of the Bernese sounded in his ear,—

'Why, how now, King Arthur — art thou asleep, or art thou wounded?'

'Neither,' said Philipson, collecting himself; 'only much surprised.'

'Surprised? and at what, most royal'——

'Forbear foolery,' said Arthur, somewhat sternly, 'and answer as thou art a man—Did she not meet thee?—didst thou not see her?'

'See her!—see whom?' said Donnerhugel. 'I saw no one. And I could have sworn you had seen no one either, for I had you in my eye the whole time of your absence, excepting two or three moments. If you saw aught, why gave you not the alarm?'

'Because it was only a woman,' answered Arthur faintly.

'Only a woman!' repeated Rudolph, in a tone of contempt. 'By my honest word, King Arthur, if I had not seen pretty flashes of valour

fly from thee at times, I should be apt to think that thou hadst only a woman's courage thyself. Strange, that a shadow by night, or a precipice in the day, should quell so bold a spirit as thou hast often shown'——

'And as I will ever show, when occasion demands it,' interrupted the Englishman, with recovered spirit. 'But I swear to you, that if I be now daunted, it is by no merely earthly fears that my mind hath been for a moment subdued.'

'Let us proceed on our walk,' said Rudolph; 'we must not neglect the safety of our friends. This appearance, of which thou speakest, may be but a trick to interrupt our duty.'

They moved on through the moonlight glades. A minute's reflection restored young Philipson to his full recollection, and with that to the painful consciousness that he had played a ridiculous and unworthy part, in the presence of the person whom (of the male sex, at least) he would the very last have chosen as a witness of his weakness.

He ran hastily over the relations which stood betwixt himself, Donnerhugel, the Landamman, his niece, and the rest of that family; and, contrary to the opinion which he had entertained but a short while before, settled in his own mind that it was his duty to mention to the immediate leader under whom he had placed himself, the appearance which he had twice observed in the course of that night's duty. There might be family circumstances—the payment of a vow, perhaps, or some such reason — which might render intelligible to her connections the behaviour of this young lady. Besides, he was for the present a soldier on duty, and these mysteries might be fraught with evils to be anticipated or guarded against; in either case, his companions were entitled to be made aware of what he had seen. It must be supposed that this resolution was adopted when the sense of duty, and of shame for the weakness which he had exhibited had for the moment subdued Arthur's personal feelings towards Anne of Geierstein, — feelings, also, liable to be chilled by the mysterious uncertainty which the events of that evening had cast, like a thick mist, around the object of them.

While the Englishman's reflections were taking this turn, his captain or companion, after a silence of several minutes, at length addressed him.

'I believe,' he said, 'my dear comrade, that, as being at present your officer, I have some title to hear from you the report of what you have just now seen, since it must be something of importance which could so strongly agitate a mind so firm as yours. But if, in your own opinion, it consists with the general safety to delay your report of what you have seen until we return to the castle, and then to deliver it to the private ear of the Landamman, you have only to intimate your purpose; and, far from urging you to place confidence in me personally, though I hope I am not undeserving of it, I will authorize your leaving us, and returning instantly to the castle.'

This proposal touched him to whom it was made exactly in the right place. An absolute demand of his confidence might perhaps have been declined; the tone of moderate request and conciliation fell presently in with the Englishman's own reflections.

'I am sensible,' he said, 'Hauptman, that I ought to mention to you that which I have seen to-night; but on the first occasion it did not fall within my duty to do so; and, now that I have a second time witnessed the same appearance, I have felt for these few seconds so much surprised at what I have seen, that even yet I can scarce find words to express it.'

'As I cannot guess what you may have to say,' replied the Bernese, 'I must beseech you to be explicit. We are but poor readers of riddles, we thick-headed Switzers.'

'Yet it is but a riddle which I have to place before you, Rudolph Donnerhugel,' answered the Englishman, 'and a riddle which is far beyond my own guessing at.' He then proceeded, though not without hesitation, 'While you were performing your first patrol amongst the ruins, a female crossed the bridge from within the castle, walked by my post without saying a single word, and vanished under the shadows of the forest.'

'Ha!' exclaimed Donnerhugel, and made no further answer.

Arthur proceeded. 'Within these five minutes, the same female form passed me a second time, issuing from the little thicket and clump of firs, and disappeared without exchanging a word. Know, further, this apparition bore the form, face, gait, and dress of your kinswoman, Anne of Geierstein.'

'Singular enough,' said Rudolph, in a tone of incredulity. 'I must not, I suppose, dispute your word, for you would receive doubt on my part as a mortal injury—such is your northern chivalry. Yet, let me say, I have eyes as well as you, and I scarce think they quitted you for a minute. We were not fifty yards from the place where I found you standing in amazement. How, therefore, should not we also have seen that which you say and think you saw?'

'To that I can give no answer,' said Arthur. 'Perhaps your eyes were not exactly turned upon me during the short space in which I saw this form—Perhaps it might be visible—as they say fantastic appearances sometimes are — to only one person at a time.'

'You suppose, then, that the appearance was imaginary, or fantastic?' said the Bernese.

'Can I tell you?' replied the Englishman. 'The Church gives its warrant that there are such things; and surely it is more natural to believe this apparition to be an illusion, than to suppose that Anne of Geierstein, a gentle and well-nurtured maiden, should be traversing the woods at this wild hour, when safety and propriety so strongly recommend her being within doors.'

'There is much in what you say,' said Rudolph; 'and yet there are stories afloat, though few care to mention them, which seem to allege that Anne of Geierstein is not altogether such as other maidens; and that she has been met with, in body and spirit, where she could hardly have come by her own unassisted efforts.'

'Ha!' said Arthur; 'so young, so beautiful, and already in league with the destroyer of mankind? It is impossible.'

'I said not so,' replied the Bernese; 'nor have

I leisure at present to explain my meaning more fully. As we return to the Castle of Graffs-lust, I may have an opportunity to tell you more. But I chiefly brought you on this patrol to introduce you to some friends, whom you will be pleased to know, and who desire your acquaintance; and it is here I expect to meet them.'

So saying, he turned round the projecting corner of a rock, and an unexpected scene was presented to the eyes of the young Englishman.

In a sort of nook or corner, screened by the rocky projection, there burned a large fire of wood, and around it sat, reclined, or lay, twelve or fifteen young men in the Swiss garb, but decorated with ornaments and embroidery, which reflected back the light of the fire. The same red gleam was returned by silver wine-cups, which circulated from hand to hand with the flasks which filled them. Arthur could also observe the relics of a banquet, to which due honour seemed to have been lately rendered.

The revellers started joyfully up at the sight of Donnerhugel and his companions, and saluted him, easily distinguished as he was by his stature, by the title of captain, warmly and exultingly uttered, while at the same time every tendency to noisy acclamation was cautiously suppressed. The zeal indicated that Rudolph came most welcome—the caution that he came in secret, and was to be received with mystery.

To the general greeting he answered,—'I thank you, my brave comrades. Has Rudiger yet reached you?'

'Thou seest he has not,' said one of the party; 'had it been so, we would have detained him here till your coming, brave Captain.'

'He has loitered on his patrol,' said the Bernese. 'We too were delayed, yet we are here before him. I bring with me, comrades, the brave Englishman whom I mentioned to you as a desirable associate in our daring purpose.'

'He is welcome, most welcome to us,' said a young man, whose richly-embroidered dress of azure blue gave him an air of authority; 'most welcome is he, if he brings with him a heart and a hand to serve our noble task.'

'For both I will be responsible,' said Rudolph. 'Pass the wine-cup, then, to the success of our glorious enterprise, and the health of this our new associate!'

While they were replenishing the cups with wine of a quality far superior to any which Arthur had yet tasted in these regions, he thought it right, before engaging himself in the pledge, to learn the secret object of the association which seemed desirous of adopting him.

'Before I engage my poor services to you, fair sirs, since it pleases you to desire them, permit me,' he said, 'to ask the purpose and character of the undertaking in which they are to be employed?'

'Shouldst thou have brought him hither, said the cavalier in blue to Rudolph, 'without satisfying him and thyself on that point?'

'Care not thou about it, Laurenz,' replied the Bernese; 'I know my man.—Be it known, then, to you, my good friend,' he continued, addressing the Englishman, 'that my comrades and I are determined at once to declare the freedom of the Swiss commerce, and to resist to the death, if it be necessary, all unlawful and extortionate demands on the part of our neighbours.'

'I understand so much,' said the young Englishman, 'and that the present deputation proceeds to the Duke of Burgundy with remonstrances to that effect.'

'Hear me,' replied Rudolph. 'The question is like to be brought to a bloody determination long ere we see the Duke of Burgundy's most august and most gracious countenance. That his influence should be used to exclude us from Bâle, a neutral town, and pertaining to the Empire, gives us cause to expect the worst reception when we enter his own dominions. We have even reason to think that we might have suffered from his hatred already, but for the vigilance of the ward which we have kept. Horsemen, from the direction of La Ferette, have this night reconnoitred our posts; and had they not found us prepared, we had, without question, been attacked in our quarters. But since we have escaped to-night, we must take care for to-morrow. For this purpose, a number of the bravest youth of the city of Bâle, incensed at the pusillanimity of their magistrates, are determined to join us, in order to wipe away the disgrace which the cowardly inhospitality of their magistracy has brought on their native place.'

'That we will do ere the sun, that will rise two hours hence, shall sink into the western sky,' said the cavalier in blue; and those around joined him in stern assent.

'Gentle sirs,' replied Arthur, when there was a pause, 'let me remind you that the embassy which you attend is a peaceful one, and that those who act as its escort ought to avoid anything which can augment the differences which it comes to reconcile. You cannot expect to receive offence in the Duke's dominions, the privileges of envoys being respected in all civilised countries; and you will, I am sure, desire to offer none.'

'We may be subjected to insult, however,' replied the Bernese, 'and that through your concerns, Arthur Philipson, and those of thy father.'

'I understand you not,' replied Philipson.

'Your father,' answered Donnerhugel, 'is a merchant, and bears with him wares of small bulk but high value?'

'He does so,' answered Arthur; 'and what of that?'

'Marry,' answered Rudolph, 'that if it be not better looked to, the Bandog of Burgundy is like to fall heir to a large proportion of your silks, satins, and jewellery work.'

'Silks, satins, and jewels!' exclaimed another of the revellers; 'such wares will not pass toll-free where Archibald of Hagenbach hath authority.'

'Fair sirs,' resumed Arthur, after a moment's consideration, 'these wares are my father's property, not mine; and it is for him, not me, to pronounce how much of them he might be content to part with in the way of toll, rather than give occasion to a fray, in which his companions, who have received him into their society, must be exposed to injury as well as himself. I can only say that he has weighty

affairs at the court of Burgundy, which must render him desirous of reaching it in peace with all men; and it is my private belief that, rather than incur the loss and danger of a broil with the garrison of La Ferette, he would be contented to sacrifice all the property which he has at present with him. Therefore I must request of you, gentlemen, a space to consult his pleasure on this occasion; assuring you that if it be his will to resist the payment of these duties to Burgundy, you shall find in me one who is fully determined to fight to the last drop of his blood.'

'Good King Arthur,' said Rudolph, 'thou art a dutiful observer of the Fifth Commandment, and thy days shall be long in the land. Do not suppose us neglectful of the same duty, although, for the present, we conceive ourselves bound, in the first place, to attend to the weal of our country, the common parent of our fathers and ourselves. But, as you know our profound respect for the Landamman, you need not fear that we shall willingly offer him offence, by rashly engaging in hostilities, or without some weighty reason; and an attempt to plunder his guest would have been met, on his part, with resistance to the death. I had hoped to find both you and your father prompt enough to resent such a gross injury. Nevertheless, if your father inclines to present his fleece to be shorn by Archibald of Hagenbach, whose scissors, he will find, clip pretty closely, it would be unnecessary and uncivil in us to interpose. Meantime, you have the advantage of knowing that, in case the Governor of La Ferette should be disposed to strip you of skin as well as fleece, there are more men close at hand than you looked for, whom you will find both able and willing to render you prompt assistance.'

'On these terms,' said the Englishman, 'I make my acknowledgments to these gentlemen of Bâle, or whatever other country hath sent them forth, and pledge them in a brotherly cup to our further and more intimate acquaintance.'

'Health and prosperity to the United Cantons and their friends!' answered the Blue Cavalier. 'And death and confusion to all besides.'

The cups were replenished; and instead of a shout of applause, the young men around testified their devoted determination to the cause which was thus announced, by grasping each other's hands, and then brandishing their weapons with a fierce yet noiseless gesture.

'Thus,' said Rudolph Donnerhugel, 'our illustrious ancestors, the fathers of Swiss independence, met in the immortal field of Rutli, between Uri and Unterwalden. Thus they swore to each other, under the blue firmament of heaven, that they would restore the liberty of their oppressed country; and history can tell how well they kept their word.'

'And she shall record,' said the Blue Cavalier, 'how well the present Switzers can preserve the freedom which their fathers won.—Proceed in your rounds, good Rudolph, and be assured that at the signal of the Hauptman the soldiers will not be far absent;—all is arranged as formerly, unless you have new orders to give us.'

'Hark thee hither, Laurenz,' said Rudolph to the Blue Cavalier,—and Arthur could hear him say,—'Beware, my friend, that the Rhine wine be not abused;—if there is too much provision of it, manage to destroy the flasks;—a mule may stumble, thou knowest, or so. Give not way to Rudiger in this. He is grown a wine-bibber since he joined us. We must bring both heart and hand to what may be done to-morrow.'—They then whispered so low that Arthur could hear nothing of their further conference, and bade each other adieu, after clasping hands, as if they were renewing some solemn pledge of union.

Rudolph and his party then moved forward, and were scarce out of sight of their new associates, when the vidette, or foremost of their patrol, gave the signal of alarm. Arthur's heart leaped to his lips—'It is Anne of Geierstein!' he said internally.

'The dogs are silent,' said the Bernese. 'Those who approach must be the companions of our watch.'

They proved, accordingly, to be Rudiger and his party, who, halting on the appearance of their comrades, made and underwent a formal challenge; such advance had the Swiss already made in military discipline, which was but little and rudely studied by the infantry in other parts of Europe. Arthur could hear Rudolph take his friend Rudiger to task for not meeting him at the halting-place appointed. 'It leads to new revelry on your arrival,' he said, 'and to-morrow must find us cool and determined.'

'Cool as an icicle, noble Hauptman,' answered the son of the Landamman, 'and determined as the rock it hangs upon.'

Rudolph again recommended temperance, and the young Biederman promised compliance. The two parties passed each other with friendly though silent greeting; and there was soon a considerable distance between them.

The country was more open on the side of the castle, around which their duty now led them, than where it lay opposite to the principal gate. The glades were broad, the trees thinly scattered over pasture land, and there were no thickets, ravines, or similar places of ambush, so that the eye might, in the clear moonlight, well command the country.

'Here,' said Rudolph, 'we may judge ourselves secure enough for some conference; and therefore may I ask thee, Arthur of England, now that thou hast seen us more closely, what thinkest thou of the Switzer youth? If thou hast learned less than I could have wished, thank thine own uncommunicative temper, which retired in some degree from our confidence.'

'Only in so far as I could not have answered, and therefore ought not to have received it,' said Arthur. 'The judgment I have been enabled to form amounts, in few words, to this: Your purposes are lofty and noble as your mountains; but the stranger from the low country is not accustomed to tread the circuitous path by which you ascend them. My foot has been always accustomed to move straight forward upon the greensward.'

'You speak in riddles,' answered the Bernese.

'Not so,' returned the Englishman. 'I think you ought plainly to mention to your seniors (the nominal leaders of young men who seem

well disposed to take their own road) that you expect an attack in the neighbourhood of La Ferette, and hope for assistance from some of the townsmen of Bâle.'

'Ay, truly,' answered Donnerhugel; 'and the Landamman would stop his journey till he despatched a messenger for a safe-conduct to the Duke of Burgundy; and should he grant it, there were an end of all hope of war.'

'True,' replied Arthur; 'but the Landamman would thereby obtain his own principal object, and the sole purpose of the mission — that is, the establishment of peace.'

'Peace—peace?' answered the Bernese hastily. 'Were my wishes alone to be opposed to those of Arnold Biederman, I know so much of his honour and faith, I respect so highly his valour and patriotism, that at his voice I would sheathe my sword, even if my most mortal enemy stood before me. But mine is not the single wish of a single man; the whole of my canton, and that of Soleure, are determined on war. It was by war, noble war, that our fathers came forth from the house of their captivity—it was by war, successful and glorious war, that a race, who had been held scarce so much worth thinking on as the oxen which they goaded, emerged at once into liberty and consequence, and were honoured because they were feared, as much as they had been formerly despised because they were unresisting.'

'This may be all very true,' said the young Englishman; 'but, in my opinion, the object of your mission has been determined by your Diet or House of Commons. They have resolved to send you with others as messengers of peace, but you are secretly blowing the coals of war; and while all or most of your senior colleagues are setting out to-morrow in expectation of a peaceful journey, you stand prepared for a combat, and look for the means of giving cause for it.'

'And is it not well that I do stand so prepared?' answered Rudolph. 'If our reception in Burgundy's dependencies be peaceful, as you say the rest of the deputation expect, my precautions will be needless; but at least they can do no harm. If it prove otherwise, I shall be the means of averting a great misfortune from my colleagues, my kinsman Arnold Biederman, my fair cousin Anne, your father, yourself—from all of us, in short, who are joyously travelling together.'

Arthur shook his head. 'There is something in all this,' he said, 'which I understand not, and will not seek to understand. I only pray that you will not make my father's concerns the subject of breaking truce; it may, as you hint, involve the Landamman in a quarrel, which he might otherwise have avoided. I am sure my father will never forgive it.'

'I have pledged my word,' said Rudolph, 'already to that effect. But if he should like the usage of the Bandog of Burgundy less than you seem to apprehend he will, there is no harm in your knowing that, in time of need, he may be well and actively supported.'

'I am greatly obliged by the assurance,' replied the Englishman.

'And thou mayest thyself, my friend,' continued Rudolph, 'take a warning from what thou hast heard: Men go not to a bridal in armour, nor to a brawl in silken doublet.'

'I will be clad to meet the worst,' said Arthur; 'and for that purpose I will don a light hauberk of well-tempered steel, proof against spear or arrow; and I thank you for your kindly counsel.'

'Nay, thank not me,' said Rudolph; 'I were ill deserving to be a leader did I not make those who are to follow me—more especially so trusty a follower as thou art—aware of the time when they should buckle on their armour, and prepare for hard blows.'

Here the conversation paused for a moment or two, neither of the speakers being entirely contented with his companion, although neither pressed any further remark.

The Bernese, judging from the feelings which he had seen predominate among the traders of his own country, had entertained little doubt that the Englishman, finding himself powerfully supported in point of force, would have caught at the opportunity to resist paying the exorbitant imposts with which he was threatened at the next town, which would probably, without any effort on Rudolph's part, have led to breaking of the truce on the part of Arnold Biederman himself, and to an instant declaration of hostilities. On the other hand, young Philipson could not understand or approve of Donnerhugel's conduct, who, himself a member of a peaceful deputation, seemed to be animated with the purpose of seizing an opportunity to kindle the flames of war.

Occupied by these various reflections, they walked side by side for some time without speaking together, until Rudolph broke silence.

'Your curiosity is then ended, Sir Englishman,' said he, 'respecting the apparition of Anne of Geierstein?'

'Far from it,' replied Philipson; 'but I would unwillingly intrude any questions on you while you are busy with the duties of your patrol.'

'That may be considered as over,' said the Bernese, 'for there is not a bush near us to cover a Burgundian knave, and a glance around us from time to time is all that is now needful to prevent surprise. And so, listen while I tell a tale, never sung or harped in hall or bower, and which, I begin to think, deserves as much credit, at least, as is due to the Tales of the Round Table, which ancient troubadours and minnesingers dole out to us as the authentic chronicles of your renowned namesake.

'Of Anne's ancestors on the male side of the house,' continued Rudolph, 'I daresay you have heard enough, and are well aware how they dwelt in the old walls at Geierstein beside the cascade, grinding their vassals, devouring the substance of their less powerful neighbours, and plundering the goods of the travellers whom ill luck sent within ken of the vulture's eyrie, the one year; and in the next, wearying the shrines for mercy for their trespasses, overwhelming the priests with the wealth which they showered upon them, and finally, vowing vows, and making pilgrimages, sometimes as palmers, sometimes as crusaders, as far as Jerusalem itself, to atone for the iniquities which they had committed without hesitation or struggle of conscience.'

'Such, I have understood,' replied the young

Englishman, 'was the history of the house of Geierstein, till Arnold, or his immediate ancestors, exchanged the lance for the sheep-hook.'

'But it is said,' replied the Bernese, 'that the powerful and wealthy Barons of Arnheim, of Swabia, whose only female descendant became the wife to Count Albert of Geierstein, and the mother of this young person, whom Swiss call simply Anne, and Germans Countess Anne of Geierstein, were nobles of a different caste. They did not restrict their lives within the limits of sinning and repenting,—of plundering harmless peasants, and pampering fat monks; but were distinguished for something more than building castles with dungeons and folter-kammers, or torture-chambers, and founding monasteries with galilees and refectories.

'These same Barons of Arnheim were men who strove to enlarge the boundaries of human knowledge, and converted their castle into a species of college, where there were more ancient volumes than the monks have piled together in the library of Saint Gall. Nor were their studies in books alone. Deep buried in their private laboratories, they attained secrets which were afterwards transmitted through the race from father to son, and were supposed to have approached nearly to the deepest recesses of alchemy. The report of their wisdom and their wealth was often brought to the Imperial footstool; and in the frequent disputes which the Emperors maintained with the Popes of old, it is said they were encouraged, if not instigated, by the counsels of the Barons of Arnheim, and supported by their treasures. It was, perhaps, such a course of politics, joined to the unusual and mysterious studies which the family of Arnheim so long pursued, which excited against them the generally received opinion that they were assisted in their superhuman researches by supernatural influences. The priests were active in forwarding this cry against men who, perhaps, had no other fault than that of being wiser than themselves.

'"Look what guests," they said, "are received in the halls of Arnheim! Let a Christian knight, crippled in war with the Saracens, present himself on the drawbridge, he is guerdoned with a crust and a cup of wine, and required to pass on his way. If a palmer, redolent of the sanctity acquired by his recent visits to the most holy shrines, and by the sacred relics which attest and reward his toil, approach the unhallowed walls, the warder bends his crossbow, and the porter shuts the gate, as if the wandering saint brought the plague with him from Palestine. But comes there a grey-bearded, glib-tongued Greek, with his parchment scrolls, the very letters of which are painful to Christian eyes—comes there a Jewish Rabbin, with his Talmud * and Cabala †—comes there a swarthy sunburnt Moor, who can boast of having read the language of the stars in Chaldea, the cradle of astrological science—lo, the wandering impostor or sorcerer occupies the highest seat at the Baron of Arnheim's board, shares with him the labours of the alembic and the furnace, learns from him mystic knowledge, like that of which our first parents participated to the overthrow of their race, and requites it with lessons more dreadful than he receives, till the profane host has added to his hoard of unholy wisdom all that the pagan visitor can communicate. And these things are done in Almain,‡ which is called the Holy Roman Empire, of which so many priests are princes!—they are done, and neither ban nor monition is issued against a race of sorcerers, who, from age to age, go on triumphing in their necromancy!"

'Such arguments, which were echoed from mitred abbots to the cell of anchorites, seem, nevertheless, to have made little impression on the Imperial Council. But they served to excite the zeal of many a baron and free count of the Empire, who were taught by them to esteem a war or feud with the Barons of Arnheim as partaking of the nature, and entitled to the immunities, of a crusade against the enemies of the faith, and to regard an attack upon these obnoxious potentates as a mode of clearing off their deep scores with the Christian Church. But the Lords of Arnheim, though not seeking for quarrel, were by no means unwarlike, or averse to maintaining their own defence. Some, on the contrary, belonging to this obnoxious race were not the less distinguished as gallant knights and good men-at-arms. They were, besides, wealthy, secured and strengthened by great alliances, and in an eminent degree wise and provident. This the parties who assailed them learned to their cost.

'The confederacies formed against the Lords of Arnheim were broken up; the attacks which their enemies meditated were anticipated and disconcerted; and those who employed actual violence were repelled with signal loss to the assailants: until at length an impression was produced in their neighbourhood, that, by their accurate information concerning meditated violence, and their extraordinary powers of resisting and defeating it, the obnoxious barons must have brought to their defence means which merely human force was incapable of overthrowing; so that, becoming as much feared as hated, they were suffered for the last generation to remain unmolested. And this was the rather the case, that the numerous vassals of this great house were perfectly satisfied with their feudal superiors, abundantly ready to rise in their defence, and disposed to believe that, whether their lords were sorcerers or no, their own condition would not be mended by exchanging their government, either for the rule of the crusaders in this holy warfare, or that of the churchmen by whom it was instigated. The race of these barons ended in Herman von Arnheim, the maternal grandfather of Anne of Geierstein. He was buried with his helmet, sword, and shield, as is the German custom with the last male of a noble family.

'But he left an only daughter, Sybilla of Arnheim, to inherit a considerable portion of his estate; and I never heard that the strong

* [A collection of commentaries on the law, handed down and written by the Jewish doctors of the law.]

† [A system of secret or esoteric teaching, embracing theology, philosophy, and magic.]

‡ [Or Allemagne, *i.e.* Germany.]

imputation of sorcery which attached to her house prevented numerous applications, from persons of the highest distinction in the Empire, to her legal guardian the Emperor, for the rich heiress's hand in marriage. Albert of Geierstein, however, though an exile, obtained the preference. He was gallant and handsome, which recommended him to Sybilla; and the Emperor, bent at the time on the vain idea of recovering his authority in the Swiss mountains, was desirous to show himself generous to Albert, whom he considered as a fugitive from his country for espousing the Imperial cause. You may thus see, most noble King Arthur, that Anne of Geierstein, the only child of their marriage, descends from no ordinary stock; and that circumstances in which she may be concerned are not to be explained or judged of so easily, or upon the same grounds of reasoning, as in the case of ordinary persons.'

'By my honest word, Sir Rudolph of Donnerhugel,' said Arthur, studiously labouring to keep a command upon his feelings, 'I can see nothing in your narrative, and understand nothing from it, unless it be that, because in Germany, as in other countries, there have been fools who have annexed the idea of witchcraft and sorcery to the possession of knowledge and wisdom, you are therefore disposed to stigmatize a young maiden, who has always been respected and beloved by those around her, as a disciple of arts which, I trust, are as uncommon as unlawful.'

Rudolph paused ere he replied.

'I could have wished,' he said, 'that you had been satisfied with the general character of Anne of Geierstein's maternal family, as offering some circumstances which may account for what you have, according to your own report, this night witnessed, and I am really unwilling to go into more particular details. To no one can Anne of Geierstein's fame be so dear as to me. I am, after her uncle's family, her nearest relative, and had she remained in Switzerland, or should she, as is most probable, return thither after the present visit to her father, perhaps our connection might be drawn yet closer. This has, indeed, only been prevented by certain prejudices of her uncle's respecting her father's authority, and the nearness of our relationship, which, however, comes within reach of a licence very frequently obtained. But I only mention these things, to show you how much more tender I must necessarily hold Anne of Geierstein's reputation than it is possible for you to do, being a stranger, known to her but a short while since, and soon to part with her, as I understand your purpose, for ever.'

The turn taken in this kind of apology irritated Arthur so highly, that it required all the reasons which recommended coolness to enable him to answer with assumed composure.

'I can have no ground, Sir Hauptman,' he said, 'to challenge any opinion which you may entertain of a young person with whom you are so closely connected as you appear to be with Anne of Geierstein. I only wonder that, with such regard for her as your relationship implies, you should be disposed to receive, on popular and trivial traditions, a belief which must injuriously affect your kinswoman, more especially one with whom you intimate a wish to form a still more close connection. Bethink you, sir, that in all Christian lands the imputation of sorcery is the most foul which can be thrown on Christian man or woman.'

'And I am so far from intimating such an imputation,' said Rudolph, somewhat fiercely, 'that, by the good sword I wear, he that dared give breath to such a thought against Anne of Geierstein must undergo my challenge, and take my life or lose his own. But the question is not whether the maiden herself practises sorcery, which he who avers had better get ready his tomb, and provide for his soul's safety; the doubt lies here, whether, as the descendant of a family whose relations with the unseen world are reported to have been of the closest degree, elfish and fantastical beings may not have power to imitate her form, and to present her appearance where she is not personally present—in fine, whether they have permission to play at her expense fantastical tricks, which they cannot exercise over other mortals, whose forefathers have ever regulated their lives by the rules of the Church, and died in regular communion with it. And as I sincerely desire to retain your esteem, I have no objection to communicate to you more particular circumstances respecting her genealogy, confirming the idea I have now expressed. But you will understand they are of the most private nature, and that I expect secrecy under the strictest personal penalty.'

'I shall be silent, sir,' replied the young Englishman, still struggling with suppressed passion, 'on everything respecting the character of a maiden whom I am bound to respect so highly. But the fear of no man's displeasure can add a feather's weight to the guarantee of my own honour.'

'Be it so,' said Rudolph; 'it is not my wish to awake angry feelings; but I am desirous, both for the sake of your good opinion, which I value, and also for the plainer explanation of what I have darkly intimated, to communicate to you what otherwise I would much rather have left untold.'

'You must be guided by your own sense of what is necessary and proper in the case,' answered Philipson; 'but remember I press not on your confidence for the communication of anything that ought to remain secret, far less where that young lady is the subject.'

Rudolph answered, after a minute's pause,—'Thou hast seen and heard too much, Arthur, not to learn the whole, or at least all that I know or apprehend on the mysterious subject. It is impossible but the circumstances must at times recur to your recollection, and I am desirous that you should possess all the information necessary to understand them as clearly as the nature of the facts will permit. We have yet, keeping leftward to view the bog, upwards of a mile to make ere the circuit of the castle is accomplished. It will afford leisure enough for the tale I have to tell.'

'Speak on—I listen!' answered the Englishman, divided between his desire to know all that it was possible to learn concerning Anne of Geierstein, and his dislike to hear her name

pronounced with such pretensions as those of Donnerhugel, together with the revival of his original prejudices against the gigantic Swiss, whose manners, always blunt, nearly to coarseness, seemed now marked by assumed superiority and presumption. Arthur listened, however, to his wild tale, and the interest which he took in it soon overpowered all other sensations.

CHAPTER XI.

DONNERHUGEL'S NARRATIVE.

> These be the adept's doctrines—every element
> Is peopled with its separate race of spirits.
> The airy Sylphs on the blue ether float;
> Deep in the earthy cavern skulks the Gnome;
> The sea-green Naiad skims the ocean billow,
> And the fierce fire is yet a friendly home
> To its peculiar sprite—the Salamander.
>
> ANONYMOUS.

I TOLD you (said Rudolph) that the Lords of Arnheim, though from father to son they were notoriously addicted to secret studies, were nevertheless, like the other German nobles, followers of war and the chase. This was peculiarly the case with Anne's maternal grandfather, Herman of Arnheim, who prided himself on possessing a splendid stud of horses, and one steed in particular, the noblest ever known in these circles of Germany. I should make wild work were I to attempt a description of such an animal, so I will content myself with saying his colour was jet black, without a hair of white either on his face or feet. For this reason, and the wildness of his disposition, his master had termed him Apollyon; a circumstance which was secretly considered as tending to sanction the evil reports which touched the house of Arnheim, being, it was said, the naming of a favourite animal after a foul fiend.

It chanced, one November day, that the Baron had been hunting in the forest, and did not reach home till nightfall. There were no guests with him, for, as I hinted to you before, the Castle of Arnheim seldom received any other than those from whom its inhabitants hoped to gain augmentation of knowledge. The Baron was seated alone in his hall, illuminated with cressets and torches. His one hand held a volume covered with characters unintelligible to all save himself. The other rested on the marble table, on which was placed a flask of Tokay wine. A page stood in respectful attendance near the bottom of the large and dim apartment, and no sound was heard save that of the night wind, when it sighed mournfully through the rusty coats of mail, and waved the tattered banners which were the tapestry of the feudal hall. At once the footstep of a person was heard ascending the stairs in haste and trepidation; the door of the hall was thrown violently open, and, terrified to a degree of ecstasy, Caspar, the head of the Baron's stable, or his master of horse, stumbled up almost to the foot of the table at which his lord was seated, with the exclamation in his mouth,—

'My lord, my lord, a fiend is in the stable!'

'What means this folly?' said the Baron, arising, surprised and displeased at an interruption so unusual.

'Let me endure your displeasure,' said Caspar, 'if I speak not truth! Apollyon'——

Here he paused.

'Speak out, thou frightened fool,' said the Baron; 'is my horse sick, or injured?'

The master of the stalls again gasped forth the word 'Apollyon!'

'Say on,' said the Baron; 'were Apollyon in presence personally, it were nothing to shake a brave man's mind.'

'The devil,' answered the master of the horse, 'is in Apollyon's stall!'

'Fool!' exclaimed the nobleman, snatching a torch from the wall; 'what is it that could have turned thy brain in such silly fashion? Things like thee, that are born to serve us, should hold their brains on a firmer tenure, for our sakes, if not for that of their worthless selves.'

As he spoke he descended to the court of the castle, to visit the stately range of stables which occupied all the lower part of the quadrangle on one side. He entered, where fifty gallant steeds stood in rows, on each side of the ample hall. At the side of each stall hung the weapons of offence and defence of a man-at-arms, as bright as constant attention could make them, together with the buff-coat which formed the trooper's under-garment. The Baron, followed by one or two of the domestics, who had assembled full of astonishment at the unusual alarm, hastened up to the head of the stable betwixt the rows of steeds. As he approached the stall of his favourite horse, which was the uppermost of the right-hand row, the gallant steed neither neighed, nor shook his head, nor stamped with his foot, nor gave the usual signs of joy at his lord's approach; a faint moaning, as if he implored assistance, was the only acknowledgment he gave of the Baron's presence.

Sir Herman held up the torch, and discovered that there was indeed a tall dark figure standing in the stall, resting his hand on the horse's shoulder. 'Who art thou,' said the Baron, 'and what dost thou here?'

'I seek refuge and hospitality,' replied the stranger; 'and I conjure thee to grant it me, by the shoulder of thy horse, and by the edge of thy sword, and so as they may never fail thee when thy need is at the utmost!'

'Thou art, then, a brother of the Sacred Fire,' said Baron Herman of Arnheim; 'and I may not refuse thee the refuge which thou requirest of me after the ritual of the Persian Magi. From whom, and for what length of time, dost thou crave my protection?'

'From those,' replied the stranger, 'who shall arrive in quest of me before the morning cock shall crow, and for the full space of a year and a day from this period.'

'I may not refuse thee,' said the Baron, 'consistently with my oath and my honour. For a year and a day I will be thy pledge, and thou shalt share with me roof and chamber, wine and food. But thou too must obey the law of Zoroaster, which, as it says, Let the stronger protect the weaker brother, says also, let the wiser instruct the brother who hath less

knowledge. I am the stronger, and thou shalt be safe under my protection; but thou art the wiser, and must instruct me in the more secret mysteries.'

'You mock your servant,' said the stranger visitor; 'but if aught is known to Dannischemend which can avail Herman, his instructions shall be as those of a father to a son.'

'Come forth, then, from thy place of refuge,' said the Baron of Arnheim. 'I swear to thee by the Sacred Fire which lives without terrestrial fuel, and by the fraternity which is betwixt us, and by the shoulder of my horse, and the edge of my good sword, I will be thy warrand for a year and a day, if so far my power shall extend.'

The stranger came forth accordingly; and those who saw the singularity of his appearance scarce wondered at the fears of Caspar, the stall-master, when he found such a person in the stable, by what mode of entrance he was unable to conceive. When he reached the lighted hall, to which the Baron conducted him, as he would have done a welcome and honoured guest, the stranger appeared to be very tall, and of a dignified aspect. His dress was Asiatic, being a long black caftan, or gown, like that worn by Armenians, and a lofty square cap, covered with the wool of Astracan lambs. Every article of the dress was black, which gave relief to the long white beard that flowed down over his bosom. His gown was fastened by a sash of black silk network, in which, instead of a poniard or sword, was stuck a silver case, containing writing materials and a roll of parchment. The only ornament of his apparel consisted in a large ruby of uncommon brilliancy, which, when he approached the light, seemed to glow with such liveliness, as if the gem itself had emitted the rays which it only reflected back. To the offer of refreshment the stranger replied, 'Bread I may not eat, water shall not moisten my lips, until the avenger shall have passed by the threshold.'

The Baron commanded the lamps to be trimmed, and fresh torches to be lighted, and, sending his whole household to rest, remained seated in the hall along with the stranger, his suppliant. At the dead hour of midnight, the gates of the castle were shaken as by a whirlwind, and a voice, as of a herald, was heard to demand a herald's lawful prisoner, Dannischemend, the son of Hali. The warder then heard a lower window of the hall thrown open, and could distinguish his master's voice addressing the person who had thus summoned the castle. But the night was so dark that he might not see the speakers, and the language which they used was either entirely foreign, or so largely interspersed with strange words, that he could not understand a syllable which they said. Scarce five minutes had elapsed, when he who was without again elevated his voice as before, and said in German, 'For a year and a day, then, I forbear my forfeiture;—but coming for it when that time shall elapse, I come for my right, and will no longer be withstood.'

From that period Dannischemend the Persian was a constant guest at the Castle of Arnheim, and, indeed, never for any visible purpose crossed the drawbridge. His amusements, or studies, seemed centred in the library of the castle, and in the laboratory, where the Baron sometimes toiled in conjunction with him for many hours together. The inhabitants of the castle could find no fault in the Magus, or Persian, excepting his apparently dispensing with the ordinances of religion, since he neither went to mass nor confession, nor attended upon other religious ceremonies. The chaplain did indeed profess himself satisfied with the state of the stranger's conscience; but it had been long suspected that the worthy ecclesiastic held his easy office on the very reasonable condition of approving the principles and asserting the orthodoxy of all guests whom the Baron invited to share his hospitality.

It was observed that Dannischemend was rigid in paying his devotions, by prostrating himself in the first rays of the rising sun, and that he constructed a silver lamp of the most beautiful proportions, which he placed on a pedestal, representing a truncated column of marble, having its base sculptured with hieroglyphical imagery. With what essences he fed this flame was unknown to all, unless perhaps to the Baron; but the flame was more steady, pure, and lustrous than any which was ever seen, excepting the sun of heaven itself; and it was generally believed that the Magian made it an object of worship in the absence of that blessed luminary. Nothing else was observed of him, unless that his morals seemed severe, his gravity extreme, his general mode of life very temperate, and his fasts and vigils of frequent recurrence. Except on particular occasions, he spoke to no one of the castle but the Baron; but as he had money, and was liberal, he was regarded by the domestics with awe indeed, but without fear or dislike.

Winter was succeeded by spring, summer brought her flowers, and autumn her fruits, which ripened and were fading, when a foot-page, who sometimes attended them in the laboratory to render manual assistance when required, heard the Persian say to the Baron of Arnheim, 'You will do well, my son, to mark my words; for my lessons to you are drawing to an end, and there is no power on earth which can longer postpone my fate.'

'Alas, my master!' said the Baron, 'and must I then lose the benefit of your direction, just when your guiding hand becomes necessary to place me on the very pinnacle of the temple of wisdom?'

'Be not discouraged, my son,' answered the sage; 'I will bequeath the task of perfecting you in your studies to my daughter, who will come hither on purpose. But remember, if you value the permanence of your family, look not upon her as aught else than a helpmate in your studies; for if you forget the instructress in the beauty of the maiden, you will be buried with your sword and your shield, as the last male of your house; and further evil, believe me, will arise; for such alliances never come to a happy issue, of which my own is an example.—But hush, we are observed.'

The household of the Castle of Arnheim, having but few things to interest them, were the more eager observers of those which came under their

notice ; and when the termination of the period when the Persian was to receive shelter in the castle began to approach, some of the inmates, under various pretexts, but which resolved into very terror, absconded, while others held themselves in expectation of some striking and terrible catastrophe. None such, however, took place ; and on the expected anniversary, long ere the witching hour of midnight, Dannischemend terminated his visit in the Castle of Arnheim, by riding away from the gate in the guise of an ordinary traveller. The Baron had meantime taken leave of his tutor with many marks of regret, and some which amounted even to sorrow. The sage Persian comforted him by a long whisper, of which the last part only was heard,—'By the first beam of sunshine she will be with you. Be kind to her, but not over kind.' He then departed, and was never again seen or heard of in the vicinity of Arnheim.

The Baron was observed, during all the day after the departure of the stranger, to be particularly melancholy. He remained, contrary to his custom, in the great hall, and neither visited the library nor the laboratory, where he could no longer enjoy the company of his departed instructor. At dawn of the ensuing morning, Sir Herman summoned his page, and, contrary to his habits, which used to be rather careless in respect of apparel, he dressed himself with great accuracy ; and, as he was in the prime of life, and of a noble figure, he had reason to be satisfied with his appearance. Having performed his toilet, he waited till the sun had just appeared above the horizon, and, taking from the table the key of the laboratory, which the page believed must have lain there all night, he walked thither, followed by his attendant. At the door the Baron made a pause, and seemed at one time to doubt whether he should not send away the page, at another to hesitate whether he should open the door, as one might do who expected some strange sight within. He pulled up resolution, however, turned the key, threw the door open, and entered. The page followed close behind his master, and was astonished to the point of extreme terror at what he beheld, although the sight, however extraordinary, had in it nothing save what was agreeable and lovely.

The silver lamp was extinguished, or removed from its pedestal, where stood in place of it a most beautiful female figure in the Persian costume, in which the colour of pink predominated. But she wore no turban or head-dress of any kind, saving a blue riband drawn through her auburn hair, and secured by a gold clasp, the outer side of which was ornamented by a superb opal, which, amid the changing lights peculiar to that gem, displayed internally a slight tinge of red like a spark of fire.

The figure of this young person was rather under the middle size, but perfectly well formed ; The Eastern dress, with the wide trousers gathered round the ankles, made visible the smallest and most beautiful feet which had ever been seen, while hands and arms of the most perfect symmetry were partly seen from under the folds of the robe. The little lady's countenance was of a lively and expressive character, in which spirit and wit seemed to predominate ; and the quick dark eye, with its beautifully formed eyebrow, seemed to presage the arch remark, to which the rosy and half smiling lip appeared ready to give utterance.

The pedestal on which she stood, or rather was perched, would have appeared unsafe had any figure heavier than her own been placed there. But however she had been transported thither, she seemed to rest on it as lightly and safely as a linnet, when it has dropped from the sky on the tendril of a rosebud. The first beam of the rising sun, falling through a window directly opposite to the pedestal, increased the effect of this beautiful figure, which remained as motionless as if it had been carved in marble. She only expressed her sense of the Baron of Arnheim's presence by something of a quicker respiration, and a deep blush, accompanied by a slight smile.

Whatever reason the Baron of Arnheim might have for expecting to see some such object as now exhibited its actual presence, the degree of beauty which it presented was so much beyond his expectation, that for an instant he stood without breath or motion. At once, however, he seemed to recollect that it was his duty to welcome the fair stranger to his castle, and to relieve her from her precarious situation. He stepped forward accordingly with the words of welcome on his tongue, and was extending his arms to lift her from the pedestal, which was nearly six feet high ; but the light and active stranger merely accepted the support of his hand, and descended on the floor as light and as safe as if she had been formed of gossamer. It was, indeed, only by the momentary pressure of her little hand, that the Baron of Arnheim was finally made sensible that he had to do with a being of flesh and blood.

'I am come as I have been commanded,' she said, looking around her. 'You must expect a strict and diligent mistress, and I hope for the credit of an attentive pupil.'

After the arrival of this singular and interesting being in the Castle of Arnheim, various alterations took place within the interior of the household. A lady of high rank and small fortune, the respectable widow of a Count of the Empire, who was the Baron's blood relation, received and accepted an invitation to preside over her kinsman's domestic affairs, and remove, by her countenance, any suspicions which might arise from the presence of Hermione, as the beautiful Persian was generally called.

The Countess Waldstetten carried her complaisance so far as to be present on almost all occasions, whether in the laboratory or library, when the Baron of Arnheim received lessons from, or pursued studies with, the young and lovely tutor who had been thus strangely substituted for the aged Magus. If this lady's report was to be trusted, their pursuits were of a most extraordinary nature, and the results which she sometimes witnessed were such as to create fear as well as surprise. But she strongly vindicated them from practising unlawful arts, or overstepping the boundaries of natural science.

A better judge of such matters, the Bishop of Bamberg himself, made a visit to Arnheim, on purpose to witness the wisdom of which so much was reported through the whole Rhine country.

He conversed with Hermione, and found her deeply impressed with the truths of religion, and so perfectly acquainted with its doctrines, that he compared her to a doctor of theology in the dress of an Eastern dancing-girl. When asked regarding her knowledge of languages and science, he answered that he had been attracted to Arnheim by the most extravagant reports on these points, but that he must return confessing 'the half thereof had not been told unto him.'

In consequence of this indisputable testimony, the sinister reports which had been occasioned by the singular appearance of the fair stranger were in a great measure lulled to sleep, especially as her amiable manners won the involuntary goodwill of every one that approached her.

Meantime a marked alteration began to take place in the interviews between the lovely tutor and her pupil. These were conducted with the same caution as before, and never, so far as could be observed, took place without the presence of the Countess of Waldstetten, or some other third person of respectability. But the scenes of these meetings were no longer the scholar's library, or the chemist's laboratory;—the gardens, the groves, were resorted to for amusement, and parties of hunting and fishing, with evenings spent in the dance, seemed to announce that the studies of wisdom were for a time abandoned for the pursuits of pleasure. It was not difficult to guess the meaning of this: the Baron of Arnheim and his fair guest, speaking a language different from all others, could enjoy their private conversation, even amid all the tumult of gaiety around them; and no one was surprised to hear it formally announced, after a few weeks of gaiety, that the fair Persian was to be wedded to the Baron of Arnheim.

The manners of this fascinating young person were so pleasing, her conversation so animated, her wit so keen, yet so well tempered with goodnature and modesty, that, notwithstanding her unknown origin, her high fortune attracted less envy than might have been expected in a case so singular. Above all, her generosity amazed and won the hearts of all the young persons who approached her. Her wealth seemed to be measureless, for the many rich jewels which she distributed among her fair friends would otherwise have left her without ornaments for herself. These good qualities, her liberality above all, together with a simplicity of thought and character, which formed a beautiful contrast to the depth of acquired knowledge which she was well known to possess,—these, and her total want of ostentation, made her superiority be pardoned among her companions. Still, there was notice taken of some peculiarities, exaggerated perhaps by envy, which seemed to draw a mystical distinction between the beautiful Hermione and the mere mortals with whom she lived and conversed.

In the merry dance she was so unrivalled in lightness and agility, that her performance seemed that of an aerial being. She could, without suffering from her exertion, continue the pleasure till she had tired out the most active revellers; and even the young Duke of Hochspringen, who was reckoned the most indefatigable at that exercise in Germany, having been her partner for half-an-hour, was compelled to break off the dance, and throw himself, totally exhausted, on a couch, exclaiming he had been dancing not with a woman, but with an *ignis fatuus*.

Other whispers averred that, while she played with her young companions in the labyrinth and mazes of the castle gardens at hide-and-seek, or similar games of activity, she became animated with the same supernatural alertness which was supposed to inspire her in the dance. She appeared amongst her companions, and vanished from them, with a degree of rapidity which was inconceivable; and hedges, treillage, or such-like obstructions, were surmounted by her in a manner which the most vigilant eye could not detect; for, after being observed on the side of the barrier at one instant, in another she was beheld close beside the spectator.

In such moments, when her eyes sparkled, her cheeks reddened, and her whole frame became animated, it was pretended that the opal clasp amid her tresses, the ornament which she never laid aside, shot forth the little spark, or tongue of flame which it always displayed, with an increased vivacity. In the same manner, if in the half-darkened hall the conversation of Hermione became unusually animated, it was believed that the jewel became brilliant, and even displayed a twinkling and flashing gleam which seemed to be emitted by the gem itself, and not produced in the usual manner, by the reflection of some external light. Her maidens were also heard to surmise that, when their mistress was agitated by any hasty or brief resentment (the only weakness of temper which she was sometimes observed to display), they could observe dark red sparks flash from the mystic brooch, as if it sympathized with the wearer's emotions. The women who attended on her toilet further reported that this gem was never removed but for a few minutes, when the Baroness's hair was combed out; that she was unusually pensive and silent during the time it was laid aside, and particularly apprehensive when any liquid was brought near it. Even in the use of holy water at the door of the church, she was observed to omit the sign of the cross on the forehead, for fear, it was supposed, of the water touching the valued jewel.

These singular reports did not prevent the marriage of the Baron of Arnheim from proceeding as had been arranged. It was celebrated in the usual form, and with the utmost splendour, and the young couple seemed to commence a life of happiness rarely to be found on earth. In the course of twelve months, the lovely Baroness presented her husband with a daughter, which was to be christened Sybilla, after the Count's mother. As the health of the child was excellent, the ceremony was postponed till the recovery of the mother from her confinement; many were invited to be present on the occasion, and the castle was thronged with company.

It happened that amongst the guests was an old lady, notorious for playing in private society the part of a malicious fairy in a minstrel's tale. This was the Baroness of Steinfeldt, famous in the neighbourhood for her insatiable curiosity and overweening pride. She had not been many days in the castle, ere, by the aid of a female

attendant, who acted as an intelligencer, she had made herself mistress of all that was heard, said, or suspected, concerning the peculiarities of the Baroness Hermione. It was on the morning of the day appointed for the christening, while the whole company were assembled in the hall, and waiting till the Baroness should appear, to pass with them to the chapel, that there arose between the censorious and haughty dame whom we have just mentioned, and the Countess Waldstetten, a violent discussion concerning some point of disputed precedence. It was referred to the Baron von Arnheim, who decided in favour of the Countess. Madame de Steinfeldt instantly ordered her palfrey to be prepared, and her attendants to mount.

'I leave this place,' she said, 'which a good Christian ought never to have entered; I leave a house of which the master is a sorcerer, the mistress a demon who dares not cross her brow with holy water, and their trencher companion one who for a wretched pittance is willing to act as matchmaker between a wizard and an incarnate fiend!'

She then departed, with rage in her countenance and spite in her heart.

The Baron of Arnheim then stepped forward, and demanded of the knights and gentlemen around, if there were any among them who would dare to make good with his sword the infamous falsehoods thrown upon himself, his spouse, and his kinswoman.

There was a general answer, utterly refusing to defend the Baroness of Steinfeldt's words in so bad a cause, and universally testifying the belief of the company that she spoke in the spirit of calumny and falsehood.

'Then let that lie fall to the ground, which no man of courage will hold up,' said the Baron of Arnheim; 'only, all who are here this morning shall be satisfied whether the Baroness Hermione doth or doth not share the rites of Christianity.'

The Countess of Waldstetten made anxious signs to him while he spoke thus; and when the crowd permitted her to approach near him, she was heard to whisper, 'O, be not rash! try no experiment! there is something mysterious about that opal talisman; be prudent, and let the matter pass by.'

The Baron, who was in a more towering passion than well became the wisdom to which he made pretence,—although it will be perhaps allowed that an affront so public, and in such a time and place, was enough to shake the prudence of the most staid and the philosophy of the most wise,—answered sternly and briefly, 'Are you, too, such a fool?' and retained his purpose.

The Baroness of Arnheim at this moment entered the hall, looking just so pale from her late confinement, as to render her lovely countenance more interesting, if less animated, than usual. Having paid her compliments to the assembled company, with the most graceful and condescending attention, she was beginning to inquire why Madame de Steinfeldt was not present, when her husband made the signal for the company to move forward to the chapel, and lent the Baroness his arm to bring up the rear. The chapel was nearly filled by the splendid company, and all eyes were bent on their host and hostess, as they entered the place of devotion immediately after four young ladies, who supported the infant babe in a light and beautiful litter.

As they passed the threshold, the Baron dipped his finger in the font-stone, and offered holy water to his lady, who accepted it, as usual, by touching his finger with her own. But then, as if to confute the calumnies of the malevolent lady of Steinfeldt, with an air of sportive familiarity which was rather unwarranted by the time and place, he flirted on her beautiful forehead a drop or two of the moisture which remained on his own hand. The opal, on which one of these drops had lighted, shot out a brilliant spark like a falling star, and became the instant afterwards lightless and colourless as a common pebble, while the beautiful Baroness sunk on the floor of the chapel with a deep sigh of pain. All crowded round her in dismay. The unfortunate Hermione was raised from the ground, and conveyed to her chamber; and so much did her countenance and pulse alter within the short time necessary to do this, that those who looked upon her pronounced her a dying woman. She was no sooner in her own apartment than she requested to be left alone with her husband. He remained an hour in the room, and when he came out he locked and double-locked the door behind him. He then betook himself to the chapel, and remained there for an hour or more, prostrated before the altar.

In the meantime most of the guests had dispersed in dismay; though some abode out of courtesy or curiosity. There was a general sense of impropriety in suffering the door of the sick lady's apartment to remain locked; but, alarmed at the whole circumstances of her illness, it was some time ere any one dared disturb the devotions of the Baron. At length medical aid arrived, and the Countess of Waldstetten took upon her to demand the key. She spoke more than once to a man who seemed incapable of hearing, at least of understanding, what she said. At length he gave her the key, and added sternly, as he did so, that all aid was unavailing, and that it was his pleasure that all strangers should leave the castle. There were few who inclined to stay, when, upon opening the door of the chamber in which the Baroness had been deposited little more than two hours before, no traces of her could be discovered, unless that there was about a handful of light grey ashes, like such as might have been produced by burning fine paper, found on the bed where she had been laid. A solemn funeral was nevertheless performed, with masses and all other spiritual rites, for the soul of the high and noble Lady Hermione of Arnheim; and it was exactly on that same day three years that the Baron himself was laid in the grave of the same chapel of Arnheim, with sword, shield, and helmet, as the last male of his family.

Here the Swiss paused, for they were approaching the bridge of the Castle of Graffs-lust.

CHAPTER XII.

——Believe me, sir,
It carries a rare form—But 'tis a spirit.
THE TEMPEST.

THERE was a short silence after the Bernese had concluded his singular tale. Arthur Philipson's attention had been gradually and intensely attracted by a story, which was too much in unison with the received ideas of the age to be encountered by the unhesitating incredulity with which it must have been heard in later and more enlightened times.

He was also considerably struck by the manner in which it had been told by the narrator, whom he had hitherto only regarded in the light of a rude huntsman or soldier; whereas he now allowed Donnerhugel credit for a more extensive acquaintance with the general manners of the world than he had previously anticipated. The Swiss rose in his opinion as a man of talent, but without making the slightest progress in his affections. 'The swashbuckler,' he said to himself, 'has brains, as well as brawn and bones, and is fitter for the office of commanding others than I formerly thought him.' Then, turning to his companion, he thanked him for the tale, which had shortened the way in so interesting a manner.

'And it is from this singular marriage,' he continued, 'that Anne of Geierstein derives her origin?'

'Her mother,' answered the Swiss, 'was Sybilla of Arnheim, the infant at whose christening the mother died—disappeared—or whatever you may list to call it. The barony of Arnheim, being a male fief, reverted to the Emperor. The castle has never been inhabited since the death of the last lord; and has, as I have heard, become in some sort ruinous. The occupations of its ancient proprietors, and above all, the catastrophe of its last inhabitant, have been thought to render it no eligible place of residence.'

'Did there appear anything preternatural,' said the Englishman, 'about the young Baroness, who married the brother of the Landamman?'

'So far as I have heard,' replied Rudolph, 'there were strange stories. It was said that the nurses, at the dead of night, have seen Hermione, the last Baroness of Arnheim, stand weeping by the side of the child's cradle, and other things to the same purpose. But here I speak from less correct information than that from which I drew my former narrative.'

'And since the credibility of a story, not very probable in itself, must needs be granted, or withheld, according to the evidence on which it is given, may I ask you,' said Arthur, 'to tell me what is the authority on which you have so much reliance?'

'Willingly,' answered the Swiss. 'Know that Theodore Donnerhugel, the favourite page of the last Baron of Arnheim, was my father's brother. Upon his master's death he retired to his native town of Berne, and most of his time was employed in training me up to arms and martial exercises, as well according to the fashion of Germany as of Switzerland, for he was master of all. He witnessed with his own eyes, and heard with his own ears, great part of the melancholy and mysterious events which I have detailed to you. Should you ever visit Berne, you may see the good old man.'

'You think, then,' said Arthur, 'that the appearance which I have this night seen is connected with the mysterious marriage of Anne of Geierstein's grandfather?'

'Nay,' replied Rudolph, 'think not that I can lay down any positive explanation of a thing so strange. I can only say that, unless I did you the injustice to disbelieve your testimony respecting the apparition of this evening, I know no way to account for it, except by remembering that there is a portion of the young lady's blood which is thought not to be derived from the race of Adam, but more or less directly from one of those elementary spirits which have been talked of both in ancient and modern times. But I may be mistaken. We will see how she bears herself in the morning, and whether she carries in her looks the weariness and paleness of a midnight watcher. If she doth not, we may be authorized in thinking, either that your eyes have strangely deceived you, or that they have been cheated by some spectral appearance, which is not of this world.'

To this the young Englishman attempted no reply, nor was there time for any; for they were immediately afterwards challenged by the sentinel from the drawbridge.

The question, 'Who goes there?' was twice satisfactorily answered, before Sigismund would admit the patrol to cross the drawbridge.

'Ass and mule that thou art,' said Rudolph, 'what was the meaning of thy delay?'

'Ass and mule thyself, Hauptman,' said the Swiss, in answer to this objurgation. 'I have been surprised by a goblin on my post once to-night already, and I have got so much experience upon that matter, that I will not easily be caught a second time.'

'What goblin, thou fool,' said Donnerhugel, 'would be idle enough to play his gambols at the expense of so very poor an animal as thou art?'

'Thou art as cross as my father, Hauptman,' replied Sigismund, 'who cries fool and blockhead at every word I speak; and yet I have lips, teeth, and tongue to speak with, just like other folk.'

'We will not contest the matter, Sigismund,' said Rudolph. 'It is clear that if thou dost differ from other people, it is in a particular which thou canst be hardly expected to find out or acknowledge. But what, in the name of simplicity, is it which hath alarmed thee on thy post?'

'Marry, thus it was, Hauptman,' returned Sigismund Biederman. 'I was something tired, you see, with looking up at the broad moon, and thinking what in the universe it could be made of, and how we came to see it just as well here as at home, this place being so many miles from Geierstein. I was tired, I say, of this and other perplexing thoughts, so I drew my fur cap down over my ears, for I promise you the wind blew shrill; and then I planted myself

firm on my feet, with one of my legs a little advanced, and both my hands resting on my partisan, which I placed upright before me to rest upon; and so I shut mine eyes.'

'Shut thine eyes, Sigismund, and thou upon thy watch!' exclaimed Donnerhugel.

'Care not thou for that,' answered Sigismund; 'I kept my ears open. And yet it was to little purpose, for something came upon the bridge with a step as stealthy as that of a mouse. I looked up with a start at the moment it was opposite to me, and when I looked up—whom think you I saw?'

'Some fool like thyself,' said Rudolph, at the same time pressing Philipson's foot to make him attend to the answer; a hint which was little necessary, since he waited for it in the utmost agitation. Out it came at last.

'By Saint Mark, it was our own Anne of Geierstein!'

'It is impossible!' replied the Bernese.

'I should have said so too,' quoth Sigismund, 'for I had peeped into her bedroom before she went thither, and it was so bedizened that a queen or a princess might have slept in it; and why should the wench get out of her good quarters, with all her friends about her to guard her, and go out to wander in the forest?'

'May be,' said Rudolph, 'she only looked from the bridge to see how the night waned.'

'No,' said Sigismund; 'she was returning from the forest. I saw her when she reached the end of the bridge, and thought of striking at her, conceiving it to be the devil in her likeness. But I remembered my halberd is no birch switch to chastise boys and girls with; and had I done Anne any harm, you would all have been angry with me, and, to speak truth, I should have been ill pleased with myself; for although she doth make a jest of me now and then, yet it were a dull house ours were we to lose Anne.'

'Ass,' answered the Bernese, 'didst thou speak to this form, or goblin as you call it?'

'Indeed I did not, Captain Wiseacre. My father is ever angry with me when I speak without thinking, and I could not at that particular moment think on anything to the purpose. Neither was there time to think, for she passed me like a snowflake upon a whirlwind. I marched into the castle after her, however, calling on her by name; so the sleepers were awakened, and men flew to their arms, and there was as much confusion as if Archibald of Hagenbach had been among us with sword and pike. And who should come out of her little bedroom, as much startled and as much in a bustle as any of us, but Mistress Anne herself! And as she protested she had never left her room that night, why, I, Sigismund Biederman, was made to stand the whole blame, as if I could prevent people's ghosts from walking. But I told her my mind when I saw them all so set against me. "And, Mistress Anne," quoth I, 'it's well known the kindred you come of; and after this fair notice, if you send any of your double-gangers * to me, let them put iron skull-caps on their heads, for I will give them the length and weight of a Swiss halberd, come in what shape they list." However, they all called "Shame on me!" and my father drove me out again, with as little remorse as if I had been the old house-dog, which had stolen in from his watch to the fireside.'

The Bernese replied, with an air of coldness approaching to contempt, 'You have slept on your watch, Sigismund, a high military offence, and you have dreamed while you slept. You were in good luck that the Landamman did not suspect your negligence, or, instead of being sent back to your duty like a lazy watch-dog, you might have been scourged back like a faithless one to your kennel at Geierstein, as chanced to poor Ernest for a less matter.'

'Ernest has not yet gone back, though,' said Sigismund, 'and I think he may pass as far into Burgundy as we shall do in this journey. I pray you, however, Hauptman, to treat me not dog-like, but as a man, and send some one to relieve me, instead of prating here in the cold night air. If there be anything to do to-morrow, as I well guess there may, a mouthful of food and a minute of sleep will be but a fitting preparative, and I have stood watch here these two mortal hours.'

With that the young giant yawned portentously, as if to enforce the reasons of his appeal.

'A mouthful and a minute?' said Rudolph,—'a roasted ox and a lethargy like that of the Seven Sleepers † would scarce restore you to the use of your refreshed and waking senses. But I am your friend, Sigismund, and you are secure in my favourable report; you shall be instantly relieved, that you may sleep, if it be possible, without disturbances from dreams.—Pass on, young men' (addressing the others, who by this time had come up), 'and go to your rest; Arthur of England and I will report to the Landamman and the Banneret the account of our patrol.'

The patrol accordingly entered the castle, and were soon heard joining their slumbering companions. Rudolph Donnerhugel seized Arthur's arm, and, while they went towards the hall, whispered in his ear,—

'These are strange passages!—How think you we should report them to the deputation?'

'That I must refer to yourself,' said Arthur; 'you are the captain of our watch. I have done my duty in telling you what I saw—or thought I saw;—it is for you to judge how far it is fitting to communicate it to the Landamman; only, as it concerns the honour of his family, to his ear alone I think it should be confided.'

'I see no occasion for that,' said the Bernese hastily; 'it cannot affect or interest our general safety. But I may take occasion hereafter to speak with Anne on this subject.'

This latter hint gave as much pain to Arthur as the general proposal of silence on an affair so delicate had afforded him satisfaction. But his uneasiness was of a kind which he felt it neces-

* Double-walkers, a name in Germany for those aërial duplicates of humanity who represent the features and appearance of other living persons.

† [According to tradition, seven youths of Ephesus, in Asia Minor, took refuge in a cave to escape the persecution of the Emperor Decius; but they were discovered, whereupon the mouth of the cave was closed with large stones, and the youths left to die of hunger. But instead of dying they slept, and slept for nearly two hundred years, and were then awakened.]

sary to suppress, and he therefore replied with as much composure as he could assume,—

'You will act, Sir Hauptman, as your sense of duty and delicacy shall dictate. For me, I shall be silent on what you call the strange passages of the night, rendered doubly wonderful by the report of Sigismund Biederman.'

'And also on what you have seen and heard concerning our auxiliaries of Berne?' said Rudolph.

'On that I shall certainly be silent,' said Arthur; 'unless thus far, that I mean to communicate to my father the risk of his baggage being liable to examination and seizure at La Ferette.'

'It is needless,' said Rudolph; 'I will answer with head and hand for the safety of everything belonging to him.'

'I thank you in his name,' said Arthur; 'but we are peaceful travellers, to whom it must be much more desirable to avoid a broil than to give occasion for one, even when secure of coming out of it triumphantly.'

'These are the sentiments of a merchant, but not of a soldier,' said Rudolph, in a cold and displeased tone; 'but the matter is your own, and you must act in it as you think best. Only remember, if you go to La Ferette without our assistance, you hazard both goods and life.'

They entered, as he spoke, the apartment of their fellow-travellers. The companions of their patrol had already laid themselves down amongst their sleeping comrades at the lower end of the room. The Landamman and the Bannerman of Berne heard Donnerhugel make a report that his patrol, both before and after midnight, had been made in safety, and without any encounter which expressed either danger or suspicion. The Bernese then wrapped him in his cloak, and, lying down on the straw, with that happy indifference to accommodation, and promptitude to seize the moment of repose, which is acquired by a life of vigilance and hardship, was in a few minutes fast asleep.

Arthur remained on foot but a little longer, to dart an earnest look on the door of Anne of Geierstein's apartment, and to reflect on the wonderful occurrences of the evening. But they formed a chaotic mystery, for which he could see no clue, and the necessity of holding instant communication with his father compelled him forcibly to turn his thoughts in that direction. He was obliged to observe caution and secrecy in accomplishing his purpose. For this he laid himself down beside his parent, whose couch, with the hospitality which he had experienced from the beginning of his intercourse with the kind-hearted Swiss, had been arranged in what was thought the most convenient place of the apartment, and somewhat apart from all others. He slept sound, but awoke at the touch of his son, who whispered to him in English, for the greater precaution, that he had important tidings for his private ear.

'An attack on our post?'—said the elder Philipson; 'must we take to our weapons?'

'Not now,' said Arthur; 'and I pray of you not to rise or make alarm—this matter concerns us alone.'

'Tell it instantly, my son,' replied his father; 'you speak to one too much used to danger to be startled at it.'

'It is a case for your wisdom to consider,' said Arthur. 'I had information, while upon the patrol, that the Governor of La Ferette will unquestionably seize upon your baggage and merchandise, under pretext of levying dues claimed by the Duke of Burgundy. I have also been informed that our escort of Swiss youth are determined to resist this exaction, and conceive themselves possessed of the numbers and means sufficient to do so successfully.'

'By Saint George, that must not be!' said the elder Philipson; 'it would be an evil requital to the true-hearted Landamman, to give the fiery Duke a pretext for that war which the excellent old man is so anxiously desirous to avoid, if it be possible. Any exactions, however unreasonable, I will gladly pay. But to have my papers seized on were utter ruin. I partly feared this, and it made me unwilling to join myself to the Landamman's party. We must now break off from it. This rapacious Governor will not surely lay hands on the deputation which seeks his master's court under protection of the law of nations; but I can easily see how he might make our presence with them a pretext for quarrel, which will equally suit his own avaricious spirit and the humour of these fiery young men, who are seeking for matter of offence. This shall not be taken for our sake. We will separate ourselves from the deputies, and remain behind till they are passed on. If this De Hagenbach be not the most unreasonable of men, I will find a way to content him so far as we are individually concerned. Meanwhile, I will instantly wake the Landamman,' he said, 'and acquaint him with our purpose.'

This was immediately done, for Philipson was not slow in the execution of his resolutions. In a minute he was standing by the side of Arnold Biederman, who, raised on his elbow, was listening to his communication, while over the shoulder of the Landamman rose the head and long beard of the deputy from Schwytz, his large clear blue eyes gleaming from beneath a fur cap, bent on the Englishman's face, but stealing a glance aside now and then to mark the impression which what was said made upon his colleague.

'Good friend and host,' said the elder Philipson, 'we have heard for a certainty that our poor merchandise will be subjected to taxation or seizure on our passage through La Ferette, and I would gladly avoid all cause of quarrel, for your sake as well as our own.'

'You do not doubt that we can and will protect you?' replied the Landamman. 'I tell you, Englishman, that the guest of a Swiss is as safe by his side as an eaglet under the wing of its dam; and to leave us because danger approaches, is but a poor compliment to our courage or constancy. I am desirous of peace; but not the Duke of Burgundy himself should wrong a guest of mine, so far as my power might prevent it.'

At this the deputy from Schwytz clenched a fist like a bull's knuckles, and showed it above the shoulders of his friend.

'It is even to avoid this, my worthy host,' replied Philipson, 'that I intend to separate from your friendly company sooner than I desire or purposed. Bethink you, my brave and worthy host, you are an ambassador, seeking a national

peace, I a trader seeking private gain. War, or quarrels which may cause war, are alike ruinous to your purpose and mine. I confess to you frankly, that I am willing and able to pay a large ransom, and when you are departed I will negotiate for the amount. I will abide in the town of Bâle till I have made fair terms with Archibald de Hagenbach; and even if he is the avaricious extortioner you describe him, he will be somewhat moderate with me, rather than run the risk of losing his booty entirely by my turning back or taking another route.'

'You speak wisely, Sir Englishman,' said the Landamman; 'and I thank you for recalling my duty to my remembrance. But you must not, nevertheless, be exposed to danger. So soon as we move forward, the country will be again open to the devastations of the Burgundian riders and lanzknechts, who will sweep the roads in every direction. The people of Bâle are unhappily too timorous to protect you; they would yield you up upon the Governor's first hint; and for justice or lenity, you might as well expect it in hell as from Hagenbach.'

'There are conjurations, it is said, that can make hell itself tremble,' said Philipson; 'and I have means to propitiate even this De Hagenbach, providing I can get to private speech with him. But I own I can expect nothing from his wild riders but to be put to death for the value of my cloak.'

'If that be the case,' said the Landamman, 'and if you must needs separate from us, for which I deny not that you have alleged wise and worthy reasons, wherefore should you not leave Graffs-lust two hours before us? The roads will be safe, as our escort is expected; and you will probably, if you travel early, find De Hagenbach sober, and as capable as he ever is of hearing reason—that is, of perceiving his own interest. But after his breakfast is washed down with Rhine wine, which he drinks every morning before he hears mass, his fury blinds even his avarice.'

'All I want, in order to execute this scheme,' said Philipson, 'is the loan of a mule to carry my valise, which is packed up with your baggage.'

'Take the she-mule,' said the Landamman; 'she belongs to my brother here from Schwytz; he will gladly bestow her on thee.'

'If she were worth twenty crowns, and my comrade Arnold desired me to do so,' said the old whitebeard.

'I will accept her as a loan with gratitude,' said the Englishman. 'But how can you dispense with the use of the creature? You have only one left.'

'We can easily supply our want from Bâle,' said the Landamman. 'Nay, we can make this little delay serve your purpose, Sir Englishman. I named for our time of departure the first hour after daybreak; we will postpone it to the second hour, which will give us enough of time to get a horse or mule, and you, Sir Philipson, space to reach La Ferette, where I trust you will have achieved your business with De Hagenbach to your contentment, and will join company again with us as we travel through Burgundy.'

'If our mutual objects will permit our travelling together, worthy Landamman,' answered the merchant, 'I shall esteem myself most happy in becoming the partner of your journey.—And now resume the repose which I have interrupted.'

'God bless you, wise and true-hearted man,' said the Landamman, rising and embracing the Englishman. 'Should we never meet again, I will still remember the merchant who neglected thoughts of gain that he might keep the path of wisdom and rectitude. I know not another who would not have risked the shedding a lake of blood to save five ounces of gold.—Farewell thou too, gallant young man. Thou hast learned among us to keep thy foot firm while on the edge of a Helvetian crag, but none can teach thee so well as thy father to keep an upright path among the morasses and precipices of human life.'

He then embraced and took a kind farewell of his friends, in which, as usual, he was imitated by his friend of Schwytz, who swept with his long beard the right and left cheeks of both the Englishmen, and again made them heartily welcome to the use of his mule. All then once more composed themselves to rest, for the space which remained before the appearance of the autumnal dawn.

CHAPTER XIII.

> The enmity and discord, which of late
> Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your Duke
> To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,—
> Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,
> Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,
> Excludes all pity from our threat'ning looks.
>
> COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE dawn had scarce begun to touch the distant horizon, when Arthur Philipson was on foot to prepare for his father's departure and his own, which, as arranged on the preceding night, was to take place two hours before the Landamman and his attendants proposed to leave the ruinous Castle of Graffs-lust. It was no difficult matter for him to separate the neatly-arranged packages which contained his father's effects, from the clumsy bundles in which the baggage of the Swiss was deposited. The one set of mails was made up with the neatness of men accustomed to long and perilous journeys; the other, with the rude carelessness of those who rarely left their home, and who were altogether inexperienced.

A servant of the Landamman assisted Arthur in this task, and in placing his father's baggage on the mule belonging to the bearded deputy from Schwytz. From this man also he received instructions concerning the road from Graffs-lust to Breisach (the chief citadel of La Ferette), which was too plain and direct to render it likely that they should incur any risk of losing their way, as had befallen them when travelling on the Swiss mountains. Everything being now prepared for their departure, the young Englishman awakened his father, and acquainted him that all was ready. He then retired towards the chimney, while his father, according to his daily custom, repeated the prayer of Saint Julian, the patron of travellers, and adjusted his dress for the journey.

It will not be wondered at, that, while the father went through his devotions, and equipped

himself for travel, Arthur, with his heart full of what he had seen of Anne of Geierstein for some time before, and his brain dizzy with the recollection of the incidents of the preceding night, should have kept his eyes riveted on the door of the sleeping apartment at which he had last seen that young person disappear; that is, unless the pale and seemingly fantastic form, which had twice crossed him so strangely, should prove no wandering spirit of the elements, but the living substance of the person whose appearance it bore. So eager was his curiosity on this subject, that he strained his eyes to the utmost, as if it had been possible for them to have penetrated through wood and walls into the chamber of the slumbering maiden, in order to discover whether her eye or cheek bore any mark that she had last night been a watcher or a wanderer.

'But that was the proof to which Rudolph appealed,' he said internally, 'and Rudolph alone will have the opportunity of remarking the result. Who knows what advantage my communication may give him in his suit with yonder lovely creature? And what must she think of me, save as one light of thought and loose of tongue, to whom nothing extraordinary can chance, but he must hasten to babble it into the ears of those who are nearest to him at the moment? I would my tongue had been palsied ere I said a syllable to yonder proud yet wily prize-fighter! I shall never see her more—that is to be counted for certain. I shall never know the true interpretation of those mysteries which hang around her. But to think I may have prated something tending to throw her into the power of yonder ferocious boor, will be a subject of remorse to me while I live.'

Here he was startled out of his reverie by the voice of his father. 'Why, how now, boy; art thou waking, Arthur, or sleeping on thy feet from the fatigue of last night's service?'

'Not so, my father,' answered Arthur, at once recollecting himself. 'Somewhat drowsy, perhaps; but the fresh morning air will soon put that to flight.'

Walking with precaution through the group of sleepers who lay around, the elder Philipson, when they had gained the door of the apartment, turned back, and, looking on the straw couch which the large form of the Landamman, and the silvery beard of his constant companion, touched by the earliest beams of light, distinguished as that of Arnold Biederman, he muttered between his lips an involuntary adieu.

'Farewell, mirror of ancient faith and integrity—farewell, noble Arnold—farewell, soul of truth and candour—to whom cowardice, selfishness, and falsehood are alike unknown!'

And farewell, thought his son, to the loveliest, and most candid, yet most mysterious of maidens!—But the adieu, as may well be believed, was not, like that of his father, expressed in words.

They were soon after on the outside of the gate. The Swiss domestic was liberally recompensed, and charged with a thousand kind words of farewell and of remembrance to the Landamman from his English guests, mingled with hopes and wishes that they might soon meet again in the Burgundian territory. The young man then took the bridle of the mule, and led the animal forward on their journey at an easy pace, his father walking by his side.

After a silence of some minutes, the elder Philipson addressed Arthur. 'I fear me,' he said, 'we shall see the worthy Landamman no more. The youths who attend him are bent upon taking offence—the Duke of Burgundy will not fail, I fear, to give them ample occasion—and the peace which the excellent man desires for the land of his fathers will be shipwrecked ere they reach the Duke's presence; though, even were it otherwise, how the proudest prince in Europe will brook the moody looks of burgesses and peasants (so will Charles of Burgundy term the friends we have parted from), is a question too easily answered. A war, fatal to the interests of all concerned, save Louis of France, will certainly take place; and dreadful must be the contest, if the ranks of the Burgundian chivalry shall encounter those iron sons of the mountains, before whom so many of the Austrian nobility have been repeatedly prostrated.'

'I am so much convinced of the truth of what you say, my father,' replied Arthur, 'that I judge even this day will not pass over without a breach of truce. I have already put on my shirt of mail, in case we should meet bad company betwixt Graffs-lust and Breisach; and I would to Heaven that you would observe the same precaution. It will not delay our journey; and I confess to you that I, at least, will travel with much greater consciousness of safety should you do so.'

'I understand you, my son,' replied the elder Philipson. 'But I am a peaceful traveller in the Duke of Burgundy's territories, and must not willingly suppose that, while under the shadow of his banner, I must guard myself against banditti, as if I were in the wilds of Palestine. As for the authority of his officers, and the extent of their exactions, I need not tell you that they are, in our circumstances, things to be submitted to without grief or grudging.'

Leaving the two travellers to journey towards Breisach at their leisure, I must transport my readers to the eastern gate of that small town, which, situated on an eminence, had a commanding prospect on every side, but especially towards Bâle. It did not properly make a part of the dominions of the Duke of Burgundy, but had been placed in his hands in pawn, or in pledge, for the repayment of a considerable sum of money, due to Charles by the Emperor Sigismund of Austria, to whom the seigniory of the place belonged in property. But the town lay so conveniently for distressing the commerce of the Swiss, and inflicting on that people, whom he at once hated and despised, similar marks of his malevolence, as to encourage a general opinion that the Duke of Burgundy, the implacable and unreasonable enemy of these mountaineers, would never listen to any terms of redemption, however equitable or advantageous, which might have the effect of restoring to the Emperor an advanced post of such consequence to the gratification of his dislike as Breisach.

The situation of the little town was in itself strong, but the fortifications which surrounded it were barely sufficient to repel any sudden attack, and not adequate to resist for any length

of time a formal siege. The morning beams had shone on the spire of the church for more than an hour, when a tall, thin, elderly man, wrapped in a morning gown, over which was buckled a broad belt, supporting on the left side a sword, on the right a dagger, approached the barbican of the eastern gate. His bonnet displayed a feather, which, or the tail of a fox in lieu of it, was the emblem of gentle blood throughout all Germany, and a badge highly prized by those who had a right to wear it.

The small party of soldiers who had kept watch there during the course of the preceding night, and supplied sentinels both for ward and outlook, took arms on the appearance of this individual, and drew themselves up in the form of a guard, which receives with military reverence an officer of importance. Archibald de Hagenbach's countenance, for it was the governor himself, expressed that settled peevishness and ill temper which characterize the morning hours of a valetudinary debauchee. His head throbbed, his pulse was feverish, and his cheek was pale,—symptoms of his having spent the last night, as was his usual custom, amid wine-stoups and flagons. Judging from the haste with which his soldiers fell into their ranks, and the awe and silence which reigned among them, it appeared that they were accustomed to expect and dread his ill humour on such occasions. He glanced at them, accordingly, an inquisitive and dissatisfied look, as if he sought something on which to vent his peevishness, and then asked for the 'loitering dog Kilian.'

Kilian presently made his appearance, a stout, hard-favoured man-at-arms, a Bavarian by birth, and by rank the personal squire of the governor.

'What news of the Swiss churls, Kilian?' demanded Archibald de Hagenbach. 'They should, by their thrifty habits, have been on the road two hours since. Have the peasant-clods presumed to ape the manners of gentlemen, and stuck by the flask till cock-crow?'

'By my faith, it may well be,' answered Kilian; 'the burghers of Bâle gave them full means of carousal.'

'How, Kilian?—They dared not offer hospitality to the Swiss drove of bullocks, after the charge we sent them to the contrary?'

'Nay, the Bâlese received them not into the town,' replied the squire; 'but I learned, by sure espial, that they afforded them means of quartering at Graffs-lust, which was furnished with many a fair gammon and pasty, to speak nought of flasks of Rhine wine, barrels of beer, and stoups of strong waters.'

'The Bâlese shall answer this, Kilian,' said the governor; 'do they think I am for ever to be thrusting myself between the Duke and his pleasure on their behalf?—The fat porkers have presumed too much since we accepted some trifling gifts at their hands, more for gracing of them than for any advantage we could make of their paltry donations. Was it not the wine from Bâle which we were obliged to drink out in pint goblets, lest it should become sour before morning?'

'It was drunk out, and in pint goblets too,' said Kilian; 'so much I can well remember.'

'Why, go to, then,' said the governor; 'they shall know, these beasts of Bâle, that I hold myself no way obliged by such donations as these, and that my remembrance of the wines which I carouse rests no longer than the headache, which the mixtures they drug me with never fail of late years to leave behind, for the next morning's pastime.'

'Your Excellency,' replied the squire, 'will make it, then, a quarrel between the Duke of Burgundy and the city of Bâle, that they gave this indirect degree of comfort and assistance to the Swiss deputation?'

'Ay, marry will I,' said De Hagenbach, 'unless there be wise men among them, who shall show me good reasons for protecting them.—O, the Bâlese do not know our noble Duke, nor the gift he hath for chastising the gutter-blooded citizens of a free town. Thou canst tell them, Kilian, as well as any man, how he dealt with the villains of Liége,* when they would needs be pragmatical.'

'I will apprise them of the matter,' said Kilian, 'when opportunity shall serve, and I trust I shall find them in a temper disposed to cultivate your honourable friendship.'

'Nay, if it is the same to them, it is quite indifferent to me, Kilian,' continued the governor; 'but, methinks, whole and sound throats are worth some purchase, were it only to swallow black-puddings and *schwarz-bier*, to say nothing of Westphalian hams and Nierensteiner†—I say, a slashed throat is a useless thing, Kilian.'

'I will make the fat citizens to understand their danger, and the necessity of making interest,' answered Kilian. 'Sure, I am not now to learn how to turn the ball into your Excellency's lap.'

'You speak well,' said Sir Archibald; 'but how chanced it thou hast so little to say to the Switzers' leaguer? I should have thought an old trooper like thee would have made their pinions flutter amidst the good cheer thou tellest me of.'

'I might as well have annoyed an angry hedgehog with my bare finger,' said Kilian. 'I surveyed Graffs-lust myself;—there were sentinels on the castle walls, a sentinel on the bridge, besides a regular patrol of these Swiss fellows who kept strict watch. So that there was nothing to be done; otherwise, knowing your Excellency's ancient quarrel, I would have had a hit at them, when they should never have known who hurt them.—I will tell you, however, fairly, that these churls are acquiring better knowledge in the art of war than the best Ritter' (knight).

'Well, they will be the better worth the looking after when they arrive,' said De Hagenbach; 'they come forth in state, doubtless, with all their finery, their wives' chains of silver, their own medals, and rings of lead and copper.—Ah, the base hinds! they are unworthy that a man of noble blood should ease them of their trash!'

'There is better ware among them, if my in-

* [Charles of Burgundy took the city of Liége in 1467; but in the following year he was obliged to take it again, which he did with great cruelty and barbarity.]

† [A Rhine wine, grown at Nierstein, ten miles south of Mainz or Mayence.]

telligence hath not deceived me,' replied Kilian; 'there are merchants'——

'Pshaw! the pack-horses of Berne and Soleure,' said the governor, 'with their paltry lumber!—cloth too coarse to make covers for horses of any breeding, and linen that is more like haircloth than any composition of flax. I will strip them, however, were it but to vex the knaves. What! not content with claiming to be treated like an independent people, and sending forth deputies and embassies, forsooth; they expect, I warrant, to make the indemnities of ambassadors cover the introduction of a cargo of their contraband commodities, and thus insult the noble Duke of Burgundy, and cheat him at the same time? But De Hagenbach is neither knight nor gentleman if he allow them to pass unchallenged.'

'And they are better worth being stopped,' said Kilian, 'than your Excellency supposes; for they have English merchants along with them, and under their protection.'

'English merchants!' exclaimed De Hagenbach, his eyes sparkling with joy; 'English merchants, Kilian! Men talk of Cathay and Ind,* where there are mines of silver, and gold, and diamonds; but, on the faith of a gentleman, I believe these brutish islanders have the caves of treasure wholly within their own foggy land! And then the variety of their rich merchandise!—Ha, Kilian! is it a long train of mules—a jolly tinkling team?—By Our Lady's glove! the sound of it is already jingling in my ears more musically than all the harps of all the minnesingers at Heilbrunn!'

'Nay, my lord, there is no great train,' replied the squire;—'only two men, as I am given to understand, with scarce so much baggage as loads a mule; but, it is said, of infinite value, silk and samite, lace and furs, pearls and jewellery-work—perfumes from the East, and gold-work from Venice.'

'Raptures and paradise! say not a word more,' exclaimed the rapacious Knight of Hagenbach; 'they are all our own, Kilian! Why, these are the very men I have dreamed of twice a week for this month past—ay, two men of middle stature, or somewhat under it—with smooth, round, fair, comely visages, having stomachs as plump as partridges, and purses as plump as their stomachs—Ha, what say'st thou to my dream, Kilian?'

'Only that, to be quite soothfast,' answered the squire, 'it should have included the presence of a score or thereabouts of sturdy young giants as ever climbed cliff, or carried bolt to whistle at a chamois—a lusty plump of clubs, bills, and partisans, such as make shields crack like oaten cakes, and helmets ring like church-bells.'

'The better, knave, the better!' exclaimed the governor, rubbing his hands. 'English pedlars to plunder! Swiss bullies to beat into submission! I wot well, we can have nothing of the Helvetian swine save their beastly bristles—it is lucky they bring these two island sheep along with them. But we must get ready our boar-spears, and clear the clipping-pens for exercise of our craft.—Here, Lieutenant Schonfeldt!'

An officer stepped forth.

'How many men are here on duty?'

'About sixty,' replied the officer. 'Twenty out on parties in different directions, and there may be forty or fifty in their quarters.'

'Order them all under arms instantly;—hark ye, not by trumpet or bugle, but by warning them individually in their quarters, to draw to arms as quietly as possible, and rendezvous here at the eastern gate. Tell the villains there is booty to be gained, and they shall have their share.'

'On these terms,' said Schonfeldt, 'they will walk over a spider's web without startling the insect that wove it. I will collect them without loss of an instant.'

'I tell thee, Kilian,' continued the exulting commandant, again speaking apart with his confidential attendant, 'nothing could come so luckily as the chance of this onslaught. Duke Charles desires to affront the Swiss,—not, look you, that he cares to act towards them by his own direct orders, in such a manner as might be termed a breach of public faith towards a peaceful embassy; but the gallant follower who shall save his prince the scandal of such an affair, and whose actions may be termed a mistake or misapprehension, shall, I warrant you, be accounted to have done knightly service. Perchance a frown may be passed upon him in public, but in private the Duke will know how to esteem him.—Why standest thou so silent, man, and what ails thy ugly-looking aspect? Thou art not afraid of twenty Switzer boys, and we at the head of such a band of spears?'

'The Swiss,' answered Kilian, 'will give and take good blows; yet I have no fear of them. But I like not that we should trust too much to Duke Charles. That he would be, in the first instance, pleased with any dishonour done the Swiss is likely enough; but if, as your Excellency hints, he finds it afterwards convenient to disown the action, he is a prince likely to give a lively colour to his disavowal by hanging up the actors.'

'Pshaw!' said the commandant, 'I know where I stand. Such a trick were like enough to be played by Louis of France, but it is foreign to the blunt character of our Bold one of Burgundy.—Why the devil stand'st thou still, man, simpering like an ape at a roasted chestnut, which he thinks too warm for his fingers?'

'Your Excellency is wise as well as warlike,' said the esquire, 'and it is not for me to contest your pleasure. But this peaceful embassy—these English merchants—if Charles goes to war with Louis, as the rumour is current, what he should most of all desire is the neutrality of Switzerland, and the assistance of England, whose king is crossing the sea with a great army. Now you, Sir Archibald of Hagenbach, may well do that in the course of this very morning, which will put the Confederated Cantons in arms against Charles, and turn the English from allies into enemies.'

'I care not,' said the commandant. 'I know the Duke's humour well; and if he, the master of so many provinces, is willing to risk them in a self-willed frolic, what is it to Archibald de Hagenbach, who has not a foot of land to lose in the cause?'

'But you have life, my lord,' said the esquire.

* [China and India.]

'Ay, life!' replied the knight; 'a paltry right to exist, which I have been ready to stake every day of my life for dollars—ay, and for kreutzers—and think you I will hesitate to pledge it for broad-pieces, jewels of the East, and goldsmith's work of Venice? No, Kilian; these English must be eased of their bales, that Archibald de Hagenbach may drink a purer flask than their thin Moselle, and wear a brocade doublet instead of greasy velvet. Nor is it less necessary that Kilian should have a seemly new jerkin, with a purse of ducats to jingle at his girdle.'

'By my faith,' said Kilian, 'that last argument hath disarmed my scruples, and I give up the point, since it ill befits me to dispute with your Excellency.'

'To the work, then,' said his leader. 'But stay—we must first take the Church along with us. The Priest of Saint Paul's hath been moody of late, and spread abroad strange things from the pulpit, as if we were little better than common pillagers and robbers. Nay, he hath had the insolence to warn me, as he termed it, twice, in strange form. It were well to break the growling mastiff's bald head; but since that might be ill taken by the Duke, the next point of wisdom is to fling him a bone.'

'He may be a dangerous enemy,' said the squire dubiously; 'his power is great with the people.'

'Tush!' replied Hagenbach, 'I know how to disarm the shaveling. Send to him, and tell him to come hither to speak with me. Meanwhile, have all our force under arms; let the barbican and barrier be well manned with archers; station spearmen in the houses on each hand of the gateway; and let the street be barricaded with carts, well bound together, but placed as if they had been there by accident—place a body of determined fellows in these carts, and behind them. So soon as the merchants and their mules enter (for that is the main point), up with your drawbridge, down with the portcullis, send a volley of arrows among those who are without, if they make any scuffle; disarm and secure those who have entered, and are cooped up between the barricade before, and the ambush behind and around them—And *then*, Kilian'——

'And then,' said his esquire, 'shall we, like merry Free Companions, be knuckle-deep in the English budgets'——

'And, like jovial hunters,' replied the knight, 'elbow-deep in Swiss blood.'

'The game will stand at bay, though,' answered Kilian. 'They are led by that Donnerhugel whom we have heard of, whom they call the Young Bear of Berne. They will turn to their defence.'

'The better, man—would'st thou kill sheep rather than hunt wolves? Besides, our toils are set, and the whole garrison shall assist. Shame on thee, Kilian, thou wert not wont to have so many scruples!'

'Nor have I now,' said Kilian. 'But these Swiss bills, and two-handed swords of the breadth of four inches, are no child's play.—And then, if you call all our garrison to the attack, to whom will your Excellency entrust the defence of the other gates, and the circuit of the walls?'

'Lock, bolt, and chain up the gates,' replied the governor, 'and bring the keys hither. There shall no one leave the place till this affair is over. Let some score of the citizens take arms for the duty of guarding the walls; and look they discharge it well, or I will lay a fine on them which they shall discharge to purpose.'

'They will grumble,' said Kilian. 'They say that, not being the Duke's subjects, though the place is impledged to his Grace, they are not liable to military service.'

'They lie! the cowardly slaves,' answered De Hagenbach. 'If I have not employed them much hitherto, it is because I scorn their assistance; nor would I now use their help, were it for anything save to keep a watch, by looking out straight before them. Let them obey, as they respect their property, persons, and families.'

A deep voice behind them repeated the emphatic language of Scripture,—'I have seen the wicked man flourish in his power even like unto a laurel, but I returned and he was not—yea, I sought him, but he was not to be found.'

Sir Archibald de Hagenbach turned sternly, and encountered the dark and ominous looks of the Priest of Saint Paul's, dressed in the vestments of his order.

'We are busy, father,' said the governor, 'and will hear your preachment another time.'

'I come by your summons, Sir Governor,' said the priest, 'or I had not intruded myself, where I well knew my preachments, if you term them so, will do no good.'

'O, I crave your mercy, reverend father,' said De Hagenbach. 'Yes, it is true that I did send for you, to desire your prayers and kind intercession with Our Lady and Saint Paul, in some transactions which are likely to occur this morning, and in which, as the Lombard says, I do espy *roba di guadagno*.'

'Sir Archibald,' answered the priest calmly, 'I well hope and trust that you do not forget the nature of the glorified saints, so far as to ask them for their blessing upon such exploits as you have been too oft engaged in since your arrival amongst us—an event which of itself gave token of the divine anger. Nay, let me say, humble as I am, that decency to a servant of the altar should check you from proposing to me to put up prayers for the success of pillage and robbery.'

'I understand you, father,' said the rapacious governor, 'and you shall see I do. While you are the Duke's subject, you must by your office put up your prayers for his success in matters that are fairly managed.—You acknowledge this with a graceful bend of your reverend head?—Well, then, I will be as reasonable as you are. Say we desire the intercession of the good saints, and of you, their pious orator, in something a little out of the ordinary path, and, if you will, somewhat of a doubtful complexion,—are we entitled to ask you or them for their pains and trouble without a just consideration? Surely no. Therefore I vow and solemnly promise, that if I have good fortune in this morning's adventure, Saint Paul shall have an altar-cloth and a basin of silver, large or little, as my booty will permit—Our Lady a web of satin for a full suit, with a necklace of pearl for holidays—and

thou, priest, some twenty pieces of broad English gold, for acting as go-between betwixt ourselves and the blessed apostles, whom we acknowledge ourselves unworthy to negotiate with in our profane person. And now, Sir Priest, do we understand each other? for I have little time to lose. I know you have hard thoughts of me, but you see the devil is not quite so horrible as he is painted.'

'Do we understand each other?' answered the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, repeating the governor's question—'Alas, no! and I fear me we never shall. Hast thou never heard the words spoken by the holy hermit, Berchtold of Offringen, to the implacable Queen Agnes, who had revenged with such dreadful severity the assassination of her father, the Emperor Albert?'

'Not I,' returned the knight; 'I have neither studied the chronicles of emperors nor the legends of hermits; and therefore, Sir Priest, an you like not my proposal, let us have no further words on the matter. I am unwont to press my favours, or to deal with priests who require entreaty when gifts are held out to them.'

'Hear yet the words of the holy man,' said the priest. 'The time may come, and that shortly, when you would gladly desire to hear what you scornfully reject.'

'Speak on, but be brief,' said Archibald de Hagenbach; 'and know, though thou may'st terrify or cajole the multitude, thou now speakest to one whose resolution is fixed far beyond the power of thy eloquence to melt.'

'Know, then,' said the Priest of Saint Paul's, 'that Agnes, daughter of the murdered Albert, after shedding oceans of blood in avenging his bloody death, founded at length the rich Abbey of Königsfeldt; and, that it might have a superior claim to renowned sanctity, made a pilgrimage in person to the cell of the holy hermit, and besought of him to honour her abbey by taking up his residence there. But what was his reply?—Mark it and tremble. "Begone, ruthless woman!" said the holy man; "God will not be served with blood-guiltiness, and rejects the gifts which are obtained by violence and robbery. The Almighty loves mercy, justice, and humanity, and by the lovers of these only will he be worshipped."—And now, Archibald of Hagenbach, once, twice, thrice hast thou had warning. Live as becomes a man on whom sentence is passed, and who must expect execution.'

Having spoken these words with a menacing tone and frowning aspect, the Priest of Saint Paul's turned away from the governor, whose first impulse was to command him to be arrested. But when he recollected the serious consequences which attached to the laying violent hands on a priest, he suffered him to depart in peace, conscious that his own unpopularity might render any attempt to revenge himself an act of great rashness. He called, therefore, for a beaker of Burgundy, in which he swallowed down his displeasure, and had just returned to Kilian the cup, which he had drained to the bottom, when the warden winded a blast from the watch-tower, which betokened the arrival of strangers at the gate of the city.

CHAPTER XIV.

I will resist such entertainment, till
My enemy has more power.
THE TEMPEST.

'THAT blast was but feebly blown,' said De Hagenbach, ascending to the ramparts, from which he could see what passed on the outside of the gate; 'who approaches, Kilian?'

The trusty squire was hastening to meet him with the news.

'Two men, with a mule, an it please your Excellency; and merchants I presume them to be.'

'Merchants? s'death, villain! pedlars, you mean. Heard ever man of English merchants tramping it on foot, with no more baggage than one mule can manage to carry? They must be beggarly Bohemians, or those whom the French people call Escossais.* The knaves! they shall pay with the pining of their paunches for the poverty of their purses.'

'Do not be too hasty, an please your Excellency,' quoth the squire; 'small budgets hold rich goods. But, rich or poor, they are our men, at least they have all the marks; the elder, well-sized and dark-visaged, may write fifty-and-five years, a beard somewhat grizzled; —the younger some two-and-twenty, taller than the first, and a well-favoured lad, with a smooth chin and light-brown moustaches.'

'Let them be admitted,' said the governor, turning back in order again to descend to the street, 'and bring them into the folter-kammer of the toll-house.'

So saying, he betook himself to the place appointed, which was an apartment in the large tower that protected the eastern gateway, in which were deposited the rack, with various other instruments of torture, which the cruel and rapacious governor was in the habit of applying to such prisoners from whom he was desirous of extorting either booty or information. He entered the apartment, which was dimly lighted, and had a lofty Gothic roof which could be but imperfectly seen, while nooses and cords hanging down from thence announced a fearful connection with various implements of rusted iron that hung round the walls, or lay scattered on the floor.

A faint stream of light, through one of the numerous and narrow slits, or shot-holes, with which the walls were garnished, fell directly upon the person and visage of a tall swarthy man, seated in what, but for the partial illumination, would have been an obscure corner of this evil-boding apartment. His features were regular, and even handsome, but of a character peculiarly stern and sinister. This person's dress was a cloak of scarlet; his head was bare, and surrounded by shaggy locks of black, which time had partly grizzled. He was busily employed in furbishing and burnishing a broad two-handed sword, of a peculiar shape, and considerably shorter than the weapons of that kind which we have described as used by the Swiss. He was so deeply engaged in his task,

* [Scotsmen.]

that he started as the heavy door opened with a jarring noise, and the sword, escaping from his hold, rolled on the stone floor with a heavy clash.

'Ha! Scharfgerichter,' said the knight, as he entered the folter-kammer, 'thou art preparing for thy duty?'

'It would ill become your Excellency's servant,' answered the man, in a harsh, deep tone, 'to be found idle. But the prisoner is not far off, as I can judge by the fall of my sword, which infallibly announces the presence of him who shall feel its edge.'

'The prisoners are at hand, Francis,' replied the governor; 'but thy omen has deceived thee for once. They are fellows for whom a good rope will suffice, and thy sword drinks only noble blood.'

'The worse for Francis Steinernherz,' replied the official in scarlet; 'I trusted that your Excellency, who have ever been a bountiful patron, should this day have made me noble.'

'Noble!' said the governor; 'thou art mad—thou noble! The common executioner!'

'And wherefore not, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach? I think the name of Francis Steinernherz *von* Blut-acker* will suit nobility, being fairly and legally won, as well as another. Nay, do not stare on me thus. If one of my profession shall do his grim office on nine men of noble birth, with the same weapon, and with a single blow to each patient, hath he not a right to his freedom from taxes, and his nobility by patent?'

'So says the law,' said Sir Archibald, after reflecting for a moment,—'but rather more in scorn than seriously, I should judge, since no one was ever known to claim the benefit of it.'

'The prouder boast for him,' said the functionary, 'that shall be the first to demand the honours due to a sharp sword and a clean stroke. I, Francis Steinernherz, will be the first noble of my profession, when I shall have despatched one more knight of the Empire.'

'Thou hast been ever in *my* service, hast thou not?' demanded De Hagenbach.

'Under what other master,' replied the executioner, 'could I have enjoyed such constant practice? I have executed your decrees on condemned sinners since I could swing a scourge, lift a crow-bar, or wield this trusty weapon; and who can say I ever failed of my first blow, or needed to deal a second? Tristrem of the Hospital, and his famous assistants, Petit André and Trois Eschelles,† are novices compared with me in the use of the noble and knightly sword. Marry, I should be ashamed to match myself with them in the field practice with bowstring and dagger; these are no feats worthy of a Christian man who would rise to honour and nobility.'

'Thou art a fellow of excellent address, and I do not deny it,' replied De Hagenbach. 'But it cannot be—I trust it cannot be—that when noble blood is becoming scarce in the land, and proud churls are lording it over knights and barons, I myself should have caused so much to be spilled?'

'I will number the patients to your Excellency by name and title,' said Francis, drawing out a scroll of parchment, and reading with a commentary as he went on,—'There was Count William of Elvershoe—he was my assay-piece, a sweet youth, and died most like a Christian.'

'I remember—he was indeed a most smart youth, and courted my mistress,' said Sir Archibald.

'He died on Saint Jude's in the year of grace 1455,' said the executioner.

'Go on — but name no dates,' said the governor.

'Sir Miles of Stockenborg' ——

'He drove off my cattle,' observed his Excellency.

'Sir Louis of Riesenfeldt'——continued the executioner.

'He made love to my wife,' commented the governor.

'The three Yung-herren of Lammerbourg—you made their father, the Count, childless in one day.'

'And he made me landless,' said Sir Archibald, 'so that account is settled.—Thou needest read no further,' he continued; 'I admit thy record, though it is written in letters somewhat of the reddest. I had counted these three young gentlemen as one execution.'

'You did me the greater wrong,' said Francis; 'they cost three good separate blows of this good sword.'

'Be it so, and God be with their souls,' said Hagenbach. 'But thy ambition must go to sleep for a while, Scharfgerichter, for the stuff that came hither to-day is for dungeon and cord, or perhaps a touch of the rack or strappado—there is no honour to win on them.'

'The worse luck mine,' said the executioner. 'I had dreamed so surely that your honour had made me noble;—and then the fall of my sword?'

'Take a bowl of wine, and forget your auguries.'

'With your honour's permission, no,' said the executioner; 'to drink before noon were to endanger the nicety of my hand.'

'Be silent, then, and mind your duty,' said De Hagenbach.

Francis took up his sheathless sword, wiped the dust reverently from it, and withdrew into a corner of the chamber, where he stood leaning with his hands on the pommel of the fatal weapon.

Almost immediately afterwards, Kilian entered at the head of five or six soldiers, conducting the two Philipsons, whose arms were tied down with cords.

'Approach me a chair,' said the governor, and took his place gravely beside a table, on which stood writing materials.

'Who are these men, Kilian, and wherefore are they bound?'

'So please your Excellency,' said Kilian, with a deep respect of manner which entirely differed from the tone, approaching to familiarity, with which he communicated with his master in private, 'we thought it well that these two

* [Englished—Francis Stony-heart of Blood-field. *Von* is the mark of a noble name.]

† [Three well-known characters who figure in Quentin Durward.]

strangers should not appear armed in your gracious presence; and when we required of them to surrender their weapons at the gate, as is the custom of the garrison, this young gallant must needs offer resistance. I admit he gave up his weapon at his father's command.'

'It is false!' exclaimed young Philipson; but his father making a sign to him to be silent, he obeyed instantly.

'Noble sir,' said the elder Philipson, 'we are strangers, and unacquainted with the rules of this citadel; we are Englishmen, and unaccustomed to submit to personal mishandling; we trust you will have excuse for us, when we found ourselves, without any explanation of the cause, rudely seized on by we knew not whom. My son, who is young and unthinking, did partly draw his weapon, but desisted at my command, without having altogether unsheathed his sword, far less made a blow. For myself, I am a merchant, accustomed to submit to the laws and customs of the countries in which I traffic; I am in the territories of the Duke of Burgundy, and I know his laws and customs must be just and equitable. He is the powerful and faithful ally of England, and I fear nothing while under his banner.'

'Hem! hem!' replied De Hagenbach, a little disconcerted by the Englishman's composure, and perhaps recollecting that, unless his passions were awakened (as in the case of the Swiss, whom he detested), Charles of Burgundy deserved the character of a just though severe prince—'Fair words are well, but hardly make amends for foul actions. You have drawn swords in riot, and opposition to the Duke's soldiers, when obeying the mandates which regulate their watch.'

'Surely, sir,' answered Philipson, 'this is a severe construction of a most natural action. But, in a word, if you are disposed to be rigorous, the simple action of drawing, or attempting to draw, a sword in a garrison town, is only punishable by a pecuniary fine, and such we must pay, if it be your will.'

'Now, here is a silly sheep,' said Kilian to the executioner, beside whom he had stationed himself, somewhat apart from the group, 'who voluntarily offers his own fleece to the clipper.'

'It will scarcely serve as a ransom for his throat, Sir Squire,' answered Francis Steinernherz; 'for look you, I dreamed last night that our master made me noble, and I knew by the fall of my sword that this is the man by whom I am to mount to gentility. I must this very day deal on him with my good sword.'

'Why, thou ambitious fool,' said the esquire, 'this is no noble, but an island pedlar—a mere English citizen.'

'Thou art deceived,' said the executioner, 'and hast never looked on men when they are about to die.'

'Have I not?' said the squire. 'Have I not looked on five pitched fields, besides skirmishes and ambuscades innumerable?'

'That tries not the courage,' said the Scharfgerichter. 'All men will fight when pitched against each other. So will the most paltry curs—so will the dunghill fowls. But he is brave and noble who can look on a scaffold and a block, a priest to give him absolution, and the headsman and good sword which is to mow him down in his strength, as he would look upon things indifferent; and such a man is that whom we now behold.'

'Yes,' answered Kilian, 'but that man looks not on such an apparatus—he only sees our illustrious patron, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach.'

'And he who looks upon Sir Archibald,' said the executioner, 'being, as yonder man assuredly is, a person of sense and apprehension, looks he not upon sword and headsman? Assuredly that prisoner apprehends as much, and being so composed as he is under such conviction, it shows him to be a nobleman by blood, or may I myself never win nobility!'

'Our master will come to compromise with him, I judge,' replied Kilian; 'he looks smilingly on him.'

'Never trust to me, then,' said the man in scarlet; 'there is a glance in Sir Archibald's eye which betokens blood, as surely as the dog-star bodes pestilence.'

While these dependents of Sir Archibald de Hagenbach were thus conversing apart, their master had engaged the prisoners in a long train of captious interrogatories concerning their business in Switzerland, their connection with the Landamman, and the cause of their travelling into Burgundy, to all which the senior Philipson gave direct and plain answers, excepting to the last. He was going, he said, into Burgundy for the purpose of his traffic,—his wares were at the disposal of the governor, who might detain all, or any part of them, as he might be disposed to make himself answerable to his master. But his business with the duke was of a private nature, respecting some particular matters of commerce, in which others as well as he himself were interested. To the duke alone, he declared, would he communicate the affair; and he pressed it strongly on the governor, that if he should sustain any damage in his own person or that of his son, the duke's severe displeasure would be the inevitable consequence.

De Hagenbach was evidently much embarrassed by the steady tone of his prisoner, and more than once held counsel with the bottle, his never-failing oracle in cases of extreme difficulty. Philipson had readily surrendered to the governor a list or invoice of his merchandise, which was of so inviting a character, that Sir Archibald absolutely gloated over it. After remaining in deep meditation for some time, he raised his head, and spoke thus:—

'You must be well aware, Sir Merchant, that it is the Duke's pleasure that no Swiss merchandise shall pass through his territories; and that, nevertheless, you have been, by your own account, some time in that country, and having also accompanied a body of men calling themselves Swiss deputies, I am authorized to believe that these valuable articles are rather the property of those persons, than of a single individual of so poor an appearance as yourself, and that, should I demand pecuniary satisfaction, three hundred pieces of gold would not be an extravagant fine for so bold a practice; and you might wander where you will with the rest of your wares, so you bring them not into Burgundy.'

'But it is to Burgundy, and to the Duke's presence, that I am expressly bound,' said the Englishman. 'If I go not thither, my journey is wrecked; and the Duke's displeasure is certain to light on those who may molest me. For I make your Excellency aware that your gracious prince already knows of my journey, and will make strict inquiry where and by whom I have been intercepted.'

Again the governor was silent, endeavouring to decide how he might best reconcile the gratification of his rapacity with precaution for his safety. After a few minutes' consideration he again addressed his prisoner.

'Thou art very positive in thy tale, my good friend; but my orders are equally so to exclude merchandise coming from Switzerland. What if I put thy mule and baggage under arrest?'

'I cannot withstand your power, my lord, to do what you will. I will in that case go to the Duke's footstool, and do my errand there.'

'Ay, and my errand also,' answered the governor. 'That is, thou wilt carry thy complaint to the Duke against the Governor of La Ferette, for executing his orders too strictly?'

'On my life and honest word,' answered the Englishman, 'I will make no complaint. Leave me but my ready money, without which I can hardly travel to the Duke's court, and I will look no more after these goods and wares than the stag looks after the antlers which he shed last year.'

Again the Governor of La Ferette looked doubtful, and shook his head.

'Men in such a case as yours,' he said, 'cannot be trusted; nor, to say truth, is it reasonable to expect they should be trustworthy.—These same wares, designed for the Duke's private hand, in what do they consist?'

'They are under seal,' replied the Englishman.

'They are of rare value, doubtless?' continued the governor.

'I cannot tell,' answered the elder Philipson; 'I know the Duke sets great store by them. But your Excellency knows that great princes sometimes place a high value on trifles.'

'Bear you them about you?' said the governor. 'Take heed how you answer—Look around you on these engines, which can bring a dumb man to speak, and consider I have the power to employ them!'

'And I the courage to support their worst infliction,' answered Philipson, with the same impenetrable coolness which he had maintained throughout the whole conference.

'Remember, also,' said Hagenbach, that I can have your person searched as thoroughly as your mails and budgets.'

'I do remember that I am wholly in thy power; and, that I may leave thee no excuse for employing force on a peaceful traveller, I will own to you,' said Philipson, 'that I have the Duke's packet in the bosom of my doublet.'

'Bring it forth,' answered the governor.

'My hands are tied, both in honour and literally,' said the Englishman.

'Pluck it from his bosom, Kilian,' said Sir Archibald; 'let us see this gear he talks of.'

'Could resistance avail,' replied the stout merchant, 'you should pluck forth my heart first. But I pray all who are present to observe that the seals are every one whole and unbroken at this moment when it is forcibly taken from my person.'

As he spoke thus, he looked around on the soldiers, whose presence De Hagenbach had perhaps forgotten.

'How, dog!' said Sir Archibald, giving way to his passion, 'would you stir up mutiny among my men-at-arms?—Kilian, let the soldiers wait without.'

So saying, he hastily placed under cover of his own robe the small but remarkably well-secured packet which Kilian had taken from the merchant's person. The soldiers withdrew, lingering, however, and looking back, like children brought away from a show before its final conclusion.

'So, fellow!' again began De Hagenbach, 'we are now more private. Wilt thou deal more on the level with me, and tell me what this packet is, and whence it comes?'

'Could all your garrison be crowded into this room, I can only answer as before.—The contents I do not precisely know—the person by whom it was sent I am determined not to name.'

'Perhaps your son,' said the governor, 'may be more compliant.'

'He cannot tell you that of which he is himself ignorant,' answered the merchant.

'Perchance the rack may make you both find your tongues;—and we will try it on the young fellow first, Kilian, since thou knowest we have seen men shrink from beholding the wrenched joints of their children, that would have committed their own old sinews to the stretching with much endurance.'

'You may make the trial,' said Arthur, 'and Heaven will give me strength to endure'——

'And me courage to behold,' added his father.

All this while the governor was turning and re-turning the little packet in his hand, curiously inspecting every fold, and regretting, doubtless, in secret, that a few patches of wax, placed under an envelope of crimson satin and ligatures of twisted silk cord, should prevent his eager eyes from ascertaining the nature of the treasure which he doubted not it concealed. At length he again called in the soldiers, and delivered up the two prisoners to their charge, commanding that they should be kept safely, and in separate holds, and that the father, in particular, should be most carefully looked after.

'I take you all here to witness,' exclaimed the elder Philipson, despising the menacing signs of De Hagenbach, 'that the Governor detains from me a packet, addressed to his most gracious lord and master, the Duke of Burgundy.'

De Hagenbach actually foamed at the mouth with passion.

'And should I *not* detain it?' he exclaimed, in a voice inarticulate with rage. 'May there not be some foul practice against the life of our most gracious sovereign, by poison or otherwise, in this suspicious packet, brought by a most suspicious bearer? Have we never heard of poisons which do their work by the smell? And shall we, who keep the gate, as I may say, of his Grace of Burgundy's dominions, give access to what may rob Europe of its pride of chivalry,

Burgundy of its prince, and Flanders of her father?—No! Away with these miscreants, soldiers—down to the lowest dungeons with them—keep them separate, and watch them carefully. This treasonable practice has been meditated with the connivance of Berne and Soleure.'

Thus Sir Archibald de Hagenbach raved, with a raised voice and inflamed countenance, lashing himself as it were into passion, until the steps of the soldiers, and the clash of their arms, as they retired with the prisoners, were no longer audible. His complexion, when these had ceased, waxed paler than was natural to him—his brow was furrowed with anxious wrinkles—and his voice became lower and more hesitating than ordinary, as, turning to his esquire, he said, 'Kilian, we stand upon a slippery plank, with a raging torrent beneath us—What is to be done?'

'Marry, to move forward with a resolved yet prudent step,' answered the crafty Kilian. 'It is unlucky that all these fellows should have seen the packet, and heard the appeal of yonder iron-nerved trader. But this ill luck has befallen us, and, the packet having been in your Excellency's hands, you will have all the credit of having broken the seals; for, though you leave them as entire as the moment they were impressed, it will only be supposed they have been ingeniously replaced. Let us see what are the contents, before we determine what is to be done with them. They must be of rare value, since the churl merchant was well contented to leave behind all his rich mule's load of merchandise, so that this precious packet might pass unexamined.'

'They may be papers on some political matter. Many such, and of high importance, pass secretly between Edward of England and our bold Duke.' Such was the reply of De Hagenbach.

'If they be papers of consequence to the Duke,' answered Kilian, 'we can forward them to Dijon.—Or they may be such as Louis of France would purchase with their weight of gold.'

'For shame, Kilian!' said the knight; 'wouldst thou have me betray my master's secrets to the King of France? Sooner would I lay my head on the block.'

'Indeed? And yet your Excellency hesitates not to'——

Here the squire stopped, apparently for fear of giving offence, by affixing a name too broad and intelligible to the practices of his patron.

'To plunder the Duke, thou wouldst say, thou impudent slave! And, saying so, thou wouldst be as dull as thou art wont to be,' answered De Hagenbach. 'I partake, indeed, in the plunder which the Duke takes from aliens; and reason good. Even so the hound and the hawk have their share of the quarry they bring down—ay, and the lion's share, too, unless the huntsman or falconer be all the nearer to them. Such are the perquisites of my rank; and the Duke, who placed me here for the gratification of his resentment and the bettering of my fortune, does not grudge them to a faithful servant. And indeed I may term myself, in so far as this territory of La Ferette extends, the Duke's full representative, or, as it may be termed, ALTER EGO—and, thereupon, I will open this packet, which, being addressed to him, is thereby equally addressed to me.'

Having thus in a manner talked himself up to an idea of his own high authority, he cut the strings of the packet, which he had all this while held in his hand, and, undoing the outer coverings, produced a very small case made of sandalwood.

'The contents,' he said, 'had need to be valuable, as they lie in so little compass.'

So saying, he pressed the spring, and the casket, opening, displayed a necklace of diamonds, distinguished by brilliancy and size, and apparently of extraordinary value. The eyes of the avaricious governor and his no less rapacious attendant were so dazzled with the unusual splendour, that for some time they could express nothing save joy and surprise.

'Ay, marry, sir,' said Kilian, 'the obstinate old knave had reasons for his hardihood. My own joints should have stood a strain or two ere I surrendered such sparklers as these.—And now, Sir Archibald, may your trusty follower ask you how this booty is to be divided between the Duke and his Governor, according to the most approved rules of garrison towns?'

'Faith, we will suppose the garrison stormed, Kilian; and in a storm, thou knowest, the first finder takes all—with due consideration always of his trusty followers.'

'As myself, for example,' said Kilian.

'Ay, and myself, for example,' answered a voice, which sounded like the echo of the esquire's words, from the remote corner of the ancient apartment.

''Sdeath! we are overheard,' exclaimed the governor, starting, and laying his hand on his dagger.

'Only by a faithful follower, as the worthy esquire observes,' said the executioner, moving slowly forward.

'Villain, how didst thou dare watch me?' said Sir Archibald de Hagenbach.

'Trouble not yourself for that, sir,' said Kilian. 'Honest Steinernherz has no tongue to speak, or ear to hear, save according to your pleasure. Indeed, we must shortly have taken him into our counsels, seeing these men must be dealt upon, and that speedily.'

'Indeed!' said De Hagenbach; 'I had thought they might be spared.'

'To tell the Duke of Burgundy how the Governor of La Ferette accounts to his treasurer for the duties and forfeitures at his custom-house?' demanded Kilian.

''Tis true,' said the knight; 'dead men have neither teeth nor tongue—they bite not, and they tell no tales. Thou wilt take order with them, Scharfgerichter.'

'I will, my lord,' answered the executioner, 'on condition that if this must be in the way of dungeon execution, which I call cellar practice, my privilege to claim nobility shall be saved and reserved to me, and the execution shall be declared to be as effectual to my claim as it might have been if the blow had been dealt in broad daylight, with my honourable blade of office.'

De Hagenbach stared at the executioner, as

not understanding what he meant; on which Kilian took occasion to explain that the Scharfgerichter was strongly impressed, from the free and dauntless conduct of the elder prisoner, that he was a man of noble blood, from whose decapitation he would himself derive all the advantages proposed to the headsman who should execute his function on nine men of illustrious extraction.

'He may be right,' said Sir Archibald, 'for here is a slip of parchment, commending the bearer of this carcanet to the Duke, desiring him to accept it as a true token from one well known to him, and to give the bearer full credence in all that he should say on the part of those by whom he is sent.'

'By whom is the note signed, if I may make bold to ask?' said Kilian.

'There is no name—the Duke must be supposed to collect that information from the gems, or perhaps the handwriting.'

'On neither of which he is likely to have a speedy opportunity of exercising his ingenuity,' said Kilian.

De Hagenbach looked at the diamonds, and smiled darkly. The Scharfgerichter, encouraged by the familiarity into which he had in a manner forced himself, returned to his plea, and insisted on the nobility of the supposed merchant. Such a trust, and such a letter of unlimited credence, could never, he contended, be entrusted to a man meanly born.*

'Thou art deceived, thou fool,' said the knight; 'kings now use the lowest tools to do their dearest offices. Louis has set the example of putting his barber and the valets of his chamber to do the work formerly entrusted to dukes and peers; and other monarchs begin to think that it is better, in choosing their agents for important affairs, to judge rather by the quality of men's brains than that of their blood. And as for the stately look and bold bearing which distinguish yonder fellow in the eyes of cravens like thee, it belongs to his country, not his rank. Thou thinkest it is in England as in Flanders, where a city-bred burgher of Ghent, Liége, or Ypres, is as distinct an animal from a knight of Hainault, as a Flanders waggon-horse from a Spanish jennet. But thou art deceived. England has many a merchant as haughty of heart and as prompt of hand as any noble-born son of her rich bosom. But be not dejected, thou foolish man; do thy business well on this merchant, and we shall presently have on our hands the Landamman of Unterwalden, who, though a churl by his choice, is yet a nobleman by blood, and shall, by his well-deserved death, aid thee to get rid of the peasant slough which thou art so weary of.'

'Were not your Excellency better adjourn these men's fate,' said Kilian, 'till you hear something of them from the Swiss prisoners whom we shall presently have in our power?'

'Be it as you will,' said Hagenbach, waving his hand, as if putting aside some disagreeable task. 'But let all be finished ere I hear of it again.'

* Louis XI. was probably the first king of France who flung aside all affectation of choosing his ministers from among the nobility. He often placed men of mean birth in situations of the highest trust.

The stern satellites bowed obedience, and the deadly conclave broke up; their chief carefully securing the valuable gems, which he was willing to purchase at the expense of treachery to the sovereign in whose employment he had enlisted himself, as well as the blood of two innocent men. Yet, with a weakness of mind not uncommon to great criminals, he shrank from the thoughts of his own baseness and cruelty, and endeavoured to banish the feeling of dishonour from his mind, by devolving the immediate execution of his villany upon his subordinate agents.

CHAPTER XV.

And this place our forefathers built for man!
OLD PLAY.

THE dungeon in which the younger Philipson was immured † was one of those gloomy caverns which cry shame on the inhumanity of our ancestors. They seem to have been almost insensible to the distinction betwixt innocence and guilt, as the consequences of mere accusation must have been far more severe in those days, than is in our own that species of imprisonment which is adjudged as an express punishment for crime.

The cell of Arthur Philipson was of considerable length, but dark and narrow, and dug out of the solid rock upon which the tower was founded. A small lamp was allowed him, not, however, without some grumbling, but his arms were still kept bound; and when he asked for a draught of water, one of the grim satellites, by whom he was thrust into this cell, answered surlily, that he might endure his thirst for all the time his life was likely to last—a gloomy response, which augured that his privations would continue as long as his life, yet neither be of long duration. By the dim lamp he had groped his way to a bench, or rough seat, cut in the rock; and, as his eyes got gradually accustomed to the obscurity of the region in which he was immured, he became aware of a ghastly cleft in the floor of his dungeon, somewhat resembling the opening of a draw-well, but irregular in its aperture, and apparently the mouth of a gulf of nature's conformation, slightly assisted by the labour of human art.

'Here, then, is my death-bed,' he said, 'and that gulf perhaps the grave which yawns for my remains! Nay, I have heard of prisoners being plunged into such horrid abysses while they were yet alive, to die at leisure, crushed with wounds, their groans unheard, and their fate unpitied!'

He approached his head to the dismal cavity, and heard, as at a great depth, the sound of a sullen, and, as it seemed, subterranean stream. The sunless waves appeared murmuring for their victim. Death is dreadful at all ages; but in the first springtide of youth, with all the feelings of enjoyment afloat and eager for gratification, to be snatched forcibly from the banquet to which the individual has but just sat down, is peculiarly

† Note B. German Dungeon.

appalling, even when the change comes in the ordinary course of nature. But to sit, like young Philipson, on the brink of the subterranean abyss, and ruminate in horrid doubt concerning the mode in which death was to be inflicted, was a situation which might break the spirit of the boldest; and the unfortunate captive was wholly unable to suppress the natural tears that flowed from his eyes in torrents, and which his bound arms did not permit him to wipe away. We have already noticed that, although a gallant young man in aught of danger which was to be faced and overcome by active exertion, the youth was strongly imaginative, and sensitive to a powerful extent to all those exaggerations which, in a situation of helpless uncertainty, fancy lends to distract the soul of him who must passively expect an approaching evil.

Yet the feelings of Arthur Philipson were not selfish. They reverted to his father, whose just and noble character was as much formed to attract veneration, as his unceasing paternal care and affection to excite love and gratitude. He, too, was in the hands of remorseless villains, who were determined to conceal robbery by secret murder—he, too, undaunted in so many dangers, resolute in so many encounters, lay bound and defenceless, exposed to the dagger of the meanest stabber. Arthur remembered, too, the giddy peak of the rock near Geierstein, and the grim vulture which claimed him as its prey. Here was no angel to burst through the mist, and marshal him on a path of safety—here the darkness was subterranean and eternal, saving when the captive should behold the knife of the ruffian flash against the lamp which lent him light to aim the fatal blow. This agony of mind lasted until the feelings of the unhappy prisoner arose to ecstasy. He started up, and struggled so hard to free himself of his bonds, that it seemed they should have fallen from him as from the arms of the mighty Nazarene. But the cords were of too firm a texture; and after a violent and unavailing struggle, in which the ligatures seemed to enter his flesh, the prisoner lost his balance, and, while the feeling thrilled through him that he was tumbling backward into the subterranean abyss, he fell to the ground with great force.

Fortunately he escaped the danger which in his agony he apprehended, but so narrowly, that his head struck against the low and broken fence with which the mouth of the horrible pit was partly surrounded. Here he lay stunned and motionless, and, as the lamp was extinguished in his fall, immersed in absolute and total darkness. He was recalled to sensation by a jarring noise.

'They come — they come — the murderers! O Lady of Mercy! and O gracious Heaven, forgive my transgressions!'

He looked up, and observed, with dazzled eyes, that a dark form approached him, with a knife in one hand and a torch in the other. He might well have seemed the man who was to do the last deed upon the unhappy prisoner, if he had come alone. But he came not alone—his torch gleamed upon the white dress of a female, which was so much illuminated by it, that Arthur could discover a form, and had even a glimpse of features, never to be forgotten, though now seen under circumstances least of all to be expected. The prisoner's unutterable astonishment impressed him with a degree of awe which overcame even his personal fear—'Can these things be?' was his muttered reflection; 'has she really the power of an elementary spirit? has she conjured up this earthlike and dark demon to concur with her in my deliverance?'

It appeared as if his guess were real; for the figure in black, giving the light to Anne of Geierstein, or at least the form which bore her perfect resemblance, stooped over the prisoner, and cut the cord that bound his arms with so much despatch, that it seemed as if it fell from his person at a touch. Arthur's first attempt to arise was unsuccessful, and a second time it was the hand of Anne of Geierstein—a living hand, sensible to touch as to sight—which aided to raise and to support him, as it had formerly done when the tormented waters of the river thundered at their feet. Her touch produced an effect far beyond that of the slight personal aid which the maiden's strength could have rendered. Courage was restored to his heart, vigour and animation to his benumbed and bruised limbs; such influence does the human mind, when excited to energy, possess over the infirmities of the human body. He was about to address Anne in accents of the deepest gratitude. But the accents died away on his tongue, when the mysterious female, laying her finger on her lips, made him a sign to be silent, and at the same time beckoned him to follow her. He obeyed in silent amazement. They passed the entrance of the melancholy dungeon, and through one or two short but intricate passages, which, cut out of the rock in some places, and built in others with hewn stone of the same kind, probably led to holds similar to that in which Arthur was so lately a captive.

The recollection that his father might be immured in some such horrid cell as he himself had just quitted, induced Arthur to pause as they reached the bottom of a small winding staircase, which conducted apparently from this region of the building.

'Come,' he said, 'dearest Anne, lead me to his deliverance! I must not leave my father.'

She shook her head impatiently, and beckoned him on.

'If your power extends not to save my father's life, I will remain and save him or die—Anne, dearest Anne'——

She answered not, but her companion replied, in a deep voice, not unsuitable to his appearance, 'Speak, young man, to those who are permitted to answer you; or rather, be silent, and listen to my instructions, which direct to the only course which can bring thy father to freedom and safety.'

They ascended the stair, Anne of Geierstein going first; while Arthur, who followed close behind, could not help thinking that her form gave existence to a part of the light which her garment reflected from the torch. This was probably the effect of the superstitious belief impressed on his mind by Rudolph's tale respecting her mother, and which was confirmed

by her sudden appearance in a place and situation where she was so little to have been expected. He had not much time, however, to speculate upon her appearance or demeanour, for, mounting the stair with a lighter pace than he was able at the time to follow closely, she was no longer to be seen when he reached the landing-place. But whether she had melted into the air, or turned aside into some other passage, he was not permitted a moment's leisure to examine.

'Here lies your way,' said his sable guide; and at the same time dashing out the light, and seizing Philipson by the arm, he led him along a dark gallery of considerable length. The young man was not without some momentary misgivings while he recollected the ominous looks of his conductor, and that he was armed with a dagger, or knife, which he could plunge of a sudden into his bosom. But he could not bring himself to dread treachery from any one whom he had seen in company with Anne of Geierstein; and in his heart he demanded her pardon for the fear which had flashed across him, and resigned himself to the guidance of his companion, who advanced with hasty but light footsteps, and cautioned him by a whisper to do the same.

'Our journey,' he at length said, 'ends here.'

As he spoke, a door gave way and admitted them into a gloomy Gothic apartment, furnished with large oaken presses, apparently filled with books and manuscripts. As Arthur looked round, with eyes dazzled with the sudden gleam of daylight from which he had been for some time excluded, the door by which they had entered disappeared. This, however, did not greatly surprise him, who judged that, being formed in appearance to correspond with the presses around the entrance which they had used, it could not when shut be distinguished from them; a device sometimes then practised, as indeed it often is at the present day. He had now a full view of his deliverer, who, when seen by daylight, showed only the vestments and features of a clergyman, without any of that expression of supernatural horror which the partial light and the melancholy appearance of all in the dungeon had combined to impress on him.

Young Philipson once more breathed with freedom, as one awakened from a hideous dream; and, the supernatural qualities with which his imagination had invested Anne of Geierstein having begun to vanish, he addressed his deliverer thus:—'That I may testify my thanks, holy father, where they are so especially due, let me inquire of you if Anne of Geierstein'——

'Speak of that which pertains to your house and family,' answered the priest, as briefly as before. 'Hast thou so soon forgot thy father's danger?'

'By Heavens, no!' replied the youth; 'tell me but how to act for his deliverance, and thou shalt see how a son can fight for a parent!'

'It is well, for it is needful,' said the priest. 'Don thou this vestment and follow me.'

The vestment presented was the gown and hood of a novice.

'Draw the cowl over thy face,' said the priest, 'and return no answer to any man who meets thee. I will say thou art under a vow.—May Heaven forgive the unworthy tyrant who imposes on us the necessity of such profane dissimulation! Follow me close and near—beware that you speak not.'

The business of disguise was soon accomplished, and the Priest of Saint Paul's, for such he was, moving on, Arthur followed him a pace or two behind, assuming as well as he could the modest step and humble demeanour of a spiritual novice. On leaving the library, or study, and descending a short stair, he found himself in the street of Breisach. Irresistibly tempted to look back, he had only time, however, to see that the house he had left was a very small building of a Gothic character, on the one side of which rose the Church of Saint Paul's, and on the other the stern black gate-house or entrance-tower.

'Follow me, Melchior,' said the deep voice of the priest; and his keen eyes were at the same time fixed upon the supposed novice, with a look which instantly recalled Arthur to a sense of his situation.

They passed along, nobody noticing them, unless to greet the priest with a silent obeisance, or muttered phrase of salutation, until, having nearly gained the middle of the village, the guide turned abruptly off from the street, and, moving northward by a short lane, reached a flight of steps, which, as usual in fortified towns, led to the banquette, or walk behind the parapet, which was of the old Gothic fashion, flanked with towers from space to space, of different forms and various heights at different angles.

There were sentinels on the walls; but the watch, as it seemed, was kept not by regular soldiers, but by burghers, with spears or swords in their hands. The first whom they passed said to the priest, in a half-whispered tone, 'Holds our purpose?'

'It holds,' replied the Priest of Saint Paul's—'Benedicite!'

'*Deo Gratias!*' replied the armed citizen, and continued his walk upon the battlements.

The other sentinels seemed to avoid them; for they disappeared when they came near, or passed them without looking, or seeming to observe them. At last their walk brought them to an ancient turret, which raised its head above the wall, and in which there was a small door opening from the battlement. It was in a corner, distinct from and uncommanded by any of the angles of the fortification. In a well-guarded fortress, such a point ought to have had a sentinel for its special protection, but no one was there upon duty.

'Now mark me,' said the priest, 'for your father's life, and, it may be, that of many a man besides, depends upon your attention, and no less upon your despatch.—You can run?—You can leap?'

'I feel no weariness, father, since you freed me,' answered Arthur; 'and the dun deer that I have often chased shall not beat me in such a wager.'

'Observe, then,' replied the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, 'this turret contains a staircase which descends to a small sallyport. I will give you entrance to it—The sallyport is barred

on the inside, but not locked. It will give you access to the moat, which is almost entirely dry. On crossing it, you will find yourself in the circuit of the outer barriers. You may see sentinels, but they will not see you—speak not to them, but make your way over the palisade as you can. I trust you can climb over an undefended rampart?'

'I have surmounted a defended one,' said Arthur. 'What is my next charge?—All this is easy.'

'You will see a species of thicket, or stretch of low bushes—make for it with all speed. When you are there, turn to the eastward; but beware, while holding that course, that you are not seen by the Burgundian Free Companions, who are on watch on that part of the walls. A volley of arrows, and the sally of a body of cavalry in pursuit, will be the consequence, if they get sight of you; and their eyes are those of the eagle, that spy the carnage afar off.'

'I will be heedful,' said the young Englishman.

'You will find,' continued the priest, 'upon the outer side of the thicket a path, or rather a sheep-track, which, sweeping at some distance from the walls, will conduct you at last into the road leading from Breisach to Bâle. Hasten forward to meet the Swiss who are advancing. Tell them your father's hours are counted, and that they must press on if they would save him; and say to Rudolph Donnerhugel, in especial, that the Black Priest of Saint Paul's waits to bestow upon him his blessing at the northern sallyport. Dost thou understand me?'

'Perfectly,' answered the young man.

The Priest of Saint Paul's then pushed open the low-browed gate of the turret, and Arthur was about to precipitate himself down the stair which opened before him.

'Stay yet a moment,' said the priest, 'and doff the novice's habit, which can only encumber thee.'

Arthur in a trice threw it from him, and was again about to start.

'Stay yet a moment longer,' continued the Black Priest. 'This gown may be a tell-tale—Stay, therefore, and help me to pull off my upper garment.'

Inwardly glowing with impatience, Arthur yet saw the necessity of obeying his guide; and when he had pulled the long and loose upper vestment from the old man, he stood before him in a cassock of black serge, befitting his order and profession, but begirt, not with a suitable sash such as clergymen wear, but with a most uncanonical buff-belt, supporting a short two-edged sword, calculated alike to stab and to smite.

'Give me now the novice's habit,' said the venerable father, 'and over that I will put the priestly vestment. Since for the present I have some tokens of the laity about me, it is fitting it should be covered with a double portion of the clerical habit.'

As he spoke thus he smiled grimly; and his smile had something more frightful and withering than the stern frown, which suited better with his features, and was their usual expression.

'And now,' said he, 'what does the fool tarry for, when life and death are in his speed?'

The young messenger waited not a second hint, but at once descended the stairs, as if it had been by a single step, found the portal, as the priest had said, only secured by bars on the inside, offering little resistance save from their rusted state, which made it difficult to draw them. Arthur succeeded, however, and found himself at the side of the moat, which presented a green and marshy appearance. Without stopping to examine whether it was deep or shallow, and almost without being sensible of the tenacity of the morass, the young Englishman forced his way through it, and attained the opposite side, without attracting the attention of two worthy burghers of Breisach who were the guardians of the barriers. One of them, indeed, was deeply employed in the perusal of some profane chronicle or religious legend; the other was as anxiously engaged in examining the margin of the moat, in search of eels, perhaps, or frogs, for he wore over his shoulder a scrip for securing some such amphibious booty.

Seeing that, as the priest foretold, he had nothing to apprehend from the vigilance of the sentinels, Arthur dashed at the palisade, in hope to catch hold of the top of the stockade, and so to clear it by one bold leap. He overrated his powers of activity, however, or they were diminished by his recent bonds and imprisonment. He fell lightly backward on the ground, and, as he got to his feet, became aware of the presence of a soldier, in yellow and blue, the livery of De Hagenbach, who came running towards him, crying to the slothful and unobservant sentinels, 'Alarm!—alarm!—you lazy swine! Stop the dog, or you are both dead men.'

The fisherman, who was on the farther side, laid down his eel-spear, drew his sword, and, flourishing it over his head, advanced towards Philipson with very moderate haste. The student was yet more unfortunate, for, in his hurry to fold up his book and attend to his duty, he contrived to throw himself (inadvertently, doubtless) full in the soldier's way. The latter, who was running at top speed, encountered the burgher with a severe shock, which threw both down; but the citizen, being a solid and substantial man, lay still where he fell, while the other, less weighty, and probably less prepared for the collision, lost his balance and the command of his limbs at once, and, rolling over the edge of the moat, was immersed in the mud and marsh. The fisher and the student went with deliberate speed to assist the unexpected and unwelcome partner of their watch; while Arthur, stimulated by the imminent sense of danger, sprung at the barrier with more address and vigour than before, and, succeeding in his leap, made, as he had been directed, with his utmost speed for the covert of the adjacent bushes. He reached them without hearing any alarm from the walls. But he was conscious that his situation had become extremely precarious, since his escape from the town was known to one man at least, who would not fail to give the alarm in case he was able to extricate himself from the marsh,—a feat, however, in which it seemed to Arthur that the armed citizens were likely to prove rather his apparent than actual assistants. While such thoughts shot across his mind, they served to augment

his natural speed of foot, so that, in less space than could have been thought possible, he reached the thinner extremity of the thicket, whence, as intimated by the Black Priest, he could see the eastern tower and the adjoining battlements of the town,—

With hostile faces throng'd, and fiery arms.

It required, at the same time, some address on the part of the fugitive to keep so much under shelter as to prevent himself from being seen in his turn by those whom he saw so plainly. He therefore expected every moment to hear a bugle wind, or to behold that bustle and commotion among the defenders which might prognosticate a sally. Neither, however, took place; and heedfully observing the footpath, or track, which the priest had pointed out to him, young Philipson wheeled his course out of sight of the guarded towers, and soon falling into the public and frequented road, by which his father and he had approached the town in the morning, he had the happiness, by the dust and flash of arms, to see a small body of armed men advancing towards Breisach, whom he justly concluded to be the van of the Swiss deputation.

He soon met the party, which consisted of about ten men, with Rudolph Donnerhugel at their head. The figure of Philipson, covered with mud, and in some places stained with blood (for his fall in the dungeon had cost him a slight wound), attracted the wonder of every one, who crowded around to hear the news. Rudolph alone appeared unmoved. Like the visage on the ancient statues of Hercules, the physiognomy of the bulky Bernese was large and massive, having an air of indifferent and almost sullen composure, which did not change but in moments of the fiercest agitation.

He listened without emotion to the breathless tale of Arthur Philipson, that his father was in prison, and adjudged to death.

'And what else did you expect?' said the Bernese coldly. 'Were you not warned? It had been easy to have foreseen the misfortune, but it may be impossible to prevent it.'

'I own—I own,' said Arthur, wringing his hands, 'that you were wise, and that we were foolish.—But O, do not think of our folly in the moment of our extremity! Be the gallant and generous champion which your Cantons proclaim you—give us your aid in this deadly strait!'

'But how, or in what manner?' said Rudolph, still hesitating. 'We have dismissed the Bâlese, who were willing to have given assistance, so much did your dutiful example weigh with us. We are now scarce above a score of men—how can you ask us to attack a garrison town, secured by fortifications, and where there are six times our number?'

'You have friends within the fortifications,' replied Arthur—'I am sure you have. Hark in your ear—The Black Priest sent to you—to you, Rudolph Donnerhugel of Berne—that he waits to give you his blessing at the northern sallyport.'

'Ay, doubtless,' said Rudolph, shaking himself free of Arthur's attempt to engage him in private conference, and speaking so that all around might hear him, 'there is little doubt on't; I will find a priest at the northern sallyport to confess and absolve me, and a block, axe, and headsman to strike my throat asunder when he has done. But I will scarce put the neck of my father's son into such risk. If they assassinate an English pedlar, who has never offended them, what will they do with the Bear of Berne, whose fangs and talons Archibald de Hagenbach has felt ere now?'

Young Philipson at these words clasped his hands together and held them up to heaven, as one who abandons hope, excepting from thence. The tears started to his eyes, and, clenching his hands and setting his teeth, he turned his back abruptly upon the Swiss.

'What means this passion?' said Rudolph. 'Whither would you now?'

'To rescue my father, or perish with him,' said Arthur; and was about to run wildly back to La Ferette, when a strong but kindly grasp detained him.

'Tarry a little till I tie my garter,' said Sigismund Biederman, 'and I will go with you, King Arthur.'

'You, oaf?' exclaimed Rudolph, 'you—and without orders?'

'Why, look you, Cousin Rudolph,' said the youth, continuing, with great composure, to fasten his garter, which, after the fashion of the time, was somewhat intricately secured—'you are always telling us that we are Swiss and freemen; and what is the advantage of being a freeman, if one is not at liberty to do what he has a mind? You are my Hauptman, look you, so long as it pleases me, and no longer.'

'And why shouldst thou desert me now, thou fool? Why at this minute, of all other minutes in the year?' demanded the Bernese.

'Look you,' replied the insubordinate follower, 'I have hunted with Arthur for this month past, and I love him—he never called me fool or idiot, because my thoughts came slower, may be, and something duller, than those of other folk. And I love his father—the old man gave me this baldric and this horn, which I warrant cost many a kreutzer. He told me, too, not to be discouraged, for that it was better to think justly than to think fast, and that I had sense enough for the one if not for the other. And the kind old man is now in Hagenbach's butcher-shambles!—But we will free him, Arthur, if two men may. Thou shalt see me fight, while steel blade and ashen shaft will hold together.'

So saying, he shook in the air his enormous partisan, which quivered in his grasp like a slip of willow. Indeed, if Iniquity was to be struck down like an ox, there was not one in that chosen band more likely to perform the feat than Sigismund; for though somewhat shorter in stature than his brethren, and of a less animated spirit, yet his breadth of shoulders and strength of muscles were enormous, and if thoroughly aroused and disposed for the contest, which was very rarely the case, perhaps Rudolph himself might, as far as sheer force went, have had difficulty in matching him.

Truth of sentiment and energy of expression always produce an effect on natural and generous characters. Several of the youths around began

to exclaim that Sigismund said well; that if the old man had put himself in danger, it was because he thought more of the success of their negotiation than of his own safety, and had taken himself from under their protection, rather than involve them in quarrels on his account. 'We are the more bound,' they said, 'to see him unscathed; and we will do so.'

'Peace, all you wiseacres!' said Rudolph, looking round with an air of superiority; 'and you, Arthur of England, pass on to the Landamman, who is close behind; you know he is our chief commander, he is no less your father's sincere friend, and whatever he may determine in your father's favour, you will find most ready executors of his pleasure in all of us.'

His companions appeared to concur in this advice, and young Philipson saw that his own compliance with the recommendation was indispensable. Indeed, although he still suspected that the Bernese, by his various intrigues, as well with the Swiss youth as with those of Bâle, and, as might be inferred from the Priest of Saint Paul's, by communication even within the town of La Ferette, possessed the greater power of assisting him at such a conjuncture; yet he trusted far more in the simple candour and perfect faith of Arnold Biederman, and pressed forward to tell to him his mournful tale, and crave his assistance.

From the top of a bank, which he reached in a few minutes after he parted from Rudolph and the advanced guard, he saw beneath him the venerable Landamman and his associates, accompanied by a few of the youths, who no longer were dispersed upon the flanks of the party, but attended on them closely and in military array, as men prepared to repel any sudden attack.

Behind came a mule or two with baggage, together with the animals which, in the ordinary course of their march, supported Anne of Geierstein and her attendant. Both were occupied by female figures as usual, and, to the best of Arthur's ken, the foremost had the well-known dress of Anne, from the grey mantle to a small heron's plume, which, since entering Germany, she had worn in compliance with the custom of the country, and in evidence of her rank as a maiden of birth and distinction. Yet if the youth's eyes brought him true tidings at present, what was the character of their former information, when, scarce more than half-an-hour since, they had beheld, in the subterranean dungeon of Breisach, the same form which they now rested upon, in circumstances so very different! The feeling excited by this thought was powerful, but it was momentary, like the lightning which blazes through a midnight sky, which is but just seen ere it vanishes into darkness. Or rather, the wonder excited by this marvellous incident only maintained its ground in his thoughts. by allying itself with the anxiety for his father's safety, which was their predominant occupation.

'If there be indeed a spirit,' he said, 'which wears that beautiful form, it must be beneficent as well as lovely, and will extend to my far more deserving father the protection which his son has twice experienced.'

But ere he had time to prosecute such a thought further, he had met the Landamman and his party. Here his appearance and his condition excited the same surprise as they had formerly occasioned to Rudolph and the vanguard. To the repeated interrogatories of the Landamman, he gave a brief account of his own imprisonment, and of his escape, of which he suffered the whole glory to rest with the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, without mentioning one word of the more interesting female apparition by which he had been attended and assisted in his charitable task. On another point also Arthur was silent. He saw no propriety in communicating to Arnold Biederman the message which the priest had addressed to Rudolph's ear alone. Whether good should come of it or no, he held sacred the obligation of silence imposed upon him by a man from whom he had just received the most important assistance.

The Landamman was struck dumb for a moment with sorrow and surprise at the news which he heard. The elder Philipson had gained his respect, as well by the purity and steadiness of the principles which he expressed, as by the extent and depth of his information, which was peculiarly valuable and interesting to the Switzer, who felt his admirable judgment considerably fettered for want of that knowledge of countries, times, and manners with which his English friend often supplied him.

'Let us press forward,' he said to the Banneret of Berne and the other deputies; 'let us offer our mediation betwixt the tyrant De Hagenbach and our friend, whose life is in danger. He must listen to us, for I know his master expects to see this Philipson at his court. The old man hinted to me so much. As we are possessed of such a secret, Archibald de Hagenbach will not dare to brave our vengeance, since we might easily send to Duke Charles information how the Governor of La Ferette abuses his power, in matters where not only the Swiss, but where the Duke himself is concerned.'

'Under your reverend favour, my worthy sir,' answered the Banneret of Berne, 'we are Swiss deputies, and go to represent the injuries of Switzerland alone. If we embroil ourselves with the quarrels of strangers, we shall find it more difficult to settle advantageously those of our own country; and if the Duke should, by this villany done upon English merchants, bring upon him the resentment of the English monarch, such breach will only render it more a matter of peremptory necessity for him to make a treaty advantageous to the Swiss Cantons.'

There was so much worldly policy in this advice, that Adam Zimmerman of Soleure instantly expressed his assent, with the additional argument, that their brother Biederman had told them, scarce two hours before, how these English merchants had, by his advice and their own free desire, parted company with them that morning, on purpose that they might not involve the deputies in the quarrels which might be raised by the governor's exactions on his merchandise.

'Now what advantage,' he said, 'shall we derive from this same parting of company, supposing, as my brother seems to urge, we are still to consider this Englishman's interest as if

he were our fellow-traveller, and under our especial protection?'

This personal reasoning pinched the Landamman somewhat closely, for he had but a short while before descanted on the generosity of the elder Philipson, who had freely exposed himself to danger, rather than that he should embarrass their negotiation by remaining one of their company; and it completely shook the fealty of the white-bearded Nicholas Bonstetten, whose eyes wandered from the face of Zimmerman, which expressed triumphant confidence in his argument, to that of his friend the Landamman, which was rather more embarrassed than usual.

'Brethren,' said Arnold at length, with firmness and animation, 'I erred in priding myself upon the worldly policy which I taught to you this morning. This man is not of our country, doubtless, but he is of our blood—a copy of the common Creator's image—and the more worthy of being called so, as he is a man of integrity and worth. We might not, without grievous sin, pass such a person, being in danger, without affording him relief, even if he lay accidentally by the side of our path; much less should we abandon him if the danger has been incurred in our own cause, and that we might escape the net in which he is himself caught. Be not, therefore, downcast—We do God's will in succouring an oppressed man. If we succeed by mild means, as I trust we shall, we do a good action at a cheap rate;—if not, God can assert the cause of humanity by the hands of a few as well as of many.'

'If such is your opinion,' said the Bannerman of Berne, 'not a man here will shrink from you. For me, I pleaded against my own inclinations when I advised you to avoid a breach with the Burgundian. But as a soldier, I must needs say, I would rather fight the garrison, were they double the number they talk of, in a fair field, than undertake to storm their defences.'

'Nay,' said the Landamman, 'I sincerely hope we shall both enter and depart from the town of Breisach without deviating from the pacific character with which our mission from the Diet invests us.'

CHAPTER XVI.

For Somerset, off with his guilty head.
THIRD PART OF HENRY VI.

THE Governor of La Ferette stood on the battlements of the eastern entrance-tower of his fortress, and looked out on the road to Bâle, when first the vanguard of the Swiss mission, then the centre and rear, appeared in the distance. At the same moment, the van halting, the main body closed with it, while the females and baggage, and mules in the rear, moved in their turn up to the main body, and the whole were united in one group.

A messenger then stepped forth, and winded one of those tremendous horns, the spoils of the wild bulls, so numerous in the Canton of Uri, that they are supposed to have given rise to its name.

'They demand admittance,' said the esquire.

'They shall have it,' answered Sir Archibald de Hagenbach. 'Marry, how they may pass out again is another and a deeper question.'

'Think yet a moment, noble sir,' continued the esquire. 'Bethink you, these Switzers are very fiends in fight, and have, besides, no booty to repay the conquest—some paltry chains of good copper, perchance, or adulterated silver. You have knocked out the marrow—do not damage your teeth by trying to grind the bone.'

'Thou art a fool, Kilian,' answered De Hagenbach, 'and it may be a coward besides. The approach of some score, or at most some score and a half of Swiss partisans, makes thee draw in thy horns like a snail at a child's finger! Mine are strong and inflexible as those of the urus, of whom they talk so much, and on which they blow so boldly. Keep in mind, thou timid creature, that if the Swiss deputies, as they presume to call themselves, are permitted to pass free, they carry to the Duke stories of merchants bound to his court, and fraught with precious commodities, specially addressed to his Grace! Charles has then at once to endure the presence of the ambassadors, whom he contemns and hates, and learns by them that the Governor of La Ferette, permitting such to pass, has nevertheless presumed to stop those whom he would full gladly see; for what prince would not blithely welcome such a casket as that which we have taken from yonder strolling English pedlar?'

'I see not how the assault on these ambassadors will mend your Excellency's plea for despoiling the Englishmen,' said Kilian.

'Because thou art a blind mole, Kilian,' answered his chief. 'If Burgundy hears of a ruffle between my garrison and the mountain churls, whom he scorns and yet hates, it will drown all notice of the two pedlars who have perished in the fray. If after-inquiry should come, an hour's ride transports me with my confidants into the Imperial dominions, where, though the Emperor be a spiritless fool, the rich prize I have found on these islanders will insure me a good reception.'

'I will stick by your Excellency to the last,' returned the esquire; 'and you shall yourself witness that, if a fool, I am at least no coward.'

'I never thought thee such when it came to hand-blows,' said De Hagenbach; 'but in policy thou art timid and irresolute. Hand me mine armour, Kilian, and beware thou brace it well. The Swiss pikes and swords are no wasp-stings.'

'May your Excellency wear it with honour and profit,' said Kilian; and, according to the duty of his office, he buckled upon his principal the complete panoply of a knight of the Empire. 'Your purpose of assaulting the Swiss then holds firm?' said Kilian. 'But what pretext will your Excellency assign?'

'Let me alone,' said Archibald de Hagenbach, 'to take one, or to make one. Do you only have Schonfeldt and the soldiers on their stations. And remember the words are—"Burgundy to the Rescue." When these words are first spoken, let the soldiers show themselves—when repeated, let them fall on. And now that I am accoutred, away to the churls and admit them.'

Kilian bowed, and withdrew.

The bugle of the Switzers had repeatedly emitted its angry roar, exasperated by the delay of nearly half-an-hour without an answer from the guarded gate of Breisach; and every blast declared, by the prolonged echoes which it awakened, the increased impatience of those who summoned the town. At length the portcullis arose, the gate opened, the drawbridge fell, and Kilian, in the equipage of a man-at-arms arrayed for fight, rode forth on an ambling palfrey.

'What bold men are ye, sirs, who are here in arms before the fortress of Breisach, appertaining in right and seignorie to the thrice noble Duke of Burgundy and Lorraine, and garrisoned for his cause and interest by the excellent Sir Archibald, Lord of Hagenbach, Knight of the most Holy Roman Empire?'

'So please you, Sir Esquire,' said the Landamman, 'for such I conjecture you to be by the feather in your bonnet, we are here with no hostile intentions; though armed, as you see, to defend us in a perilous journey, where we are something unsafe by day, and cannot always repose by night in places of security. But our arms have no offensive purpose; if they had such, our numbers had not been so few as you see them.'

'What then is your character and purpose?' said Kilian, who had learned to use, in his master's absence, the lordly and insolent tone of the governor himself.

'We are delegates,' answered the Landamman, in a calm and even tone of voice, without appearing to take offence at, or to observe, the insolent demeanour of the esquire, 'from the Free and Confederated Cantons of the Swiss States and Provinces, and from the good town of Soleure, who are accredited from our Diet of Legislature to travel to the presence of his Grace the Duke of Burgundy, on an errand of high importance to both countries, and with a hope of establishing with your master's lord—I mean with the noble Duke of Burgundy—a sure and steadfast peace, upon such terms as shall be to the mutual honour and advantage of both countries, and to avert disputes and the effusion of Christian blood, which may otherwise be shed for want of timely and good understanding.'

'Show me your letters of credence,' said the esquire.

'Under your forgiveness, Sir Esquire,' replied the Landamman, 'it will be time enough to exhibit these when we are admitted to the presence of your master the governor.'

'That is as much as to say, wilful will to it. It is well, my masters; and yet you may take this advice from Kilian of Kersberg. It is sometimes better to reel backwards than to run forwards.—My master, and my master's master, are more ticklish persons than the dealers of Bâle, to whom you sell your cheeses. Home, honest men, home! your way lies before you, and you are fairly warned.'

'We thank thee for thy counsel,' said the Landamman, interrupting the Banneret of Berne, who had commenced an angry reply, 'supposing it kindly meant; if not, an uncivil jest is like an overcharged gun, which recoils on the cannonier. Our road lies onward through Breisach, and onward we propose to go, and take such hap as that which we may find before us.'

'Go onward, then, in the devil's name,' said the squire, who had entertained some hope of deterring them from pursuing their journey, but found himself effectually foiled.

The Switzers entered the town, and, stopped by the barricade of cars which the governor had formed across the street, at about twenty yards from the gate, they drew themselves up in military order, with their little body formed into three lines, the two females and the fathers of the deputation being in the centre. The little phalanx presented a double front, one to each side of the street, while the centre line faced so as to move forward, and only waited for the removal of the barricade in order to do so. But while they stood thus inactive, a knight in complete armour appeared from a side door of the great tower, under the arch of which they had entered into the town. His visor was raised, and he walked along the front of the little line formed by the Swiss, with a stern and frowning aspect.

'Who are you,' he said, 'who have thus far intruded yourselves in arms into a Burgundian garrison?'

'With your Excellency's leave,' said the Landamman, 'we are men who come on a peaceful errand, though we carry arms for our own defence. Deputies we are from the towns of Berne and Soleure, the Cantons of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwalden, come to adjust matters of importance with the gracious Duke of Burgundy and Lorraine.'

'What towns, what cantons?' said the Governor of La Ferette. 'I have heard no such names among the Free Cities of Germany.—Berne, truly! when became Berne a Free State?'

'Since the twenty-first day of June,' said Arnold Biederman, 'in the year of grace one thousand three hundred and thirty-nine, on which day the battle of Laupen was fought.'

'Away, vain old man,' said the knight; 'thinkest thou that such idle boasts can avail thee here? We have heard, indeed, of some insurgent villages and communities among the Alps, and how they rebelled against the Emperor, and, by the advantage of fastnesses, ambuscades, and lurking-places, how they have murdered some knights and gentlemen sent against them by the Duke of Austria; but we little thought that such paltry townships and insignificant bands of mutineers had the insolence to term themselves Free States, and propose to enter into negotiation as such with a mighty prince like Charles of Burgundy.'

'May it please your Excellency,' replied the Landamman, with perfect temper, 'your own laws of chivalry declare that if the stronger wrong the weaker, or the noble does injury to the less gentle, the very act levels distinctions between them, and the doer of an injury becomes bound to give condign satisfaction, of such kind as the wronged party shall demand.'

'Hence to thy hills, churl!' exclaimed the haughty knight; 'there comb thy beard and roast thy chestnuts. What! because a few rats and mice find retreat among the walls and wain-

scoting of our dwelling-houses, shall we therefore allow them to intrude their disgusting presence and their airs of freedom and independence into our personal presence? No, we will rather crush them beneath the heel of our ironshod boots.'

'We are not men to be trodden on,' said Arnold Biederman calmly; 'those who have attempted it have found us stumbling-blocks. Lay, Sir Knight, lay aside for an instant this haughty language, which can only lead to warfare, and listen to the words of peace. Dismiss our comrade, the English merchant Philipson, on whom you have this morning laid unlawful hands; let him pay a moderate sum for his ransom, and we, who are bound instantly to the Duke's presence, will bear a fair report to him of his Governor of La Ferette.'

'You will be so generous, will you!' said Sir Archibald, in a tone of ridicule. 'And what pledge shall I have that you will favour me so kindly as you propose?'

'The word of a man who never broke his promise,' answered the stoical Landamman.

'Insolent hind!' replied the knight, 'dost thou stipulate? *thou* offer thy paltry word as a pledge betwixt the Duke of Burgundy and Archibald de Hagenbach? Know that ye go not to Burgundy at all, or you go thither with fetters on your hands and halters round your necks.—So ho, Burgundy to the Rescue!'

Instantly, as he spoke, the soldiers showed themselves before, behind, and around the narrow space where the Swiss had drawn themselves up. The battlements of the town were lined with men, others presented themselves at the doors of each house in the street, prepared to sally, and at the windows, prepared to shoot, as well with guns as with bows and crossbows. The soldiers who defended the barricade also started up, and seemed ready to dispute the passage in front. The little band, encompassed and over-matched, but neither startled nor disheartened, stood to their arms. The centre rank under the Landamman prepared to force their way over the barricade. The two fronts stood back to back, ready to dispute the street with those that should issue from the houses. It could not fail to prove a work of no small blood and toil to subdue this handful of determined men, even with five times their number. Some sense of this, perhaps, made Sir Archibald delay giving the signal for onset, when suddenly behind arose a cry of 'Treason, treason!'

A soldier covered with mud rushed before the governor, and said, in hurried accents, that, as he endeavoured to stop a prisoner who had made his escape some short time since, he had been seized by the burghers of the town, and well-nigh drowned in the moat. He added that the citizens were even now admitting the enemy into the place.

'Kilian,' said the knight, 'take two score of men—hasten to the northern sallyport; stab, cut down, or throw from the battlements, whomsoever you meet in arms, townsmen or strangers. Leave me to settle with these peasants by fair means or foul.'

But ere Kilian could obey his master's commands, a shout arose in the rear, where they cried, 'Bâle! Bâle!—Freedom! freedom!—The day is our own!'

Onward came the youth of Bâle, who had not been at such a distance but that Rudolph had contrived to recall them—onward came many Swiss who had hovered around the embassy, holding themselves in readiness for such a piece of service; and onward came the armed citizens of La Ferette, who, compelled to take arms and mount guard by the tyranny of De Hagenbach, had availed themselves of the opportunity to admit the Bâlese at the sallyport through which Philipson had lately made his escape.

The garrison, somewhat discouraged before by the firm aspect of the Swiss who had held their numbers at defiance, were totally disconcerted by this new and unexpected insurrection. Most of them prepared rather to fly than to fight, and they threw themselves in numbers from the walls, as the best chance of escaping. Kilian and some others, whom pride prevented from flying, and despair from asking quarter, fought with fury, and were killed on the spot. In the midst of this confusion the Landamman kept his own bands unmoved, permitting them to take no share in the action, save to repel such violence as was offered to them.

'Stand fast all!' sounded the deep voice of Arnold Biederman along their little body. 'Where is Rudolph?—Save lives, but take none.—Why, how now, Arthur Philipson! stand fast, I say.'

'I cannot stand fast,' said Arthur, who was in the act of leaving the ranks. 'I must seek my father in the dungeons; they may be slaying him in this confusion while I stand idle here.'

'By Our Lady of Einsiedlen, you say well,' answered the Landamman; 'that I should have forgot my noble guest! I will help thee to search for him, Arthur—the affray seems well-nigh ended.—Ho there, Sir Banneret, worthy Adam Zimmerman, my good friend Nicholas Bonstetten, keep our men standing firm. Have nothing to do with this affray, but leave the men of Bâle to answer their own deeds. I return in a few minutes.'

So saying, he hurried after Arthur Philipson, whose recollection conducted him, with sufficient accuracy, to the head of the dungeon stairs. There they met an ill-looking man clad in a buff jerkin, who bore at his girdle a bunch of rusted keys, which intimated the nature of his calling.

'Show me the prison of the English merchant,' said Arthur Philipson, 'or thou diest by my hand!'

'Which of them desire you to see?' answered the official,—'the old man, or the young one?'

'The old,' said young Philipson. 'His son has escaped thee.'

'Enter here, then, gentlemen,' said the jailor, undoing the spring-bolt of a heavy door.

At the upper end of the apartment lay the man they came to seek for, who was instantly raised from the ground, and loaded with their embraces.

'My dear father!'—'My worthy guest!' said his son and friend at the same moment, 'how fares it with you?'

'Well,' answered the elder Philipson, 'if you, my friend, and son, come, as I judge from your

arms and countenance, as conquerors, and at liberty—ill, if you come to share my prison-house.'

'Have no fear of that,' said the Landamman; 'we have been in danger, but are remarkably delivered.—Your evil lair has benumbed you. Lean on me, my noble guest, and let me assist you to better quarters.'

Here he was interrupted by a heavy clash, as it seemed, of iron, and differing from the distant roar of the popular tumult, which they still heard from the open street, as men hear the deep voice of a remote and tempestuous ocean.

'By Saint Peter of the fetters!' said Arthur, who instantly discovered the cause of the sound, 'the jailor has cast the door to the staple, or it has escaped his grasp. The spring-lock has closed upon us, and we cannot be liberated saving from the outside.—Ho, jailor dog! villain! open the door, or thou diest!'

'He is probably out of hearing of your threats,' said the elder Philipson, 'and your cries avail you nothing. But are you sure the Swiss are in possession of the town?'

'We are peaceful occupants of it,' answered the Landamman, 'though without a blow given on our side.'

'Why, then,' said the Englishman, 'your followers will soon find you out. Arthur and I are paltry ciphers, and our absence might easily pass over unobserved; but you are too important a figure not to be missed and looked after, when the sum of your number is taken.'

'I well hope it will prove so,' said the Landamman, 'though methinks I show but scurvily, shut up here like a cat in a cupboard, when he has been stealing cream—Arthur, my brave boy, dost thou see no means of shooting back the bolt?'

Arthur, who had been minutely examining the lock, replied in the negative; and added that they must take patience perforce, and arm themselves to wait calmly their deliverance, which they could do nothing to accelerate.

Arnold Biederman, however, felt somewhat severely the neglect of his sons and companions.

'All my youths, uncertain whether I am alive or dead, are taking the opportunity of my absence, doubtless, for pillage and licence—and the politic Rudolph, I presume, cares not if I should never reappear on the stage—the Banneret, and the white-bearded fool Bonstetten, who calls me his friend—every neighbour has deserted me—and yet they know that I am anxious for the safety of the most insignificant of them all, as dearer to me than my own. By Heavens! it looks like stratagem; and shows as if the rash young men desired to get rid of a rule too regular and peaceful to be pleasing to those who are eager for war and conquest.'

The Landamman, fretted out of his usual serenity of temper, and afraid of the misbehaviour of his countrymen in his absence, thus reflected upon his friends and companions, while the distant noise soon died away into the most absolute and total silence.

'What is to do now?' said Arthur Philipson. 'I trust they will take the opportunity of quiet to go through the roll-call, and inquire then who are amissing.'

It seemed as if the young man's wish had some efficacy, for he had scarce uttered it before the lock was turned, and the door set ajar by some one who escaped upstairs from behind it, before those who were set at liberty could obtain a glance of their deliverer.

'It is the jailor, doubtless,' said the Landamman, 'who may be apprehensive, as he has some reason, that we might prove more incensed at our detention in the dungeon, than grateful for our deliverance.'

As they spoke thus, they ascended the narrow stairs, and issued from the door of the Gate-house tower, where a singular spectacle awaited them. The Swiss deputies and their escort still remained standing fast and firm on the very spot where Hagenbach had proposed to assail them. A few of the late governor's soldiers, disarmed, and cowering from the rage of a multitude of the citizens, who now filled the streets, stood with downcast looks behind the phalanx of the mountaineers, as their safest place of retreat. But this was not all.

The cars, so lately placed to obstruct the passage of the street, were now joined together, and served to support a platform, or scaffold, which had been hastily constructed of planks. On this was placed a chair, in which sat a tall man, with his head, neck, and shoulders bare, the rest of his body clothed in bright armour. His countenance was as pale as death, yet young Philipson recognised the hard-hearted governor, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach. He appeared to be bound to the chair. On his right, and close beside him, stood the Priest of Saint Paul's, muttering prayers, with his breviary in his hand; while on his left, and somewhat behind the captive, appeared a tall man, attired in red, and leaning with both hands on the naked sword which has been described on a former occasion. The instant that Arnold Biederman appeared, and before the Landamman could open his lips to demand the meaning of what he saw, the priest drew back, the executioner stepped forward, the sword was brandished, the blow was struck, and the victim's head rolled on the scaffold. A general acclamation and clapping of hands, like that by which a crowded theatre approves of some well-graced performer, followed this feat of dexterity. While the headless corpse shot streams from the arteries, which were drunk up by the sawdust that strewed the scaffold, the executioner gracefully presented himself alternately at the four corners of the stage, modestly bowing, as the multitude greeted him with cheers of approbation.

'Nobles, knights, gentleman of free-born blood, and good citizens,' he said, 'who have assisted at this act of high justice, I pray you to bear me witness that this judgment hath been executed after the form of the sentence, at one blow, and without stroke missed or repeated.'

The acclamations were reiterated.

'Long live our Scharfgerichter Steinernherz, and many a tyrant may he do his duty on!'

'Noble friends,' said the executioner, with the deepest obeisance, 'I have yet another word to say, and it must be a proud one.—God be gracious to the soul of this good and noble

knight, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach. He was the patron of my youth, and my guide to the path of honour. Eight steps have I made towards freedom and nobility on the heads of free-born knights and nobles, who have fallen by his authority and command; and the ninth, by which I have attained it, is upon his own, in grateful memory of which I will expend this purse of gold, which but an hour since he bestowed on me, in masses for his soul. Gentlemen, noble friends, and now my equals, La Ferette has lost a nobleman, and gained one. Our Lady be gracious to the departed knight, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach, and bless and prosper the progress of Francis Steinernherz von Blut-acker, now free and noble of right!'*

With that he took the feather out of the cap of the deceased, which, soiled with the blood of the wearer, lay near his body upon the scaffold, and, putting it into his own official bonnet, received the homage of the crowd in loud huzzas, which were partly in earnest, partly in ridicule of such an unusual transformation.

Arnold Biederman at length found breath, which the extremity of surprise had at first denied him. Indeed, the whole execution had passed much too rapidly for the possibility of his interference.

'Who has dared to act this tragedy?' he said indignantly; 'And by what right has it taken place?'

A cavalier, richly dressed in blue, replied to the question—

'The free citizens of Bâle have acted for themselves, as the fathers of Swiss liberty set them an example; and the tyrant De Hagenbach has fallen by the same right which put to death the tyrant Geysler.† We bore with him till his cup was brimming over, and then we bore no longer.'

'I say not but that he deserved death,' replied the Landamman; 'but, for your own sake and for ours, you should have forborne him till the Duke's pleasure was known.'

'What tell you us of the Duke?' answered Laurenz Neipperg, the same Blue Cavalier whom Arthur had seen at the secret rendezvous of the Bâlese youth, in company with Rudolph,—'Why talk you of Burgundy to us, who are none of his subjects? The Emperor, our only rightful lord, had no title to pawn the town and fortifications of La Ferette, being as it is a dependency of Bâle, to the prejudice of our Free City. He might have pledged the revenue, indeed; and supposing him to have done so, the debt has been paid twice over by the exactions levied by yonder oppressor, who has now received his due. But pass on, Landamman of Unterwalden. If our actions displease you, abjure them at the footstool of the Duke of Burgundy; but in doing so abjure the memory of William Tell and Stauffacher, of Furst and Melchthal, the fathers of Swiss freedom.'

'You speak truth,' said the Landamman; 'but it is in an ill-chosen and unhappy time. Patience would have remedied your evils, which none felt more deeply, or would have redressed more willingly, than I. But O, imprudent young man, you have thrown aside the modesty of your age and the subjection you owe to your elders. William Tell and his brethren were men of years and judgment, husbands and fathers, having a right to be heard in council, and to be foremost in action. Enough—I leave it with the fathers and senators of your own city to acknowledge or to reprove your actions. —But you, my friends—you, Banneret of Berne —you, Rudolph — above all, you, Nicholas Bonstetten, my comrade and my friend, why did you not take this miserable man under your protection? The action would have shown Burgundy that we were slandered by those who have declared us desirous of seeking a quarrel with him, or of inciting his subjects to revolt. Now all these prejudices will be confirmed in the minds of men naturally more tenacious of evil impressions than of those which are favourable.'

'As I live by bread, good gossip and neighbour,' answered Nicholas Bonstetten, 'I thought to obey your injunctions to a tittle; so much so, that I once thought of breaking in and protecting the man, when Rudolph Donnerhugel reminded me that your last orders were, to stand firm, and let the men of Bâle answer for their own actions; and surely, said I to myself, my gossip Arnold knows better than all of us what is fitting to be done.'

'Ah, Rudolph, Rudolph,' said the Landamman, looking on him with a displeased countenance, 'wert thou not ashamed thus to deceive an old man?'

'To say I deceived him is a hard charge; but from you, Landamman,' answered the Bernese, with his usual deference, 'I can bear anything. I will only say that, being a member of this embassy, I am obliged to think and to give my opinion as such, especially when he is not present who is wise enough to lead and direct us all.'

'Thy words are always fair, Rudolph,' replied Arnold Biederman, 'and I trust so is thy meaning. Yet there are times when I somewhat doubt it.—But let disputes pass, and let me have your advice, my friends; and for that purpose go we where it may best profit us, even to the church, where we will first return our thanks for our deliverance from assassination, and then hold counsel what next is to be done.'

The Landamman led the way, accordingly, to the Church of Saint Paul's, while his companions and associates followed in their order. This gave Rudolph, who, as youngest, suffered the others to precede him, an opportunity to beckon to him the Landamman's eldest son, Rudiger, and whisper to him to get rid of the two English merchants.

'Away with them, my dear Rudiger, by fair means, if possible; but away with them directly. Thy father is besotted with these two English pedlars, and will listen to no other counsel; and thou and I know, dearest Rudiger, that such men as these are unfit to give laws to free-born Switzers. Get the trumpery they have been robbed of, or as much of it as is extant, together as fast as thou canst, and send them a-travelling, in Heaven's name.'

* Note C. Public Executioner.

† [Geysler or Gessler was the bailiff of the Duke of Austria who so bitterly oppressed the Swiss, and who made William Tell shoot the apple from his boy's head.]

Rudiger nodded intelligently, and went to offer his services to expedite the departure of the elder Philipson. He found the sagacious merchant as desirous to escape from the scene of confusion now presented in the town, as the young Swiss could be to urge his departure. He only waited to recover the casket of which De Hagenbach had possessed himself, and Rudiger Biederman set on foot a strict search after it, which was the more likely to be successful, that the simplicity of the Swiss prevented them from setting the true value upon its contents. A strict and hasty search was immediately instituted, both on the person of the dead De Hagenbach, on which the precious packet was not to be found, and on all who had approached him at his execution, or were supposed to enjoy his confidence.

Young Arthur Philipson would gladly have availed himself of a few moments to bid farewell to Anne of Geierstein. But the grey wimple was no longer seen in the ranks of the Switzers, and it was reasonable to think that, in the confusion which followed the execution of De Hagenbach, and the retreat of the leaders of the little battalion, she had made her escape into some of the adjacent houses, while the soldiers around her, no longer restrained by the presence of their chiefs, had dispersed, some to search for the goods of which the Englishman had been despoiled, others doubtless to mingle with and join in the rejoicings of the victorious youths of Bâle, and of those burghers of La Ferette by whom the fortifications of the town had been so gently surrendered.

The cry amongst them was universal, that Breisach, so long considered as the curb of the Swiss Confederates, and the barrier against their commerce, should henceforth be garrisoned, as their protection against the encroachments and exactions of the Duke of Burgundy and his officers. The whole town was in a wild but joyful jubilee, while the citizens vied with each other in offering to the Swiss every species of refreshment, and the youths who attended upon the mission hurried gaily, and in triumph, to profit by the circumstances which had so unexpectedly converted the ambuscade so treacherously laid for them into a genial and joyous reception.

Amid this scene of confusion, it was impossible for Arthur to quit his father, even to satisfy the feelings which induced him to wish for a few moments at his own disposal. Sad, thoughtful, and sorrowful amid the general joy, he remained with the parent whom he had so much reason to love and honour, to assist him in securing and placing on their mule the various packages and bales which the honest Switzers had recovered after the death of De Hagenbach, and which they emulated each other in bringing to their rightful owner; while they were with difficulty prevailed on to accept the guerdon which the Englishman, from the means which he had still left upon his person, was disposed not merely to offer, but to force upon the restorers of his property, and which, in their rude and simple ideas, seemed greatly to exceed the value of what they had recovered for him.

This scene had scarcely lasted ten or fifteen minutes, when Rudolph Donnerhugel approached the elder Philipson, and in a tone of great courtesy invited him to join the council of the Chiefs of the Embassy of the Swiss Cantons, who, he said, were desirous of having the advantage of his experience upon some important questions respecting their conduct on these unexpected occurrences.

'See to our affairs, Arthur, and stir not from the spot on which I leave you,' said Philipson to his son. 'Look especially after the sealed packet of which I was so infamously and illegally robbed; its recovery is of the utmost consequence.'

So speaking, he instantly prepared himself to attend the Bernese, who, in a confidential manner, whispered, as he went arm-in-arm with him towards the Church of Saint Paul's—

'I think a man of your wisdom will scarce advise us to trust ourselves to the mood of the Duke of Burgundy, when he has received such an injury as the loss of this fortress and the execution of his officer. You, at least, would be too judicious to afford us any further the advantage of your company and society, since to do so would be wilfully to engage in our shipwreck?'

'I will give my best advice,' answered Philipson, 'when I shall be more particularly acquainted with the circumstances under which it is asked of me.'

Rudolph muttered an oath, or angry exclamation, and led Philipson to the church without further argument.

In a small chapel adjoining to the church, and dedicated to Saint Magnus the Martyr, the four deputies were assembled in close conclave around the shrine in which the sainted hero stood, armed as when he lived. The Priest of Saint Paul's was also present, and seemed to interest himself deeply in the debate which was taking place. When Philipson entered, all were for a moment silent, until the Landamman addressed him thus:—'Seignor Philipson, we esteem you a man far travelled, well versed in the manners of foreign lands, and acquainted with the conditions of this Duke Charles of Burgundy; you are therefore fit to advise us in a matter of great weight. You know with what anxiety we go on this mission for peace with the Duke; you also know what has this day happened, which may probably be represented to Charles in the worst colours;—would you advise us, in such a case, to proceed to the Duke's presence, with the odium of this action attached to us; or should we do better to return home, and prepare for war with Burgundy?'

'How do your own opinions stand on the subject?' said the cautious Englishman.

'We are divided,' answered the Banneret of Berne,—'I have borne the banner of Berne against her foes for thirty years; I am more willing to carry it against the lances of the knights of Hainault and Lorraine, than to undergo the rude treatment which we must look to meet at the footstool of the Duke.'

'We put our heads in the lion's mouth if we go forward,' said Zimmerman of Soleure:—'my opinion is, that we draw back.'

'I would not advise retreat,' said Rudolph Donnerhugel, 'were my life alone concerned:

but the Landamman of Unterwalden is the father of the United Cantons, and it would be parricide if I consented to put his life in peril. My advice is, that we return, and that the Confederacy stand on their defence.'

'My opinion is different,' said Arnold Biederman; 'nor will I forgive any man who, whether in sincere or feigned friendship, places my poor life in the scale with the advantage of the Cantons. If we go forward, we risk our heads—be it so. But if we turn back we involve our country in war with a power of the first magnitude in Europe. Worthy citizens, you are brave in fight,—show your fortitude as boldly now; and let us not hesitate to incur such personal danger as may attend ourselves, if by doing so we can gain a chance of peace for our country.'

'I think and vote with my neighbour and gossip, Arnold Biederman,' said the laconic deputy from Schwytz.

'You hear how we are divided in opinion,' said the Landamman to Philipson; 'what is your opinion?'

'I would first ask of you,' said the Englishman, 'what has been your part in the storming of a town occupied by the Duke's forces, and putting to death his governor?'

'So help me, Heaven!' said the Landamman, 'as I knew not of any purpose of storming the town until it unexpectedly took place.'

'And for the execution of De Hagenbach,' said the Black Priest, 'I swear to you, stranger, by my holy order, that it took place under the direction of a competent court, whose sentence Charles of Burgundy himself is bound to respect, and whose proceedings the deputies of the Swiss mission could neither have advanced nor retarded.'

'If such be the case, and if you can really prove yourselves free of these proceedings,' answered Philipson, 'which must needs be highly resented by the Duke of Burgundy, I would advise you by all means to proceed upon your journey; with the certainty that you will obtain from that prince a just and impartial hearing, and it may be a favourable answer. I know Charles of Burgundy; I may even say that, our different ranks and walks of life considered, I know him well. He will be deeply incensed by the first tidings of what has here chanced, which he will no doubt interpret to your disfavour. But if, in the course of investigation, you are able to clear yourselves of these foul imputations, a sense of his own injustice may perhaps turn the balance in your favour; and in that case he will rush from the excess of censure into that of indulgence. But your cause must be firmly stated to the Duke, by some tongue better acquainted with the language of courts than yours; and such a friendly interpreter might I have proved to you, had I not been plundered of the valuable packet which I bore with me in order to present to the Duke, and in testimony of my commission to him.'

'A paltry fetch,' whispered Donnerhugel to the Banneret, 'that the trader may obtain from us satisfaction for the goods of which he has been plundered.'

The Landamman himself was perhaps for a moment of the same opinion.

'Merchant,' he said, 'we hold ourselves bound to make good to you—that is, if our substance can effect it—whatever loss you may have sustained, trusting to our protection.'

'Ay, that we will,' said the old man of Schwytz, 'should it cost us twenty zecchins to make it good.'

'To your guarantee of immunity I can have no claim,' said Philipson, 'seeing I parted company with you before I sustained any loss. And I regret the loss, not so much for its value, although that is greater than you may fancy; but chiefly because, that the contents of the casket I bore being a token betwixt a person of considerable importance and the Duke of Burgundy, I shall not, I fear, now that I am deprived of them, receive from his Grace that credence which I desire, both for my own sake and yours. Without them, and speaking only in the person of a private traveller, I may not take upon me as I might have done when using the names of the persons whose mandates I carried.'

'This important packet,' said the Landamman, 'shall be most rigorously sought for, and carefully re-delivered to thee. For ourselves, not a Swiss of us knows the value of its contents; so that, if they are in the hands of any of our men, they will be returned of course, as baubles upon which they set no value.'

As he spoke, there was a knocking at the door of the chapel. Rudolph, who stood nearest to it, having held some communication with those without, observed with a smile, which he instantly repressed, lest it had given offence to Arnold Biederman,—'It is Sigismund, the good youth—Shall I admit him to our council?'

'To what purpose, poor simple lad?' said his father, with a sorrowful smile.

'Yet let me undo the door,' said Philipson; 'he is anxious to enter, and perhaps he brings news. I have observed, Landamman, that the young man, though with slowness of ideas and expression, is strong in his principles, and sometimes happy in his conceptions.'

He admitted Sigismund accordingly; while Arnold Biederman felt, on the one hand, the soothing compliment which Philipson had paid to a boy, certainly the dullest of his family, and, on the other, feared some public display of his son's infirmity, or lack of understanding. Sigismund, however, seemed all confidence; and he certainly had reason to be so, since, as the shortest mode of explanation, he presented to Philipson the necklace of diamonds, with the casket in which it had been deposited.

'This pretty thing is yours,' he said. 'I understand so much from your son Arthur, who tells me you would be glad to have it again.'

'Most cordially do I thank you,' said the merchant. 'The necklace is certainly mine; that is, the packet of which it formed the contents was under my charge; and it is at this moment of greater additional value to me than even its actual worth, since it serves as my pledge and token for the performance of an important mission.—And how, my young friend,' he continued, addressing Sigismund, 'have you been so fortunate as to recover what we have sought for hitherto in vain? Let me return my best

acknowledgments; and do not think me over curious if I ask how it reached you?'

'For that matter,' said Sigismund, 'the story is soon told. I had planted myself as near the scaffold as I could, having never beheld an execution before; and I observed the executioner, who I thought did his duty very cleverly, just in the moment that he spread a cloth over the body of De Hagenbach, snatch something from the dead man's bosom and huddle it hastily into his own; so, when the rumour arose that an article of value was amissing, I hurried in quest of the fellow. I found he had bespoke masses to the extent of a hundred crowns at the high altar of Saint Paul's; and I traced him to the tavern of the village, where some ill-looking men were joyously drinking to him as a free citizen and a nobleman. So I stepped in amongst them with my partisan, and demanded of his lordship either to surrender to me what he had thus possessed himself of, or to try the weight of the weapon I carried. His lordship, my Lord Hangman, hesitated, and was about to make a brawl. But I was something peremptory, and so he judged it best to give me the parcel, which I trust you, Seignor Philipson, will find safe and entire as it was taken from you. And—and—I left them to conclude their festivities—and that is the whole of the story.'

'Thou art a brave lad,' said Philipson; 'and with a heart always right, the head can seldom be far wrong. But the Church shall not lose its dues; and I take it on myself, ere I leave La Ferette, to pay for the masses which the man had ordered for the sake of De Hagenbach's soul, snatched from the world so unexpectedly.'

Sigismund was about to reply; but Philipson, fearing he might bring out some foolery to diminish the sense which his father had so joyously entertained of his late conduct, immediately added, 'Hie away, my good youth, and give to my son Arthur this precious casket.'

With simple exultation at receiving applause to which he was little accustomed, Sigismund took his leave, and the council were once more left to their own privacy.

There was a moment's silence; for the Landamman could not overcome the feeling of exquisite pleasure at the sagacity which poor Sigismund, whose general conduct warranted no such expectations, had displayed on the present occasion. It was not, however, a feeling to which circumstances permitted him to give vent, and he reserved it for his own secret enjoyment, as a solace to the anxiety which he had hitherto entertained concerning the limited intellect of this simple-minded young man. When he spoke, it was to Philipson, with the usual candour and manliness of his character.

'Seignor Philipson,' he said, 'we will hold you bound by no offer which you made while these glittering matters were out of your possession; because a man may often think that if he were in such and such a situation, he would be able to achieve certain ends, which, that position being attained, he may find himself unable to accomplish. But I now ask you whether, having thus fortunately and unexpectedly regained possession of what you say will give you certain credence with the Duke of Burgundy, you conceive yourself entitled to mediate with him on our behalf, as you formerly propose?'

All bent forward to hear the merchant's answer.

'Landamman,' he replied, 'I never spoke the word in difficulty which I was not ready to redeem when that difficulty was removed. You say, and I believe, that you had no concern with this storming of La Ferette. You say also that the life of De Hagenbach was taken by a judicature over which you had no control, and exercised none—let a protocol be drawn up, averring these circumstances, and, as far as possible, proving them. Entrust it to me,—under seal if you will,—and if such points be established, I will pledge my word as a—as a—as an honest man and a true-born Englishman, that the Duke of Burgundy will neither detain nor offer you any personal injury. I also hope to show to Charles strong and weighty reasons why a league of friendship betwixt Burgundy and the United Cantons of Helvetia is, on his Grace's part, a wise and generous measure. But it is possible I may fail in this last point; and if I do, I shall deeply grieve for it. In warranting your safe passage to the Duke's court, and your safe return from it to your own country, I think I cannot fail. If I do, my own life, and that of my beloved and only child, shall pay the ransom for my excess of confidence in the Duke's justice and honour.'

The other deputies stood silent, and looked on the Landamman; but Rudolph Donnerhugel spoke.

'Are we then to trust our own lives, and, what is still dearer to us, that of our honoured associate, Arnold Biederman, on the simple word of a foreign trader? We all know the temper of the Duke, and how vindictively and relentlessly he has ever felt towards our country and its interests. Methinks this English merchant should express the nature of his interest at the court of Burgundy more plainly, if he expects us to place such implicit reliance in it.'

'That, Seignor Rudolph Donnerhugel,' replied the merchant, 'I find myself not at liberty to do. I pry not into your secrets, whether they belong to you as a body or as individuals. My own are sacred. If I consulted my own safety merely, I should act most wisely to part company with you here. But the object of your mission is peace; and your sudden return, after what has chanced at La Ferette, will make war inevitable. I think I can assure you of a safe and free audience from the Duke, and I am willing, for the chance of securing the peace of Christendom, to encounter any personal peril which may attach to myself.'

'Say no more, worthy Philipson,' said the Landamman; 'thy good faith is undoubted on our part, and ill luck is his who cannot read it written on thy manly forehead. We go forward, then, prepared to risk our own safety at the hand of a despotic prince, rather than leave undischarged the mission which our country has entrusted us with. He is but half a brave man who will risk his life only in the field of battle. There are other dangers, to front which is equally honourable; and since the weal of Switzerland demands that we should encounter them, not one of us will hesitate to take the risk.'

The other members of the mission bowed in assent, and the conclave broke up to prepare for their farther entrance into Burgundy.

CHAPTER XVII.

Upon the mountain's heathery side,
The day's last lustre shone,
And, rich with many a radiant hue,
Gleam'd gaily on the Rhone.

SOUTHEY.

THE English merchant was now much consulted by the Swiss commissioners in all their motions. He exhorted them to proceed with all despatch on their journey, so as to carry to the duke their own account of the affair of Breisach, and thus anticipate all rumours less favourable to their conduct on the occasion. For this purpose Philipson recommended that the deputies, dismissing their escort, whose arms and numbers might give umbrage and suspicion, while they were too few for defence, should themselves proceed by rapid journeys on horseback towards Dijon, or wherever the duke might chance to be for the time.

This proposal was, however, formally resisted by the very person who had hitherto been the most ductile of the party, and the willing echo of the Landamman's pleasure. On the present occasion, notwithstanding that Arnold Biederman declared the advice of Philipson excellent, Nicholas Bonstetten stood in absolute and insurmountable opposition; because, having hitherto trusted to his own limbs for transporting himself to and fro all on occasions, he could by no means be persuaded to commit himself to the discretion of a horse. As he was found obstinately positive on this subject, it was finally determined that the two Englishmen should press forward on their journey with such speed as they might, and that the elder of them should make the duke acquainted with so much as to the capture of La Ferette as he had himself witnessed of the matter. The particulars which had attended the death of De Hagenbach, the Landamman assured him, would be sent to the duke by a person of confidence, whose attestation on the subject could not be doubted.

This course was adopted, as Philipson expressed his confidence of getting an early and private audience with his Grace of Burgundy.

'My best intercession,' he said, 'you have a good right to reckon upon; and no one can bear more direct testimony than I can to the ungovernable cruelty and rapacity of De Hagenbach, of which I had so nearly been the victim. But of his trial and execution I neither know nor can tell anything; and as Duke Charles is sure to demand why execution was done upon his officer without an appeal to his own tribunal, it will be well that you either provide me with such facts as you have to state, or send forward, at least, as speedily as possible, the evidence which you have to lay before him on that most weighty branch of the subject.'

The proposal of the merchant created some visible embarrassment on the countenance of the Swiss, and it was with obvious hesitation that Arnold Biederman, having led him aside, addressed him in a whisper—

'My good friend,' he said, 'mysteries are in general like the hateful mists which disfigure the noblest features of nature; yet, like mists, they will sometimes intervene when we most desire their absence—when we most desire to be plain and explicit. The manner of De Hagenbach's death you saw—we will take care that the Duke is informed of the authority by which it was inflicted. This is all that I can at present tell you on the subject; and let me add, that the less you speak of it with any one, you will be the more likely to escape inconvenience.'

'Worthy Landamman,' said the Englishman, 'I am also by nature, and from the habits of my country, a hater of mysteries. Yet such is my firm confidence in your truth and honour, that you shall be my guide in these dark and secret transactions, even as amongst the mists and precipices of your native land, and I rest contented in either case to place unlimited confidence in your sagacity. Let me only recommend that your explanation with Charles be instant, as well as clear and candid. Such being the case, I trust my poor interest with the Duke may be reckoned for something in your favour. Here, then, we part, but, as I trust, soon to meet again.'

The elder Philipson now rejoined his son, whom he directed to hire horses, together with a guide, to conduct them with all speed to the presence of the Duke of Burgundy. By various inquiries in the town, and especially among the soldiers of the slain De Hagenbach, they at length learned that Charles had been of late occupied in taking possession of Lorraine, and, being now suspicious of unfriendly dispositions on the part of the Emperor of Germany, as well as of Sigismund, Duke of Austria, had drawn a considerable part of his army together near Strassburg, in order to be prepared against any attempt of these princes, or of the Free Imperial Cities, which might interfere with his course of conquest. The Duke of Burgundy, at this period, well deserved his peculiar epithet of the Bold, since, surrounded by enemies, like one of the nobler animals of the chase, he yet astounded by his stern and daring countenance, not only the princes and States we have mentioned, but even the King of France, equally powerful, and far more politic than himself.

To his camp, therefore, the English travellers bent their way, each full of such deep and melancholy reflection as, perhaps, prevented his bestowing much attention on the other's state of mind. They rode as men deeply immersed in their own thoughts, and with less intercourse than had been usual betwixt them on their former journeys. The nobleness of the elder Philipson's nature, and his respect for the Landamman's probity, joined with gratitude for his hospitality, had prevented him from separating his cause from that of the Swiss deputies, nor did he now repent this generosity in adhering to them. But when he recollected the nature and importance of the personal affairs which he himself had to despatch with a proud, imperious, and irritable prince, he could not but regret the circumstances which had involved his own particular

mission, of so much consequence to himself and his friends, with that of persons likely to be so highly obnoxious to the duke as Arnold Biederman and his companions; and, however grateful for the hospitality of Geierstein, he regretted, nevertheless, the circumstances which had obliged him to accept of it.

The thoughts of Arthur were no less anxious. He found himself anew separated from the object to which his thoughts were, almost against his own will, constantly returning. And this second separation had taken place after he had incurred an additional load of gratitude, and found new, as well as more mysterious food for his ardent imagination. How was he to reconcile the character and attributes of Anne of Geierstein, whom he had known so gentle, candid, pure, and simple, with those of the daughter of a sage and of an elementary spirit, to whom night was as day, and an impervious dungeon the same as the open portico of a temple? Could they be identified as the same being? or, while strictly alike in shape and lineament, was the one a tenant of the earth, the other only a phantom, permitted to show itself among those of a nature in which she did not partake? Above all, must he never see her more, or receive from her own lips an explanation of the mysteries which were so awfully entwined with his recollections of her? Such were the questions which occupied the mind of the younger traveller, and prevented him from interrupting, or even observing, the reverie in which his father was plunged.

Had either of the travellers been disposed to derive amusement from the country through which their road lay, the vicinity of the Rhine was well qualified to afford it. The ground on the left bank of that noble river is indeed rather flat and tame; and the mountains of Alsace, a ridge of which sweeps along its course, do not approach so near as greatly to vary the level surface of the valley which divides them from its shores. But the broad stream itself, hurrying forward with dizzy rapidity, and rushing around the islets by which its course is interrupted, is one of the most majestic spectacles in nature. The right bank is dignified at once and adorned by the numerous eminences, covered with wood and interspersed with valleys, which constitute the district so well known by the name of the Black Forest, to which superstition attached so many terrors, and credulity such a variety of legends. Terrors, indeed, it had, of a real and existing character. The old castles, seen from time to time on the banks of the river itself, or on the ravines and large brooks which flow into it, were then no picturesque ruins, rendered interesting by the stories which were told about their former inhabitants, but constituted the real and apparently impregnable strongholds of that robber-chivalry whom we have already frequently mentioned, and of whom, since Goethe, an author born to arouse the slumbering fame of his country, has dramatised the story of Goetz of Berlichingen,* we have had so many spirit-stirring tales. The danger attending the vicinity of these fortresses was only known on the right or German bank of the Rhine, for the breadth and depth of that noble stream effectually prevented any foray of their inhabitants from reaching Alsace. The former was in possession of the Cities or Free Towns of the Empire, and thus the feudal tyranny of the German lords was chiefly exerted at the expense of their own countrymen, who, irritated and exhausted with their rapine and oppression, were compelled to erect barriers against it, of a nature as interesting and extraordinary as were the wrongs from which they endeavoured to protect themselves.

But the left bank of the river, over great part of which Charles of Burgundy exercised his authority, under various characters, was under the regular protection of the ordinary magistrates, who were supported in the discharge of their duty by large bands of mercenary soldiers. These were maintained by Charles out of his private revenue; he, as well as his rival Louis, and other princes of the period, having discovered that the feudal system gave an inconvenient degree of independence to their vassals, and thinking, of course, that it was better to substitute in its place a standing army, consisting of Free Companies, or soldiers by profession. Italy furnished most of these bands, which composed the strength of Charles's army, at least the part of it in which he most trusted.

Our travellers, therefore, pursued their way by the banks of the river in as great a degree of security as could well be enjoyed in that violent and distracted time, until at length the father, after having eyed for some time the person whom Arthur had hired to be their guide, suddenly asked of his son who or what the man was. Arthur replied that he had been too eager to get a person who knew the road, and was willing to show it, to be very particular in inquiring into his station or occupation; but that he thought, from the man's appearance, he must be one of those itinerant ecclesiastics, who travel through the country with relics, pardons, and other religious trinkets, and were in general but slightly respected, excepting by the lower orders, on whom these vendors of superstitious wares were often accused of practising gross deceptions.

The man's appearance was rather that of a lay devotee, or palmer, bound on his pilgrimage to different shrines, than of a mendicant friar, or questionary. He wore the hat, scrip, staff, and coarse dalmatic, somewhat like the military cloak of the modern hussar, which were used by such persons on their religious peregrinations. Saint Peter's keys, rudely shaped out of some scarlet rag of cloth, appeared on the back of his mantle, placed, as heralds say, saltire-wise. This devotee seemed a man of fifty and upwards, well made and stout for his age, with a cast of countenance which, though not positively ugly, was far from being well favoured. There was shrewdness and an alert expression in his eye and actions, which made some occasional contrast with the sanctimonious demeanour of the character he now bore. This difference betwixt his dress and physiognomy was by no means uncommon among persons of his description, many of whom embraced this mode of life,

* [This drama, by Goethe, was translated by Sir Walter Scott, and was one of his earliest publications.]

rather to indulge roving and idle habits, than from any religious call.

'Who art thou, good fellow?' said the elder Philipson; 'and by what name am I to call thee while we are fellow-travellers?'

'Bartholomew, sir,' said the man; 'Brother Bartholomew—I might say Bartholomæus, but it does not become a poor lay brother like me to aspire to the honour of a learned termination.'

'And whither does thy journey tend, good Brother Bartholomew?'

'In whichever direction your worship chooses to travel, and to require my services as guide,' answered the palmer; 'always premising you allow me leisure for my devotions at such holy stations as we pass on our route.'

'That is, thine own journey hath no professed or pressing object or end?' said the Englishman.

'None, as your worship says, peculiar,' said the itinerant; 'or I might rather say that my journey, good sir, embraces so many objects, that it is matter of indifference to me which of them I accomplish first. My vow binds me for four years to travel from one shrine or holy place to another; but I am not directly tied to visit them by any precise rule of rotation.'

'That is to say, thy vow of pilgrimage does not prevent thee from hiring thyself to wait upon travellers as their guide?' replied Philipson.

'If I can unite the devotion I owe to the blessed saints whose shrines I visit, with a service rendered to a wandering fellow-creature who desires to be directed upon his journey, I do maintain,' replied Bartholomew, 'that the objects are easily to be reconciled to each other.'

'Especially as a little worldly profit may tend to cement the two duties together, if otherwise incompatible?' said Philipson.

'It pleases your honour to say so,' replied the pilgrim; 'but you yourself may, if you will, derive from my good company something more than the mere knowledge of the road in which you propose to travel. I can make your journey more edifying by legends of the blessed saints whose holy relics I have visited; and pleasing, by the story of the wonderful things which I have seen and heard in my travels. I can impart to you an opportunity of providing yourself with his Holiness's pardon, not only for the sins which you have committed, but also granting you indulgence for future errors.'

'These things are highly available, doubtless,' replied the merchant; 'but, good Bartholomew, when I desire to speak of them, I apply to my father confessor, to whom I have been uniformly regular in committing the charge of my conscience, and who must be, therefore, well acquainted with my state of mind, and best accustomed to prescribe what its case may require.'

'Nevertheless,' said Bartholomew, 'I trust your worship is too religious a man, and too sound a Catholic, to pass any hallowed station without endeavouring to obtain some share of the benefits which it is the means of dispensing to those who are ready and willing to deserve them. More especially as all men, of whatever trade and degree, hold respect to the holy saint who patronizeth his own mystery; so I hope you, being a merchant, will not pass the Chapel of Our Lady of the Ferry without making some fitting orison.'

'Friend Bartholomew,' said Philipson, 'I have not heard of the shrine which you recommend to me; and as my business is pressing, it were better worth my while to make a pilgrimage hither on purpose to make mine homage at a fitter season, than to delay my journey at present. This, God willing, I will not fail to do, so that I may be held excused for delaying my reverence till I can pay it more respectfully, and at greater leisure.'

'May it please you not to be wroth,' said the guide, 'if I say that your behaviour in this matter is like that of a fool, who, finding a treasure by the roadside, omits to put it in his bosom and carry it along with him, proposing to return from a distance on a future day, of express purpose to fetch it.'

Philipson, something astonished at the man's pertinacity, was about to answer hastily and angrily, but was prevented by the arrival of three strangers, who rode hastily up from behind them.

The foremost of these was a young female, most elegantly attired, and mounted upon a Spanish jennet, which she reined with singular grace and dexterity. She wore on her right hand such a glove as that which was used to carry hawks, and had a merlin perched upon it. Her head was covered with a montero cap, and, as was frequently the custom at the period, she wore on her face a kind of black silk vizard, which effectually concealed her features. Notwithstanding this disguise, Arthur Philipson's heart sprung high at the appearance of these strangers, for he was at once certain he recognised the matchless form of the Swiss maiden, by whom his mind was so anxiously occupied. Her attendants were a falconer with his hunting-pole, and a female, both apparently her domestics. The elder Philipson, who had no such accuracy of recollection as his son manifested upon the occasion, saw in the fair stranger only some dame or damsel of eminence engaged in the amusement of hawking, and, in return to a brief salutation, merely asked her, with suitable courtesy, as the case demanded, whether she had spent the morning in good sport.

'Indifferent, good friend,' said the lady. 'I dare not fly my hawk so near the broad river, lest he should soar to the other side, and so I might lose my companion. But I reckon on finding better game when I have crossed to the other side of the ferry, which we are now approaching.'

'Then your ladyship,' said Bartholomew, 'will hear mass in Hans' Chapel, and pray for your success?'

'I were a heathen to pass the holy place without doing so,' replied the damsel.

'That, noble damsel, touches the point we were but now talking of,' said the guide Bartholomew; 'for know, fair mistress, that I cannot persuade this worthy gentleman how deeply the success of his enterprise is dependent upon his obtaining the blessing of Our Lady of the Ferry.'

'The good man,' said the young maiden seriously, and even severely, 'must know little

of the Rhine. I will explain to the gentleman the propriety of following your advice.'

She then rode close to young Philipson, and spoke in Swiss,* for she had hitherto used the German language, 'Do not start, but hear me!' and the voice was that of Anne of Geierstein. 'Do not, I say, be surprised—or at least show not your wonder—you are beset by dangers. On this road, especially, your business is known—your lives are laid in wait for. Cross over the river at the Ferry of the Chapel, or Hans' Ferry, as it is usually termed.'

Here the guide drew so near to them that it was impossible for her to continue the conversation without being overheard. At that same moment a woodcock sprung from some bushes, and the young lady threw off her merlin in pursuit.

'Sa ho—sa ho—wo ha!' hollowed the falconer, in a note which made the thicket ring again; and away he rode in pursuit. The elder Philipson and the guide himself followed the chase eagerly with their eyes, so attractive was the love of that brave sport to men of all ranks. But the voice of the maiden was a lure which would have summoned Arthur's attention from matters more deeply interesting.

'Cross the Rhine,' she again repeated, 'at the ferry to Kirch-hoff, on the other side of the river. Take your lodgings at the Golden Fleece, where you will find a guide to Strassburg. I must stay here no longer.'

So saying, the damsel raised herself in her saddle, struck her horse lightly with the loose reins, and the mettled animal, already impatient at her delay, and the eager burst of its companions, flew forward at such a pace, as if he had meant to emulate the flight of the hawk and of the prey he pursued. The lady and her attendants soon vanished from the sight of the travellers.

A deep silence for some time ensued, during which Arthur studied how to communicate the warning he had received, without awakening the suspicions of their guide.

But the old man broke silence himself, saying to Bartholomew, 'Put your horse into more motion, I pray you, and ride onward a few yards; I would have some private conference with my son.'

The guide obeyed, and as if with the purpose of showing a mind too profoundly occupied by heavenly matters to admit a thought concerning those of this transitory world, he thundered forth a hymn in praise of Saint Wendelin the Shepherd, in a strain so discordant, as startled every bird from every bush by which they passed. There was never a more unmelodious melody, whether sacred or profane, than that under protection of which the elder Philipson thus conferred with his son.

'Arthur,' he said, 'I am much convinced that this howling hypocritical vagrant has some plot upon us; and I had well-nigh determined that the best mode to baffle it would be to consult my own opinion, and not his, as to our places of repose, and the direction of our journey.'

'Your judgment is correct, as usual,' said his son. 'I am well convinced of yonder man's treachery from a whisper in which that maiden informed me that we ought to take the road to Strassburg by the eastern side of the river, and for that purpose cross over to a place called Kirch-hoff, on the opposite bank.'

'Do you advise this, Arthur?' replied his father.

'I will pledge my life for the faith of this young person,' replied his son.

'What!' said his father, 'because she sits her palfrey fairly, and shows a faultless shape? Such is the reasoning of a boy—and yet my own old and cautious heart feels inclined to trust her. If our secret is known in this land, there are doubtless many who may be disposed to think they have an interest in barring my access to the Duke of Burgundy, even by the most violent means; and well you know that I should on my side hold my life equally cheap, could I discharge mine errand at the price of laying it down. I tell thee, Arthur, that my mind reproaches me for taking hitherto over little care of insuring the discharge of my commission, owing to the natural desire I had to keep thee in my company. There now lie before us two ways, both perilous and uncertain, by which we may reach the Duke's court. We may follow this guide, and take the chance of his fidelity, or we may adopt the hint of yonder damsel-errant, and cross over to the other side of the Rhine, and again repass the river at Strassburg. Both roads are perhaps equally perilous. I feel it my duty to diminish the risk of the miscarriage of my commission, by sending thee across to the right bank, while I pursue my proposed course upon the left. Thus, if one of us be intercepted, the other may escape, and the important commission which he bears may be duly executed.'

'Alas, my father!' said Arthur, 'how is it possible for me to obey you, when by doing so I must leave you alone, to incur so many dangers, to struggle with so many difficulties, in which my aid might be at least willing, though it could only be weak? Whatever befall us in these delicate and dangerous circumstances, let us at least meet it in company.'

'Arthur, my beloved son,' said his father, 'in parting from thee, I am splitting mine own heart in twain; but the same duty which commands us to expose our bodies to death, as peremptorily orders us not to spare our most tender affections. We must part.'

'O then,' replied his son eagerly, 'let me at least prevail in one point. Do thou, my father, cross the Rhine, and let me prosecute the journey by the route originally proposed.'

'And why, I pray you,' answered the merchant, 'should I go one of these roads in preference to the other?'

'Because,' said Arthur eagerly, 'I would warrant yonder maiden's faith with my life.'

'Again, young man?' said his father; 'and wherefore so confident in that young maiden's faith? Is it merely from the confidence which youth reposes in that which is fair and pleasing,

* [This would be, however, a dialect of German, unless French, Italian, or the Romansch dialect spoken in the Canton of the Grisons, be meant; for these four are the languages used in Switzerland. There is, of course, no specific Swiss language.]

or have you had further acquaintance with her than the late brief conversation with her admitted?'

'Can I give you an answer?' replied his son. 'We have been long absent from lands of knights and ladies, and is it not natural that we should give to those who remind us of the honoured ties of chivalry and gentle blood, the instinctive credence which we refuse to such a poor wretch as this itinerant mountebank, who gains his existence by cheating, with false relics and forged legends, the poor peasants amongst whom he travels?'

'It is a vain imagination, Arthur,' said his father; 'not unbefitting, indeed, an aspirant to the honours of chivalry, who draws his ideas of life and its occurrences from the romances of the minstrels, but too visionary for a youth who has seen, as thou hast, how the business of this world is conducted. I tell thee, and thou wilt learn to know I say truth, that around the homely board of our host the Landamman were ranged truer tongues and more faithful hearts than the *cour plénière* of a monarch has to boast. Alas! the manly spirit of ancient faith and honour has fled even from the breast of kings and knights, where, as John of France said, it ought to continue to reside a constant inhabitant, if banished from all the rest of the world.'

'Be that as it may, dearest father,' replied the younger Philipson, 'I pray you to be persuaded by me; and if we must part company, let it be by your taking the right bank of the Rhine, since I am persuaded it is the safest route.'

'And if it be the safest,' said his father, with a voice of tender reproach, 'is that a reason why I should spare my own almost exhausted thread of life, and expose thine, my dear son, which has but begun its course?'

'Nay, father,' answered the son with animation, 'in speaking thus you do not consider the difference of our importance to the execution of the purpose which you have so long entertained, and which seems now so nigh being accomplished. Think how imperfectly I might be able to discharge it, without knowledge of the Duke's person, or credentials to gain his confidence. I might, indeed, repeat your words, but the circumstances would be wanting to attract the necessary faith, and of consequence, your scheme, for the success of which you have lived, and now are willing to run the risk of death, would miscarry along with me.'

'You cannot shake my resolution,' said the elder Philipson, 'or persuade me that my life is of more importance than yours. You only remind me that it is you, and not I, who ought to be the bearer of this token to the Duke of Burgundy. Should you be successful in reaching his court or camp, your possession of these gems will be needful to attach credit to your mission; a purpose for which they would be less necessary to me, who can refer to other circumstances under which I might claim credence, if it should please Heaven to leave me alone to acquit myself of this important commission, which may Our Lady, in her mercy, forefend! Understand, therefore, that should an opportunity occur by which you can make your way to the opposite side of the Rhine, you are to direct your journey so as again to cross to this bank at Strassburg, where you will inquire for news of me at the Flying Stag, a hostelry in that city, which you will easily discover. If you hear no tidings of me at that place, you will proceed to the Duke, and deliver to him this important packet.'

Here he put into his son's hand, with as much privacy as possible, the case containing the diamond necklace.

'What else your duty calls on you to do,' continued the elder Philipson, 'you well know; only I conjure you, let no vain inquiries after my fate interfere with the great duty you have there to discharge. In the meantime, prepare to bid me a sudden farewell, with a heart as bold and confident as when you went before me, and courageously led the way amid the rocks and storms of Switzerland. Heaven was above us then, as it is over us now. Adieu, my beloved Arthur! Should I wait till the moment of separation, there may be but short time to speak the fatal word, and no eye save thine own must see the tear which I now wipe away.'

The painful feeling which accompanied this anticipation of their parting was so sincere on Arthur's part, as well as that of his father, that it did not at first occur to the former, as a source of consolation, that it seemed likely he might be placed under the guidance of the singular female, the memory of whom haunted him. True it was that the beauty of Anne of Geierstein, as well as the striking circumstances in which she had exhibited herself, had on that very morning been the principal occupation of his mind; but they were now chased from it by the predominant recollection that he was about to be separated in a moment of danger from a father, so well deserving of his highest esteem and his fondest affection.

Meanwhile that father dashed from his eye the tear which his devoted stoicism could not suppress, and as if afraid of softening his resolution by indulging his parental fondness, he recalled the pious Bartholomew, to demand of him how far they were from the Chapel of the Ferry.

'Little more than a mile,' was the reply; and when the Englishman required further information concerning the cause of its erection, he was informed that an old boatman and fisherman named Hans had long dwelt at the place, who gained a precarious livelihood by transporting travellers and merchants from one bank of the river to the other. The misfortune, however, of losing first one boat and then a second in the deep and mighty stream, with the dread inspired in travellers by the repetition of such accidents, began to render his profession an uncertain one. Being a good Catholic, the old man's distress took a devotional turn. He began to look back on his former life, and consider by what crimes he had deserved the misfortunes which darkened the evening of his days. His remorse was chiefly excited by the recollection that he had on one occasion, when the passage was peculiarly stormy, refused to

discharge his duty as a ferryman, in order to transport to the other shore a priest, who bore along with him an image of the Virgin, destined for the village of Kirch-hoff, on the opposite or right bank of the Rhine. For this fault Hans submitted to severe penance, as he was now disposed to consider as culpable his doubt of the Virgin's power of protecting herself, her priest, and the bark employed in her service; besides which, the offering of a large share of his worldly goods to the church of Kirch-hoff expressed the truth of the old man's repentance. Neither did he ever again permit himself to interpose any delay in the journey of men of Holy Church; but all ranks of the clergy, from the mitred prelate to the barefooted friar, might at any time of day or night have commanded the services of him and his boat.

While prosecuting so laudable a course of life, it became at length the lot of Hans to find, on the banks of the Rhine, a small image of the Virgin, thrown by the waves, which appeared to him exactly to resemble that which he had formerly ungraciously refused to carry across, when under charge of the sacristan of Kirch-hoff. He placed it in the most conspicuous part of his hut, and poured out his soul before it in devotion, anxiously inquiring for some signal by which he might discover whether he was to consider the arrival of her holy image as a pledge that his offences were forgiven. In the visions of the night his prayers were answered, and Our Lady, assuming the form of the image, stood by his bedside, for the purpose of telling him wherefore she had come hither.

'My trusty servant,' she said, 'men of Belial have burned my dwelling at Kirch-hoff, spoiled my chapel, and thrown the sacred image which represents me into the swollen Rhine, which swept me downward. Now, I have resolved to dwell no longer in the neighbourhood of the profane doers of this deed, or of the cowardly vassals who dared not prevent it. I am therefore compelled to remove my habitation, and, in despite of the opposing current, I determined to take the shore on this side, being resolved to fix my abode with thee, my faithful servant, that the land in which thou dwellest may be blessed, as well as thou and thy household.'

As the vision spoke, she seemed to wring from her tresses the water in which they had been steeped, while her disordered dress and fatigued appearance was that of one who has been buffeting with the waves.

Next morning brought intelligence that, in one of the numerous feuds of that fierce period, Kirch-hoff had been sacked, the church destroyed, and the church treasury plundered.

In consequence of the fisherman's vision being thus remarkably confirmed, Hans entirely renounced his profession, and, leaving it to younger men to supply his place as ferrymen, he converted his hut into a rustic chapel, and he himself, taking orders, attended upon the shrine as a hermit, or daily chaplain. The figure was supposed to work miracles, and the ferry became renowned from its being under the protection of the Holy Image of Our Lady, and her no less holy servant.

When Bartholomew had concluded his account of the ferry and its chapel, the travellers had arrived at the place itself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Upon the Rhine, upon the Rhine they cluster,
The grapes of juice divine,
Which makes the soldier's jovial courage muster;
O blessed be the Rhine!

DRINKING SONG.*

A COTTAGE or two on the side of the river, beside which were moored one or two fishing-boats, showed the pious Hans had successors in his profession as a boatman. The river, which at a point a little lower was restrained by a chain of islets, expanded more widely, and moved less rapidly, than when it passed these cottages, affording to the ferryman a smoother surface, and a less heavy stream to contend with, although the current was even there too strong to be borne up against, unless the river was in a tranquil state.

On the opposite bank, but a good deal lower than the hamlet which gave name to the ferry, was seated on a small eminence, screened by trees and bushes, the little town of Kirch-hoff. A skiff departing from the left bank was, even on favourable occasions, carried considerably to leeward ere it could attain the opposite side of the deep and full stream of the Rhine, so that its course was oblique towards Kirch-hoff. On the other hand, a boat departing from Kirch-hoff must have great advantage, both of wind and oars, in order to land its loading or crew at the Chapel of the Ferry, unless it were under the miraculous influence which carried the image of the Virgin in that direction. The communication, therefore, from the east to the west bank was only maintained by towing boats up the stream to such a height on the eastern side, that the leeway which they made during the voyage across might correspond with the point at which they desired to arrive, and enable them to attain it with ease. Hence it naturally happened that, the passage from Alsace into Swabia being the most easy, the ferry was more used by those who were desirous of entering Germany, than by travellers who came in an opposite direction.

When the elder Philipson had by a glance around him ascertained the situation of the ferry, he said firmly to his son,—'Begone, my dear Arthur, and do what I have commanded thee.'

With a heart rent with filial anxiety, the young man obeyed, and took his solitary course towards the cottages, near which the barks were moored, which were occasionally used for fishing, as well as for the purposes of the ferry.

'Your son leaves us?' said Bartholomew to the elder Philipson.

'He does for the present,' said his father,

* This is one of the best and most popular of the German ditties:—

Am Rhein, am Rhein, da wachsen unsere Reben,
Gesegnet sei der Rhein,' etc.

'as he has certain inquiries to make in yonder hamlet.'

'If they be,' answered the guide, 'any matters connected with your honour's road, I laud the saints that I can better answer your inquiries than those ignorant boors, who hardly understand your language.'

'If we find that their information needs thy commentary,' said Philipson, 'we will request it —meanwhile, lead on to the chapel, where my son will join us.'

They moved towards the chapel, but with slow steps, each turning his looks aside to the fishing hamlet; the guide as if striving to see whether the younger traveller was returning towards them, the father anxious to descry, on the broad bosom of the Rhine, a sail unloosed, to waft his son across to that which might be considered as the safer side. But though the looks of both guide and traveller were turned in the direction of the river, their steps carried them towards the chapel, to which the inhabitants, in memory of the founder, had given the title of Hans-Chapelle.

A few trees scattered around gave an agreeable and sylvan air to the place; and the chapel, that appeared on a rising ground at some distance from the hamlet, was constructed in a style of pleasing simplicity, which corresponded with the whole scene. Its small size confirmed the tradition that it had originally been merely the hut of a peasant; and the cross of fir-trees, covered with bark, attested the purpose to which it was now dedicated. The chapel and all round it breathed peace and solemn tranquillity, and the deep sound of the mighty river seemed to impose silence on each human voice which might presume to mingle with its awful murmur.

When Philipson arrived in the vicinity, Bartholomew took the advantage afforded by his silence to thunder forth two stanzas to the praise of the Lady of the Ferry, and her faithful worshipper Hans, after which he broke forth into the rapturous exclamation,—'Come hither, ye who fear wreck, here is your safe haven!—Come hither, ye who die of thirst, here is a well of mercy open to you!—Come those who are weary and far-travelled, this is your place of refreshment!'—and more to the same purpose he might have said, but Philipson sternly imposed silence on him.

'If thy devotion were altogether true,' he said, 'it would be less clamorous; but it is well to do what is good in itself, even if it is a hypocrite who recommends it.—Let us enter this holy chapel, and pray for a fortunate issue to our precarious travels.'

The pardoner caught up the last words.

'Sure was I,' he said, 'that your worship is too well advised to pass this holy place without imploring the protection and influence of Our Lady of the Ferry. Tarry but a moment until I find the priest who serves the altar, that he may say a mass on your behalf.'

Here he was interrupted by the door of the chapel suddenly opening, when an ecclesiastic appeared on the threshold. Philipson instantly knew the Priest of Saint Paul's, whom he had seen that morning at La Ferette. Bartholomew also knew him, as it would seem; for his officious hypocritical eloquence failed him in an instant, and he stood before the priest with his arms folded on his breast, like a man who waits for the sentence of condemnation.

'Villain,' said the ecclesiastic, regarding the guide with a severe countenance, 'dost thou lead a stranger into the houses of the holy saints, that thou mayst slay him, and possess thyself of his spoils? But Heaven will no longer bear with thy perfidy. Back, thou wretch, to meet thy brother miscreants, who are hastening hitherward. Tell them thy arts were unavailing, and that the innocent stranger is under MY protection—under my protection, which those who presume to violate will meet with the reward of Archibald de Hagenbach!'

The guide stood quite motionless, while addressed by the priest in a manner equally menacing and authoritative; and no sooner did the latter cease speaking, than, without offering a word either in justification or reply, Bartholomew turned round, and retreated at a hasty pace by the same road which had conducted the traveller to the chapel.

'And do you, worthy Englishman,' continued the priest, 'enter into this chapel and perform in safety those devotions, by means of which yonder hypocrite designed to detain you until his brethren in iniquity came up.—But first, wherefore are you alone? I trust nought evil hath befallen your young companion?'

'My son,' said Philipson, 'crosses the Rhine at yonder ferry, as we had important business to transact on the other side.'

As he spoke thus, a light boat, about which two or three peasants had been for some time busy, was seen to push from the shore and shoot into the stream, to which it was partly compelled to give way, until a sail stretched along the slender yard, and supporting the bark against the current, enabled her to stand obliquely across the river.

'Now, praise be to God!' said Philipson, who was aware that the bark he looked upon must be in the act of carrying his son beyond the reach of the dangers by which he was himself surrounded.

'Amen!' answered the priest, echoing the pious ejaculation of the traveller. 'Great reason have you to return thanks to Heaven.'

'Of that I am convinced,' replied Philipson; 'but yet from you I hope to learn the special cause of danger from which I have escaped?'

'This is neither time nor place for such an investigation,' answered the Priest of Saint Paul's. 'It is enough to say that yonder fellow, well known for his hypocrisy and his crimes, was present when the young Switzer Sigismund reclaimed from the executioner the treasure of which you were robbed by Hagenbach. Thus Bartholomew's avarice was awakened. He undertook to be your guide to Strassburg, with the criminal intent of detaining you by the way till a party came up, against whose numbers resistance would have been in vain. But his purpose has been anticipated.—And now, ere giving vent to other worldly thoughts, whether of hope or fear,—to the chapel, sir, and join in orisons to Him who

hath been your aid, and to those who have interceded with him in your behalf.'

Philipson entered the chapel with his guide, and joined in returning thanks to Heaven and the tutelary power of the spot, for the escape which had been vouchsafed to him.

When this duty had been performed, Philipson intimated his purpose of resuming his journey, to which the Black Priest replied, 'That, far from delaying him in a place so dangerous, he would himself accompany him for some part of the journey, since he also was bound to the presence of the Duke of Burgundy.'

'You, my father!—you!' said the merchant, with some astonishment.

'And wherefore surprised?' answered the priest. 'Is it so strange that one of my order should visit a prince's court? Believe me, there are but too many of them to be found there.'

'I do not speak with reference to your order,' answered Philipson, 'but in regard of the part which you have this day acted, in abetting the execution of Archibald de Hagenbach. Know you so little of the fiery Duke of Burgundy, as to imagine you can dally with his resentment with more safety than you would pull the mane of a sleeping lion?'

'I know his mood well,' said the priest; 'and it is not to excuse, but to defend the death of De Hagenbach that I go to his presence. The Duke may execute his serfs and bondsmen at his pleasure, but there is a spell upon my life, which is proof to all his power. But let me retort the question—You, Sir Englishman, knowing the conditions of the Duke so well—you, so lately the guest and travelling companion of the most unwelcome visitors who could approach him—you, implicated, in appearance at least, in the uproar at La Ferette—what chance is there of your escaping his vengeance? and wherefore will you throw yourself wantonly within his power?'

'Worthy father,' said the merchant, 'let each of us, without offence to the other, keep his own secret. I have, indeed, no spell to secure me from the Duke's resentment—I have limbs to suffer torture and imprisonment, and property which may be seized and confiscated. But I have had in former days many dealings with the Duke; I may even say I have laid him under obligations, and hope my interest with him may in consequence be sufficient, not only to save me from the consequences of this day's procedure, but be of some avail to my friend the Landamman.'

'But if you are in reality bound to the court of Burgundy as a merchant,' said the priest, 'where are the wares in which you traffic? Have you no merchandise save that which you carry on your person? I heard of a sumpter-horse with baggage. Has yonder villain deprived you of it?'

This was a trying question to Philipson, who, anxious about the separation from his son, had given no direction whether the baggage should remain with himself, or should be transported to the other side of the Rhine. He was, therefore, taken at advantage by the priest's inquiry, to which he answered, with some incoherence,—'I believe my baggage is in the hamlet—that is, unless my son has taken it across the Rhine with him.'

'That we will soon learn,' answered the priest.

Here a novice appeared from the vestiary of the chapel at his call, and received commands to inquire at the hamlet whether Philipson's bales, with the horse which transported them, had been left there, or ferried over along with his son.

The novice, being absent a few minutes, presently returned with the baggage-horse, which, with its burden, Arthur, from regard to his father's accommodation, had left on the western side of the river. The priest looked on attentively, while the elder Philipson, mounting his own horse, and taking the rein of the other in his hand, bade the Black Priest adieu in these words:—'And now, father, farewell! I must pass on with my bales, since there is little wisdom in travelling with them after nightfall, else would I gladly suit my pace, with your permission, so as to share the way with you.'

'If it is your obliging purpose to do so, as indeed I was about to propose,' said the priest, 'know I will be no stay to your journey. I have here a good horse; and Melchior, who must otherwise have gone on foot, may ride upon your sumpter-horse. I the rather propose this course, as it will be rash for you to travel by night. I can conduct you to an hostelry about five miles off, which we may reach with sufficient daylight, and where you will be lodged safely for your reckoning.'

The English merchant hesitated a moment. He had no fancy for any new companion on the road, and although the countenance of the priest was rather handsome, considering his years, yet the expression was such as by no means invited confidence. On the contrary, there was something mysterious and gloomy which clouded his brow, though it was a lofty one, and a similar expression gleamed in his cold grey eye, and intimated severity and even harshness of disposition. But notwithstanding this repulsive circumstance, the priest had lately rendered Philipson a considerable service, by detecting the treachery of his hypocritical guide, and the merchant was not a man to be startled from his course by any imaginary prepossessions against the looks or manners of any one, or apprehensions of machinations against himself. He only revolved in his mind the singularity attending his destiny, which, while it was necessary for him to appear before the Duke of Burgundy in the most conciliatory manner, seemed to force upon him the adoption of companions who must needs be obnoxious to that prince; and such, he was too well aware, must be the case with the Priest of Saint Paul's. Having reflected for an instant, he courteously accepted the offer of the priest to guide him to some place of rest and entertainment, which must be absolutely necessary for his horse before he reached Strassburg, even if he himself could have dispensed with it.

The party being thus arranged, the novice brought forth the priest's steed, which he mounted with grace and agility, and the neophyte, being probably the same whom Arthur had represented during his escape from La Ferette, took charge, at his master's command,

of the baggage-horse of the Englishman; and, crossing himself, with a humble inclination of his head, as the priest passed him, he fell into the rear, and seemed to pass the time, like the false brother Bartholomew, in telling his beads, with an earnestness which had perhaps more of affected than of real piety. The Black Priest of Saint Paul's, to judge by the glance which he cast upon his novice, seemed to disdain the formality of the young man's devotion. He rode upon a strong black horse, more like a warrior's charger than the ambling palfrey of a priest, and the manner in which he managed him was entirely devoid of awkwardness and timidity. His pride, whatever was its character, was not certainly of a kind altogether professional, but had its origin in other swelling thoughts which arose in his mind, to mingle with and enhance the self-consequence of a powerful ecclesiastic.

As Philipson looked on his companion from time to time, his scrutinizing glance was returned by a haughty smile, which seemed to say, 'You may gaze on my form and features, but you cannot penetrate my mystery.'

The looks of Philipson, which were never known to sink before mortal man, seemed to retort, with equal haughtiness, 'Nor shall you, proud priest, know that you are now in company with one whose secret is far more important than thine own can be.'

At length the priest made some advance towards conversation, by allusion to the footing upon which, by a mutual understanding, they seemed to have placed their intercourse.

'We travel, then,' he said, 'like two powerful enchanters, each conscious of his own high and secret purpose; each in his own chariot of clouds, and neither imparting to his companion the direction or purpose of his journey.'

'Excuse me, father,' answered Philipson, 'I have neither asked your purpose, nor concealed my own, so far as it concerns you. I repeat, I am bound to the presence of the Duke of Burgundy, and my object, like that of any other merchant, is to dispose of my wares to advantage.'

'Doubtless it would seem so,' said the Black Priest, 'from the extreme attention to your merchandise which you showed not above half-an-hour since, when you knew not whether your bales had crossed the river with your son, or were remaining in your own charge. Are English merchants usually so indifferent to the sources of their traffic?'

'When their lives are in danger,' said Philipson, 'they are sometimes negligent of their fortune.'

'It is well,' replied the priest, and again resumed his solitary musings; until another half-hour's travelling brought them to a *dorf*, or village, which the Black Priest informed Philipson was that where he proposed to stop for the night.

'The novice,' he said, 'will show you the inn, which is of good reputation, and where you may lodge with safety. For me, I have to visit a penitent in this village, who desires my ghostly offices;—perhaps I may see you again this evening, perhaps not till the next morning;—at any rate, adieu for the present.'

So saying, the priest stopped his horse, while the novice, coming close up to Philipson's side, conducted him onward through the narrow street of the village, whilst the windows exhibited here and there a twinkling gleam, announcing that the hour of darkness was arrived. Finally he led the Englishman through an archway into a sort of court-yard, where there stood a car or two of a particular shape, used occasionally by women when they travel, and some other vehicles of the same kind. Here the young man threw himself from the sumpter-horse, and, placing the rein in Philipson's hand, disappeared in the increasing darkness, after pointing to a large but dilapidated building, along the front of which not a spark of light was to be discovered from any of the narrow and numerous windows, which were dimly visible in the twilight.

CHAPTER XIX.

First Carrier. What, ostler!—a plague on thee, hast never an eye in thy head? Canst thou not hear? An 'twere not as good a deed as drink to break the pate of thee, I am a very villain—Come, and be hanged—Hast thou no faith in thee?

Gadshill. I pray thee, lend me thy lantern, to see my gelding in the stable.

Second Carrier. Nay, soft, I pray you—I know a trick worth two of that.

Gadshill. I prithee lend me thine.

Third Carrier. Ay, when? Canst tell?—Lend thee my lantern, quotha? Marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

HENRY IV.

THE social spirit peculiar to the French nation had already introduced into the inns of that country the gay and cheerful character of welcome, upon which Erasmus,* at a later period, dwells with strong emphasis, as a contrast to the saturnine and sullen reception which strangers were apt to meet with at a German caravansera. Philipson was therefore in expectation of being received by the busy, civil, and talkative host—by the hostess and her daughter, all softness, coquetry, and glee—the smiling and supple waiter—the officious and dimpled chambermaid. The better inns in France boast also separate rooms, where strangers could change or put in order their dress, where they might sleep without company in their bedroom, and where they could deposit their baggage in privacy and safety. But all these luxuries were as yet unknown in Germany; and in Alsace, where the scene now lies, as well as in the other dependencies of the Empire, they regarded as effeminacy everything beyond such provisions as were absolutely necessary for the supply of the wants of travellers; and even these were coarse and indifferent, and, excepting in the article of wine, sparingly ministered.

The Englishman, finding that no one appeared at the gate, began to make his presence known by calling aloud, and finally by alighting, and smiting with all his might on the doors of the hostelry for a long time, without attracting the least attention. At length the head of a grizzled

* [A celebrated Latin scholar of the Reformation period, who, though born in Holland, spent most of his life in Germany.]

servitor was thrust out at a small window, who, in a voice which sounded like that of one displeased at the interruption, rather than hopeful of advantage from the arrival of a guest, demanded what he wanted.

'Is this an inn?' replied Philipson.

'Yes,' bluntly replied the domestic, and was about to withdraw from the window, when the traveller added,—

'And if it be, can I have lodgings?'

'You may come in,' was the short and dry answer.

'Send some one to take the horses,' replied Philipson.

'No one is at leisure,' replied this most repulsive of waiters; 'you must litter down your horses yourself, in the way that likes you best.'

'Where is the stable?' said the merchant, whose prudence and temper were scarce proof against this Dutch phlegm.

The fellow, who seemed as sparing of his words as if, like the princess in the fairy tale, he had dropped ducats with each of them, only pointed to a door in an outer building, more resembling that of a cellar than of a stable, and, as if weary of the conference, drew in his head, and shut the window sharply against the guest, as he would against an importunate beggar.

Cursing the spirit of independence which left a traveller to his own resources and exertions, Philipson, making a virtue of necessity, led the two nags towards the door pointed out as that of the stable, and was rejoiced at heart to see light glimmering through its chinks. He entered with his charge into a place very like the dungeon vault of an ancient castle, rudely fitted up with some racks and mangers. It was of considerable extent in point of length, and at the lower end two or three persons were engaged in tying up their horses, dressing them, and dispensing them their provender.

This last article was delivered by the ostler, a very old lame man, who neither put his hand to wisp nor curry-comb, but sat weighing forth hay by the pound, and counting out corn, as it seemed, by the grain, so anxiously did he bend over his task, by the aid of a blinking light enclosed within a horn lantern. He did not even turn his head at the noise which the Englishman made on entering the place with two additional horses, far less did he seem disposed to give himself the least trouble, or the stranger the smallest assistance.

In respect of cleanliness, the stable of Augeas* bore no small resemblance to that of this Alsatian *dorf;* and it would have been an exploit worthy of Hercules to have restored it to such a state of cleanliness as would have made it barely decent in the eyes, and tolerable to the nostrils, of the punctilious Englishman. But this was a matter which disgusted Philipson himself much more than those of his party which were principally concerned. They, *videlicet* the two horses, seeming perfectly to understand that the rule of the place was, 'first come first served,' hastened to occupy the empty stalls which happened to be nearest to them. In this one of them at least was disappointed, being received by a groom with a blow across the face with a switch.

'Take that,' said the fellow, 'for forcing thyself into the place taken up for the horses of the Baron of Randelsheim.'

Never in the course of his life had the English merchant more pain to retain possession of his temper than at that moment. Reflecting, however, on the discredit of quarrelling with such a man in such a cause, he contented himself with placing the animal, thus repulsed from the stall he had chosen, into one next to that of his companion, to which no one seemed to lay claim.

The merchant then proceeded, notwithstanding the fatigue of the day, to pay all that attention to the mute companions of his journey, which they deserve from every traveller who has any share of prudence, to say nothing of humanity. The unusual degree of trouble which Philipson took to arrange his horses, although his dress, and much more his demeanour, seemed to place him above this species of servile labour, appeared to make an impression even upon the iron insensibility of the old ostler himself. He showed some alacrity in furnishing the traveller, who knew the business of a groom so well, with corn, straw, and hay, though in small quantity, and at exorbitant rates, which were instantly to be paid; nay, he even went as far as the door of the stable, that he might point across the court to the well, from which Philipson was obliged to fetch water with his own hands. The duties of the stable being finished, the merchant concluded that he had gained such an interest with the grim master of the horse, as to learn of him whether he might leave his bales safely in the stable.

'You may leave them if you will,' said the ostler; 'but touching their safety, you will do much more wisely if you take them with you, and give no temptation to any one by suffering them to pass from under your own eyes.'

So saying, the man of oats closed his oracular jaws, nor could he be prevailed upon to unlock them again by any inquiry which his customer could devise.

In the course of this cold and comfortless reception, Philipson recollected the necessity of supporting the character of a prudent and wary trader, which he had forgotten once before in the course of the day; and, imitating what he saw the others do, who had been, like himself, engaged in taking charge of their horses, he took up his baggage, and removed himself and his property to the inn. Here he was suffered to enter, rather than admitted, into the general or public *stube*, or room of entertainment, which, like the ark of the patriarch, received all ranks without distinction, whether clean or unclean.

The *stube* of a German inn derived its name from the great hypocaust, or stove, which is always strongly heated to secure the warmth of the apartment in which it is placed. There travellers of every age and description assembled —there their upper garments were indiscriminately hung up around the stove to dry or to air —and the guests themselves were seen employed

* [One of the twelve labours imposed upon the Greek god Hercules was to cleanse in a single day the vast stables and cow-stalls of Augeas, king of Elis—a task which the god accomplished by turning through them the waters of two rivers.]

in various acts of ablution or personal arrangement, which are generally, in modern times, referred to the privacy of the dressing-room.

The more refined feelings of the Englishman were disgusted with this scene, and he was reluctant to mingle in it. For this reason he inquired for the private retreat of the landlord himself, trusting that, by some of the arguments powerful among his tribe, he might obtain separate quarters from the crowd, and a morsel of food to be eaten in private. A grey-haired Ganymede,* to whom he put the question where the landlord was, indicated a recess behind the huge stove, where, veiling his glory in a very dark and extremely hot corner, it pleased the great man to obscure himself from vulgar gaze. There was something remarkable about this person. Short, stout, bandylegged, and consequential, he was in these respects like many brethren of the profession in all countries. But the countenance of the man, and still more his manners, differed more from the merry host of France or England, than even the experienced Philipson was prepared to expect. He knew German customs too well to expect the suppliant and serviceable qualities of the master of a French inn, or even the more blunt and frank manners of an English landlord. But such German innkeepers as he had yet seen, though indeed arbitrary and peremptory in their country fashions, yet, being humoured in these, they, like tyrants in their hours of relaxation, dealt kindly with the guests over whom their sway extended, and mitigated, by jest and jollity, the harshness of their absolute power. But this man's brow was like a tragic volume, in which you were as unlikely to find anything of jest or amusement, as in a hermit's breviary. His answers were short, sudden, and repulsive, and the air and manner with which they were delivered was as surly as their tenor; which will appear from the following dialogue betwixt him and his guest:—

'Good host,' said Philipson, in the mildest tone he could assume, 'I am fatigued, and far from well—May I request to have a separate apartment, a cup of wine, and a morsel of food, in my private chamber?'

'You may,' answered the landlord, but with a look strangely at variance with the apparent acquiescence which his words naturally implied.

'Let me have such accommodation, then, with your earliest convenience.'

'Soft!' replied the innkeeper. 'I have said that you may request these things, but not that I would grant them. If you would insist on being served differently from others, it must be at another inn than mine.'

'Well, then,' said the traveller, 'I will shift without supper for a night—nay, more, I will be content to pay for a supper which I do not eat, if you will cause me to be accommodated with a private apartment.'

'Seignor Traveller,' said the innkeeper, 'every one here must be accommodated as well as you, since all pay alike. Whoso comes to this house of entertainment must eat as others eat, drink as others drink, sit at table with the rest of my guests, and go to bed when the company have done drinking.'

'All this,' said Philipson, humbling himself where anger would have been ridiculous, 'is highly reasonable; and I do not oppose myself to your laws or customs. 'But,' added he, taking his purse from his girdle, 'sickness craves some privilege; and when the patient is willing to pay for it, methinks the rigour of your laws may admit of some mitigation?'

'I keep an inn, seignor, and not a hospital. If you remain here, you shall be served with the same attention as others,—if you are not willing to do as others do, leave my house and seek another inn.'

On receiving this decisive rebuff, Philipson gave up the contest, and retired from the *sanctum sanctorum* of his ungracious host, to await the arrival of supper, penned up like a bullock in a pound amongst the crowded inhabitants of the *stube*. Some of these, exhausted by fatigue, snored away the interval between their own arrival and that of the expected repast; others conversed together on the news of the country, and others again played at dice, or such games as might serve to consume the time. The company were of various ranks, from those who were apparently wealthy and well appointed, to some whose garments and manners indicated that they were but just beyond the grasp of poverty.

A begging friar, a man apparently of a gay and pleasant temper, approached Philipson, and engaged him in conversation. The Englishman was well enough acquainted with the world, to be aware that whatever of his character and purpose it was desirable to conceal, would be best hidden under a sociable and open demeanour. He therefore received the friar's approaches graciously, and conversed with him upon the state of Lorraine, and the interest which the Duke of Burgundy's attempt to seize that fief into his own hands was likely to create both in France and Germany. On these subjects, satisfied with hearing his fellow-traveller's sentiments, Philipson expressed no opinion of his own, but, after receiving such intelligence as the friar chose to communicate, preferred rather to talk upon the geography of the country, the facilities afforded to commerce, and the rules which obstructed or favoured trade.

While he was thus engaged in the conversation which seemed most to belong to his profession, the landlord suddenly entered the room, and, mounting on the head of an old barrel, glanced his eye slowly and steadily round the crowded apartment, and when he had completed his survey, pronounced, in a decisive tone, the double command—'Shut the gates—Spread the table.'

'The Baron Saint Antonio be praised!' said the friar; 'our landlord has given up hope of any more guests to-night, until which blessed time we might have starved for want of food before he had relieved us. Ay, here comes the cloth, the old gates of the court-yard are now bolted fast enough; and when Johann Mengs has once said, "Shut the gates," the stranger may knock on the outside as he will, but we may rest assured that it shall not be opened to him.'

* [In Greek mythology, Ganymede acted as cupbearer to the gods.]

'Meinherr Mengs maintains strict discipline in his house,' said the Englishman.

'As absolute as the Duke of Burgundy,' answered the friar. 'After ten o'clock no admittance—the "seek another inn," which is before that a conditional hint, becomes, after the clock has struck, and the watchmen have begun their rounds, an absolute order of exclusion. He that is without remains without, and he that is within must, in like manner, continue there until the gates open at break of day. Till then the house is almost like a beleaguered citadel, John Mengs its seneschal'——

'And we its captives, good father,' said Philipson. 'Well content am I; a wise traveller must submit to the control of the leaders of the people when he travels; and I hope a goodly fat potentate, like John Mengs, will be as clement as his station and dignity admit of.'

While they were talking in this manner, the aged waiter, with many a weary sigh and many a groan, had drawn out certain boards, by which a table, that stood in the midst of the *stube*, had the capacity of being extended so as to contain the company present, and covered it with a cloth, which was neither distinguished by extreme cleanliness nor fineness of texture. On this table, when it had been accommodated to receive the necessary number of guests, a wooden trencher and spoon, together with a glass drinking cup, were placed before each, he being expected to serve himself with his own knife for the other purposes of the table. As for forks, they were unknown until a much later period, all the Europeans of that day making the same use of the fingers to select their morsels and transport them to the mouth, which the Asiatics now practise.

The board was no sooner arranged, than the hungry guests hastened to occupy their seats around it; for which purpose the sleepers were awakened, the dicers resigned their game, and the idlers and politicians broke off their sage debates, in order to secure their station at the supper-table, and be ready to perform their part in the interesting solemnity which seemed about to take place. But there is much between the cup and the lip, and not less sometimes between the covering of a table and the placing food upon it. The guests sat in order, each with his knife drawn, already menacing the victuals which were still subject to the operations of the cook. They had waited with various degrees of patience for full half-an-hour, when at length the old attendant before mentioned entered with a pitcher of thin Moselle wine, so light and so sharp-tasted, that Philipson put down his cup with every tooth in his head set on edge by the slender portion which he had swallowed. The landlord, John Mengs, who had assumed a seat somewhat elevated at the head of the table, did not omit to observe this mark of insubordination, and to animadvert upon it.

'The wine likes you not, I think, my master?' said he to the English merchant.

'For wine, no,' answered Philipson; 'but, could I see anything requiring such sauce, I have seldom seen better vinegar.'

This jest, though uttered in the most calm and composed manner, seemed to drive the innkeeper to fury.

'Who are you,' he exclaimed, 'for a foreign pedlar, that ventures to quarrel with my wine, which has been approved of by so many princes, dukes, reigning dukes, graves, rhinegraves, counts, barons, and knights of the Empire, whose shoes you are altogether unworthy even to clean? Was it not of this wine that the Count Palatine of Nimmersatt drank six quarts before he ever rose from the blessed chair in which I now sit?'

'I doubt it not, mine host,' said Philipson; 'nor should I think of scandalizing the sobriety of your honourable guest, even if he had drunken twice the quantity.'

'Silence, thou malicious railer!' said the host; 'and let instant apology be made to me, and the wine which you have calumniated, or I will instantly command the supper to be postponed till midnight.'

Here there was a general alarm among the guests, all abjuring any part in the censures of Philipson, and most of them proposing that John Mengs should avenge himself on the actual culprit, by turning him instantly out of doors, rather than involve so many innocent and famished persons in the consequences of his guilt. The wine they pronounced excellent; some two or three even drank their glass out, to make their words good; and they all offered, if not with lives and fortunes, at least with hands and feet, to support the ban of the house against the contumacious Englishman. While petition and remonstrance were assailing John Mengs on every side, the friar like a wise counsellor, and a trusty friend endeavoured to end the feud, by advising Philipson to submit to the host's sovereignty.

'Humble thyself, my son,' he said; 'bend the stubbornness of thy heart before the great lord of the spigot and butt. I speak for the sake of others as well as my own; for Heaven alone knows how much longer they or I can endure this extenuating fast!'

'Worthy guests,' said Philipson, 'I am grieved to have offended our respected host, and am so far from objecting to the wine, that I will pay for a double flagon of it, to be served all round to this honourable company—so only they do not ask me to share of it.'

These last words were spoken aside; but the Englishman could not fail to perceive, from the wry mouths of some of the party who were possessed of a nicer palate, that they were as much afraid as himself of a repetition of the acid potation.

The friar next addressed the company with a proposal that the foreign merchant, instead of being amerced in a measure of the liquor which he had scandalized, should be mulcted in an equal quantity of the more generous wines which were usually produced after the repast had been concluded. In this mine host as well as the guests found their advantage; and as Philipson made no objection, the proposal was unanimously adopted, and John Mengs gave, from his seat of dignity, the signal for supper to be served.

The long-expected meal appeared, and there was twice as much time employed in consuming as there had been in expecting it. The articles of which the supper consisted, as well as the mode of serving them up, were as much calculated

to try the patience of the company as the delay which had preceded its appearance. Messes of broth and vegetables followed in succession, with platters of meat sodden and roasted, of which each in its turn took a formal course around the ample table, and was specially subjected to every one in rotation. Black-puddings, hung beef, dried fish, also made the circuit, with various condiments, called Botargo, Caviare, and similar names, composed of the roes of fish mixed with spices, and the like preparations calculated to awaken thirst and encourage deep drinking. Flagons of wine accompanied these stimulating dainties. The liquor was so superior in flavour and strength to the ordinary wine which had awakened so much controversy, that it might be objected to on the opposite account, being so heady, fiery, and strong, that, in spite of the rebuffs which his criticism had already procured, Philipson ventured to ask for some cold water to allay it.

'You are too difficult to please, Sir Guest,' replied the landlord, again bending upon the Englishman a stern and offended brow; 'if you find the wine too strong in my house, the secret to allay its strength is to drink the less. It is indifferent to us whether you drink or not, so you pay the reckoning of those good fellows who do.' And he laughed a gruff laugh.

Philipson was about to reply, but the friar, retaining his character of mediator, plucked him by the cloak, and entreated him to forbear. 'You do not understand the ways of the place,' said he; 'it is not here as in the hostelries of England and France, where each guest calls for what he desires for his own use, and where he pays for what he has required, and for no more. Here we proceed on a broad principle of equality and fraternity. No one asks for anything in particular; but such provisions as the host thinks sufficient are set down before all indiscriminately; and as with the feast, so is it with the reckoning. All pay their proportions alike, without reference to the quantity of wine which one may have swallowed more than another; and thus the sick and infirm, nay, the female and the child, pay the same as the hungry peasant and strolling lanzknecht.'

'It seems an unequal custom,' said Philipson; 'but travellers are not to judge. So that, when a reckoning is called, every one, I am to understand, pays alike?'

'Such is the rule,' said the friar,—'excepting, perhaps, some poor brother of our own order, whom Our Lady and Saint Francis send into such a scene as this, that good Christians may bestow their alms upon him, and so make a step on their road to heaven.'

The first words of this speech were spoken in the open and independent tone in which the friar had begun the conversation; the last sentence died away into the professional whine of mendicity proper to the convent, and at once apprised Philipson at what price he was to pay for the friar's counsel and mediation. Having thus explained the custom of the country, good Father Gratian turned to illustrate it by his example, and, having no objection to the new service of wine on account of its strength, he seemed well disposed to signalize himself amongst some stout topers, who, by drinking deeply, appeared determined to have full pennyworths for their share of the reckoning. The good wine gradually did its office, and even the host relaxed his sullen and grim features, and smiled to see the kindling flame of hilarity catch from one to another, and at length embrace almost all the numerous guests at the *table d'hôte*, except a few who were too temperate to partake deeply of the wine, or too fastidious to enter into the discussions to which it gave rise. On these the host cast, from time to time, a sullen and displeased eye.

Philipson, who was reserved and silent, both in consequence of his abstinence from the wine-pot and his unwillingness to mix in conversation with strangers, was looked upon by the landlord as a defaulter in both particulars; and as he aroused his own sluggish nature with the fiery wine, Mengs began to throw out obscure hints about kill-joy, mar-company, spoil-sport, and such-like epithets, which were plainly directed against the Englishman. Philipson replied, with the utmost equanimity, that he was perfectly sensible that his spirits did not at this moment render him an agreeable member of a merry company, and that, with the leave of those present, he would withdraw to his sleeping apartment, and wish them all a good evening, and continuance to their mirth.

But this very reasonable proposal, as it might have elsewhere seemed, contained in it treason against the laws of German compotation.

'Who are you,' said John Mengs, 'who presume to leave the table before the reckoning is called and settled? Sapperment der teufel! we are not men upon whom such an offence is to be put with impunity! You may exhibit your polite pranks in Rams-Alley if you will, or in East-cheap, or in Smithfield; but it shall not be in John Mengs's Golden Fleece; nor will I suffer one guest to go to bed to blink out of the reckoning, and so cheat me and all the rest of my company.'

Philipson looked round, to gather the sentiments of the company, but saw no encouragement to appeal to their judgment. Indeed, many of them had little judgment left to appeal to, and those who paid any attention to the matter at all, were some quiet old soakers, who were already beginning to think of the reckoning, and were disposed to agree with the host in considering the English merchant as a flincher, who was determined to evade payment of what might be drunk after he left the room; so that John Mengs received the applause of the whole company when he concluded his triumphant denunciation against Philipson.

'Yes, sir, you may withdraw if you please; but, potz element! it shall not be for this time to seek for another inn, but to the court-yard shall you go, and no farther, there to make your bed upon the stable litter; and good enough for the man that will needs be the first to break up good company.'

'It is well said, my jovial host,' said a rich trader from Ratisbon; 'and here are some six of us—more or less—who will stand by you to maintain the good old customs of Germany; and the—umph—laudable and—and praiseworthy rules of the Golden Fleece.'

'Nay, be not angry, sir,' said Philipson; 'yourself and your three companions, whom the good wine has multiplied into six, shall have your own way of ordering the matter; and since you will not permit me to go to bed, I trust that you will take no offence if I fall asleep in my chair.'

'How say you? what think you, mine host?' said the citizen from Ratisbon; 'may the gentleman, being drunk, as you see he is, since he cannot tell that three and one make six—I say, may he, being drunk, sleep in the elbow-chair?'

This question introduced a contradiction on the part of the host, who contended that three and one made four, not six; and this again produced a retort from the Ratisbon trader. Other clamours rose at the same time, and were at length with difficulty silenced by the stanzas of a chorus song of mirth and good fellowship, which the friar, now become somewhat oblivious of the rule of Saint Francis, thundered forth with better good-will than he ever sang a canticle of King David. Under cover of this tumult, Philipson drew himself a little aside, and though he felt it impossible to sleep, as he had proposed, was yet enabled to escape the reproachful glances with which John Mengs distinguished all those who did not call for wine loudly, and drink it lustily. His thoughts roamed far from the *stube* of the Golden Fleece, and upon matter very different from that which was discussed around him, when his attention was suddenly recalled by a loud and continued knocking at the door of the hostelry.

'What have we here?' said John Mengs, his nose reddening with very indignation; 'who the Foul Fiend presses on the Golden Fleece at such an hour, as if he thundered at the door of a bordel? To the turret window some one—Geoffrey, knave ostler, or thou, old Timothy, tell the rash man there is no admittance into the Golden Fleece save at timeous hours.'

The men went as they were directed, and might be heard in the *stube* vying with each other in the positive denial which they gave to the ill-fated guest who was pressing for admission. They returned, however, to inform their master that they were unable to overcome the obstinacy of the stranger, who refused positively to depart until he had an interview with Mengs himself.

Wroth was the master of the Golden Fleece at this ill-omened pertinacity, and his indignation extended, like a fiery exhalation, from his nose all over the adjacent regions of his cheeks and brow. He started from his chair, grasped in his hand a stout stick, which seemed his ordinary sceptre or leading-staff of command, and muttering something concerning cudgels for the shoulders of fools, and pitchers of fair or foul water for the drenching of their ears, he marched off to the window which looked into the court, and left his guests nodding, winking, and whispering to each other, in full expectation of hearing the active demonstrations of his wrath. It happened otherwise, however; for, after the exchange of a few indistinct words, they were astonished when they heard the noise of the unbolting and unbarring of the gates of the inn, and presently after the footsteps of men upon the stairs; and the landlord entering, with an appearance of clumsy courtesy, prayed those assembled to make room for an honoured guest, who came, though late, to add to their numbers. A tall dark form followed, muffled in a travelling cloak; on laying aside which, Philipson at once recognised his late fellow-traveller, the Black Priest of Saint Paul's.

There was in the circumstance itself nothing at all surprising, since it was natural that a landlord, however coarse and insolent to ordinary guests, might yet show deference to an ecclesiastic, whether from his rank in the Church, or from his reputation for sanctity. But what did appear surprising to Philipson, was the effect produced by the entrance of this unexpected guest. He seated himself, without hesitation, at the highest place of the board, from which John Mengs had dethroned the aforesaid trader from Ratisbon, notwithstanding his zeal for ancient German customs, his steady adherence and loyalty to the Golden Fleece, and his propensity to brimming goblets. The priest took instant and unscrupulous possession of his seat of honour, after some negligent reply to the host's unwonted courtesy; when it seemed that the effect of his long black vestments, in place of the slashed and flounced coat of his predecessor, as well as of the cold grey eye with which he slowly reviewed the company, in some degree resembled that of the fabulous Gorgon,* and if it did not literally convert those who looked upon it into stone, there was yet something petrifying in the steady, unmoved glance with which he seemed to survey them, looking as if desirous of reading their very inmost souls, and passing from one to another, as if each upon whom he looked in succession was unworthy of longer consideration.

Philipson felt, in his turn, that momentary examination, in which, however, there mingled nothing that seemed to convey recognition. All the courage and composure of the Englishman could not prevent an unpleasant feeling while under this mysterious man's eye, so that he felt a relief when it passed from him and rested upon another of the company, who seemed in turn to acknowledge the chilling effects of that freezing glance. The noise of intoxicated mirth and drunken disputation, the clamorous argument, and the still more boisterous laugh, which had been suspended on the priest's entering the eating apartment, now, after one or two vain attempts to resume them, died away, as if the feast had been changed to a funeral, and the jovial guests had been at once converted into the lugubrious mutes who attend on such solemnities. One little rosy-faced man, who afterwards proved to be a tailor from Augsburg, ambitious, perhaps, of showing a degree of courage not usually supposed consistent with his effeminate trade, made a bold effort; and yet it was with a timid and restrained voice that he called on the jovial friar to renew his song. But whether it was that he did not dare to venture on an uncanonical pastime in presence of a brother in orders, or whether he had some other

* [A female monster, in Greek mythology, who had on her head instead of hair, snakes so hideous that whosoever gazed upon them was changed into stone.]

reason for declining the invitation, the merry churchman hung his head, and shook it with such an expressive air of melancholy, that the tailor drew back as if he had been detected in cabbaging from a cardinal's robes, or cribbing the lace of some cope or altar gown. In short, the revel was hushed into deep silence, and so attentive were the company to what should arrive next, that the bells of the village church, striking the first hour after midnight, made the guests start as if they heard them rung backwards, to announce an assault or conflagration. The Black Priest, who had taken some slight and hasty repast which the host had made no kind of objection to supplying him with, seemed to think the bells, which announced the service of lauds, being the first after midnight, a proper signal for breaking up the party.

'We have eaten,' he said, 'that we may support life; let us pray that we may be fit to meet death, which waits upon life as surely as night upon day, or the shadow upon the sunbeam, though we know not when or from whence it is to come upon us.'

The company, as if mechanically, bent their uncovered heads, while the priest said, with his deep and solemn voice, a Latin prayer, expressing thanks to God for protection throughout the day, and entreating for its continuance during the witching hours which were to pass ere the day again commenced. The hearers bowed their heads in token of acquiescence in the holy petition; and, when they raised them, the Black Priest of Saint Paul's had followed the host out of the apartment, probably to that which was destined for his repose. His absence was no sooner perceived, than signs, and nods, and even whispers, were exchanged between the guests; but no one spoke above his breath, or in such connected manner as that Philipson could understand anything distinctly from them. He himself ventured to ask the friar, who sat near him, observing at the same time the undertone which seemed to be fashionable for the moment, whether the worthy ecclesiastic who had left them was not the Priest of Saint Paul's, on the frontier town of La Ferette.

'And if you know it is he,' said the friar, with a countenance and a tone from which all signs of intoxication were suddenly banished, 'why do you ask of me?'

'Because,' said the merchant, 'I would willingly learn the spell which so suddenly converted so many merry tipplers into men of sober manners, and a jovial company into a convent of Carthusian friars?'

'Friend,' said the friar, 'thy discourse savoureth mightily of asking after what thou knowest right well. But I am no such silly duck as to be taken by a decoy. If thou knowest the Black Priest, thou canst not be ignorant of the terrors which attend his presence, and that it were safer to pass a broad jest in the holy House of Loretto,* than where he shows himself.'

So saying, and as if desirous of avoiding further discourse, he withdrew to a distance from Philipson.

At the same moment the landlord again appeared, and, with more of the usual manners of a publican than he had hitherto exhibited, commanded his waiter Geoffrey to hand round to the company a sleeping-drink, or pillow-cup, of distilled water, mingled with spices, which was indeed as good as Philipson himself had ever tasted. John Mengs, in the meanwhile, with somewhat of more deference, expressed to his guests a hope that his entertainment had given satisfaction; but this was in so careless a manner, and he seemed so conscious of deserving the affirmative which was expressed on all hands, that it became obvious there was very little humility in proposing the question. The old man Timothy was in the meantime mustering the guests, and marking with chalk on the bottom of a trencher the reckoning, the particulars of which were indicated by certain conventional hieroglyphics, while he showed on another the division of the sum-total among the company, and proceeded to collect an equal share of it from each. When the fatal trencher, in which each man paid down his money, approached the jolly friar, his countenance seemed to be somewhat changed. He cast a piteous look towards Philipson, as the person from whom he had the most hope of relief; and our merchant, though displeased with the manner in which he had held back from his confidence, yet not unwilling in a strange country to incur a little expense, in the hope of making a useful acquaintance, discharged the mendicant's score as well as his own. The poor friar paid his thanks in many a blessing in good German and bad Latin, but the host cut them short; for, approaching Philipson with a candle in his hand, he offered his own services to show him where he might sleep, and even had the condescension to carry his mail, or portmanteau, with his own landlordly hands.

'You take too much trouble, mine host,' said the merchant, somewhat surprised at the change in the manner of John Mengs, who had hitherto contradicted him at every word.

'I cannot take too much pains for a guest,' was the reply, 'whom my venerable friend, the Priest of Saint Paul's, hath especially recommended to my charge.'

He then opened the door of a small bedroom, prepared for the occupation of a guest, and said to Philipson,—'Here you may rest till to-morrow at what hour you will, and for as many days more as you incline. The key will secure your wares against theft or pillage of any kind. I do not this for every one; for if my guests were every one to have a bed to himself, the next thing they would demand might be a separate table; and then there would be an end of the good old German customs, and we should be as foppish and frivolous as our neighbours.'

He placed the portmanteau on the floor, and seemed about to leave the apartment, when, turning about, he began a sort of apology for the rudeness of his former behaviour.

'I trust there is no misunderstanding between us, my worthy guest. You might as well expect to see one of our bears come aloft and do tricks

* [At Loretto, a city on the Adriatic coast, fifteen miles south of Ancona, is the shrine that contains the sacred house in which, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary lived at Nazareth.]

like a jackanapes, as one of us stubborn old Germans play the feats of a French or an Italian host. Yet I pray you to note that, if our behaviour is rude our charges are honest, and our articles what they profess to be. We do not expect to make Moselle pass for Rhenish, by dint of a bow and a grin, nor will we sauce your mess with poison, like the wily Italian, and call you all the time Illustrissimo and Magnifico.'

He seemed in these words to have exhausted his rhetoric, for when they were spoken he turned abruptly and left the apartment.

Philipson was thus deprived of another opportunity to inquire who or what this ecclesiastic could be, that had exercised such influence on all who approached him. He felt, indeed, no desire to prolong a conference with John Mengs, though he had laid aside in such a considerable degree his rude and repulsive manners; yet he longed to know who this man could be, who had power with a word to turn aside the daggers of Alsatian banditti, habituated as they were, like most borderers, to robbery and pillage, and to change into civility the proverbial rudeness of a German innkeeper. Such were the reflections of Philipson, as he doffed his clothes to take his much-needed repose, after a day of fatigue, danger, and difficulty, on the pallet afforded by the hospitality of the Golden Fleece in the Rhein-Thal.

CHAPTER XX.

Macbeth. How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags,
What is't ye do?
Witches. A deed without a name.
MACBETH.

We have said in the conclusion of the last chapter, that, after a day of unwonted fatigue and extraordinary excitation, the merchant Philipson naturally expected to forget so many agitating passages in that deep and profound repose which is at once the consequence and the cure of extreme exhaustion. But he was no sooner laid on his lowly pallet, than he felt that the bodily machine, over-laboured by so much exercise, was little disposed to the charms of sleep. The mind had been too much excited, the body was far too feverish, to suffer him to partake of needful rest. His anxiety about the safety of his son, his conjectures concerning the issue of his mission to the Duke of Burgundy, and a thousand other thoughts which recalled past events, or speculated on those which were to come, rushed upon his mind like the waves of a perturbed sea, and prevented all tendency to repose. He had been in bed about an hour, and sleep had not yet approached his couch, when he felt that the pallet on which he lay was sinking below him, and that he was in the act of descending along with it he knew not whither. The sound of ropes and pulleys was also indistinctly heard, though every caution had been taken to make them run smooth; and the traveller, by feeling around him, became sensible that he and the bed on which he lay had been spread upon a large trap-door, which was capable of being let down into the vaults or apartments beneath.

Philipson felt fear in circumstances so well qualified to produce it; for how could he hope a safe termination to an adventure which had begun so strangely? But his apprehensions were those of a brave, ready-witted man, who, even in the extremity of danger, which appeared to surround him, preserved his presence of mind. His descent seemed to be cautiously managed, and he held himself in readiness to start to his feet and defend himself, as soon as he should be once more upon firm ground. Although somewhat advanced in years, he was a man of great personal vigour and activity, and, unless taken at advantage, which no doubt was at present much to be apprehended, he was likely to make a formidable defence. His plan of resistance, however, had been anticipated. He no sooner reached the bottom of the vault, down to which he was lowered, than two men, who had been waiting there till the operation was completed, laid hands on him from either side, and, forcibly preventing him from starting up as he intended, cast a rope over his arms, and made him a prisoner as effectually as when he was in the dungeons of La Ferette. He was obliged, therefore, to remain passive and unresisting, and await the termination of this formidable adventure. Secured as he was, he could only turn his head from one side to the other; and it was with joy that he at length saw lights twinkle, but they appeared at a great distance from him.

From the irregular manner in which these scattered lights advanced, sometimes keeping a straight line, sometimes mixing and crossing each other, it might be inferred that the subterranean vault in which they appeared was of very considerable extent. Their number also increased; and, as they collected more together, Philipson could perceive that the lights proceeded from many torches, borne by men muffled in black cloaks, like mourners at a funeral, or the Black Friars of Saint Francis's Order, wearing their cowls drawn over their heads so as to conceal their features. They appeared anxiously engaged in measuring off a portion of the apartment, and while occupied in that employment they sang, in the ancient German language, rhymes more rude than Philipson could well understand, but which may be imitated thus:—

Measures of good and evil,
Bring the square, the line, the level,—
Rear the altar, dig the trench,
Blood both stone and ditch shall drench.
Cubits six, from end to end,
Must the fatal bench extend,—
Cubits six, from side to side,
Judge and culprit must divide.
On the east the Court assembles,
On the west the Accused trembles—
Answer, brethren, all and one,
Is the ritual rightly done?

A deep chorus seemed to reply to the question. Many voices joined in it, as well of persons already in the subterranean vault, as of others who as yet remained without in various galleries and passages which communicated with it, and whom Philipson now presumed to be very numerous. The answer chanted ran as follows:—

On life and soul, on blood and bone,
One for all, and all for one,
We warrant this is rightly done.

The original strain was then renewed in the same manner as before :—

How wears the night?—Doth morning shine
In early radiance on the Rhine?
What music floats upon his tide?
Do birds the tardy morning chide?—
Brethren, look out from hill and height,
And answer true, how wears the night?

The answer was returned, though less loud than at first, and it seemed that those by whom the reply was given were at a much greater distance than before ; yet the words were distinctly heard :—

The night is old ; on Rhine's broad breast
Glance drowsy stars which long to rest ;
No beams are twinkling in the east.
There is a voice upon the flood,
The stern still call of blood for blood ;
'Tis time we listen the behest.

The chorus replied with many additional voices :—

Up, then, up ! When day's at rest,
'Tis time that such as we are watchers ;
Rise to judgment, brethren, rise !
Vengeance knows not sleepy eyes,
He and night are matchers.

The nature of the verses soon led Philipson to comprehend that he was in presence of the Initiated, or the Wise Men ; names which were applied to the celebrated Judges of the Secret Tribunal, which continued at that period to subsist in Swabia, Franconia, and other districts of the east of Germany, which was called, perhaps from the frightful and frequent occurrence of executions by command of those invisible judges, the Red Land. Philipson had often heard that the seat of a Free Count, or Chief of the Secret Tribunal, was secretly instituted even on the left bank of the Rhine, and that it maintained itself in Alsace, with the usual tenacity of those secret societies, though Duke Charles of Burgundy had expressed a desire to discover and discourage its influence so far as was possible, without exposing himself to danger from the thousands of poniards which that mysterious tribunal could put in activity against his own life ;—an awful means of defence, which for a long time rendered it extremely hazardous for the sovereigns of Germany, and even the Emperors themselves, to put down by authority those singular associations.

So soon as this explanation flashed on the mind of Philipson, it gave some clue to the character and condition of the Black Priest of Saint Paul's. Supposing him to be a president, or chief official of the secret association, there was little wonder that he should confide so much in the inviolability of his terrible office, as to propose vindicating the execution of De Hagenbach ; that his presence should surprise Bartholomew, whom he had power to have judged and executed upon the spot ; and that his mere appearance at supper on the preceding evening should have appalled the guests ; for though everything about the institution, its proceedings and its officers, was preserved in as much obscurity as is now practised in freemasonry, yet the secret was not so absolutely well kept as to prevent certain individuals from being guessed or hinted at as men initiated and entrusted with high authority by the Vehme-gericht, or tribunal of the bounds. When such suspicion attached to an individual, his secret power, and supposed acquaintance with all guilt, however secret, which was committed within the society in which he was conversant, made him at once the dread and hatred of every one who looked on him ; and he enjoyed a high degree of personal respect, on the same terms on which it would have been yielded to a powerful enchanter, or a dreaded genie. In conversing with such a person, it was especially necessary to abstain from all questions alluding, however remotely, to the office which he bore in the Secret Tribunal ; and indeed, to testify the least curiosity upon a subject so solemn and mysterious was sure to occasion some misfortune to the inquisitive person.

All these things rushed at once upon the mind of the Englishman, who felt that he had fallen into the hands of an unsparing tribunal, whose proceedings were so much dreaded by those who resided within the circle of their power, that the friendless stranger must stand a poor chance of receiving justice at their hands, whatever might be his consciousness of innocence. While Philipson made this melancholy reflection, he resolved, at the same time, not to forsake his own cause, but defend himself as he best might ; conscious as he was that these terrible and irresponsible judges were nevertheless governed by certain rules of right and wrong, which formed a check on the rigours of their extraordinary code.

He lay, therefore, devising the best means of obviating the present danger, while the persons whom he beheld glimmered before him, less like distinct and individual forms than like the phantoms of a fever, or the phantasmagoria with which a disease of the optic nerves has been known to people a sick man's chamber. At length they assembled in the centre of the apartment where they had first appeared, and seemed to arrange themselves into form and order. A great number of black torches were successively lighted, and the scene became distinctly visible. In the centre of the hall, Philipson could now perceive one of the altars which are sometimes to be found in ancient subterranean chapels. But we must pause, in order briefly to describe, not the appearance only, but the nature and constitution, of this terrible court.

Behind the altar, which seemed to be the central point, on which all eyes were bent, there were placed in parallel lines two benches covered with black cloth. Each was occupied by a number of persons, who seemed assembled as judges ; but those who held the foremost bench were fewer, and appeared of a rank superior to those who crowded the seat most remote from the altar. The first seemed to be all men of some consequence, priests high in their order, knights or noblemen ; and, notwithstanding an appearance of equality which seemed to pervade this singular institution, much more weight was laid upon their opinion or testimonies. They were called Free Knights, Counts, or whatever title they might bear ; while the inferior class of the judges were only termed Free and Worthy Burghers. For it must be observed that the Vehmique

Institution,* which was the name that it commonly bore, although its power consisted in a wide system of espionage, and the tyrannical application of force which acted upon it, was yet (so rude were the ideas of enforcing public law) accounted to confer a privilege on the country in which it was received, and only freemen were allowed to experience its influence. Serfs and peasants could neither have a place among the Free Judges, their assessors, or assistants; for there was in this assembly even some idea of trying the culprit by his peers.

Besides the dignitaries who occupied the benches, there were others who stood around, and seemed to guard the various entrances to the hall of judgment, or, standing behind the seats on which their superiors were ranged, looked prepared to execute their commands. These were members of the order, though not of the highest ranks. Schöppen is the name generally assigned to them, signifying officials, or sergeants of the Vehmique Court, whose doom they stood sworn to enforce, through good report and bad report, against their own nearest and most beloved, as well as in cases of ordinary malefactors.

The Schöppen, or Scabini, as they were termed in Latin, had another horrible duty to perform—that, namely, of denouncing to the tribunal whatever came under their observation, that might be construed as an offence falling under its cognisance; or, in their language, a crime against the Vehme. This duty extended to the judges as well as the assistants, and was to be discharged without respect of persons; so that, to know, and wilfully conceal, the guilt of a mother or brother, inferred, on the part of the unfaithful official, the same penalty as if he himself had committed the crime which his silence screened from punishment. Such an institution could only prevail at a time when ordinary means of justice were excluded by the hand of power, and when, in order to bring the guilty to punishment, it required all the influence and authority of such a confederacy. In no other country than one exposed to every species of feudal tyranny, and deprived of every ordinary mode of obtaining justice or redress, could such a system have taken root and flourished.

We must now return to the brave Englishman, who, though feeling all the danger he encountered from so tremendous a tribunal, maintained nevertheless a dignified and unaltered composure.

The meeting being assembled, a coil of ropes and a naked sword, the well-known signals and emblems of Vehmique authority, were deposited on the altar; where the sword, from its being usually straight with a cross handle, was considered as representing the blessed emblem of Christian Redemption, and the cord as indicating the right of criminal jurisdiction and capital punishment. Then the president of the meeting, who occupied the centre seat on the foremost bench, arose, and, laying his hand on the symbols, pronounced aloud the formula expressive of the duty of the tribunal, which all the inferior judges and assistants repeated after him, in deep and hollow murmurs.

'I swear by the Holy Trinity, to aid and co-operate, without relaxation, in the things belonging to the Holy Vehme, to defend its doctrines and institutions against father and mother, brother and sister, wife and children; against fire, water, earth, and air; against all that the sun enlightens; against all that the dew moistens; against all created things of heaven and earth, or the waters under the earth; and I swear to give information to this holy judicature, of all that I know to be true, or hear repeated by credible testimony, which, by the rules of the Holy Vehme, is deserving of animadversion or punishment; and that I will not cloak, cover, or conceal such my knowledge, neither for love, friendship, or family affection, nor for gold, silver, or precious stones; neither will I associate with such as are under the sentence of this sacred tribunal, by hinting to a culprit his danger, or advising him to escape, or aiding and supplying him with counsel or means to that effect; neither will I relieve such culprit with fire, clothes, food, or shelter, though my father should require from me a cup of water in the heat of summer noon, or my brother should request to sit by my fire in the bitterest cold night of winter: And further, I vow and promise to honour this holy association, and do its behests speedily, faithfully, and firmly, in preference to those of any other tribunal whatsoever—so help me God, and his holy Evangelists.'

When this oath of office had been taken, the president, addressing the assembly, as men who judge in secret and punish in secret like the Deity, desired them to say why this 'child of the cord'† lay before them bound and helpless? An individual rose from the more remote bench, and in a voice which, though altered and agitated, Philipson conceived that he recognised, declared himself the accuser, as bound by his oath, of the child of the cord, or prisoner, who lay before them.

'Bring forward the prisoner,' said the president, 'duly secured, as is the order of our secret law; but not with such severity as may interrupt his attention to the proceedings of the tribunal, or limit his power of hearing and replying.'

Six of the assistants immediately dragged forward the pallet and platform of boards on which Philipson lay, and advanced it towards the foot of the altar. This done, each unsheathed his dagger, while two of them unloosed the cords by which the merchant's hands were secured, and admonished him in a whisper that the slightest attempt to resist or escape would be the signal to stab him dead.

'Arise!' said the president; 'listen to the charge to be preferred against you, and believe you shall in us find judges equally just and inflexible.'

Philipson, carefully avoiding any gesture which might indicate a desire to escape, raised

* The word Wehme, pronounced Vehmey, is of uncertain derivation, but was always used to intimate this inquisitorial and secret court. The members were termed Wissenden, or Initiated, answering to the modern phrase of Illuminati. Mr. Palgrave seems inclined to derive the word *Vehme* from *Ehme*, i.e. *Law*, and he is probably right.

† The term *Strick-kind*, or child of the cord, was applied to the person accused before these awful assemblies.

his body on the lower part of the couch, and remained seated, clothed as he was in his under-vest and *caleçons*, or drawers, so as exactly to face the muffled president of the terrible court. Even in these agitating circumstances, the mind of the undaunted Englishman remained unshaken, and his eyelid did not quiver, nor his heart beat quicker, though he seemed, according to the expression of Scripture, to be a pilgrim in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, beset by numerous snares, and encompassed by total darkness, where light was most necessary for safety.

The president demanded his name, country, and occupation.

'John Philipson,' was the reply; 'by birth an Englishman, by profession a merchant.'

'Have you ever borne any other name and profession?' demanded the judge.

'I have been a soldier, and, like most others, had then a name by which I was known in war.'

'What was that name?'

'I laid it aside when I resigned my sword, and I do not desire again to be known by it. Moreover, I never bore it where your institutions have weight and authority,' answered the Englishman.

'Know you before whom you stand?' continued the judge.

'I may at least guess,' replied the merchant.

'Tell your guess, then,' continued the interrogator. 'Say who we are, and wherefore are you before us?'

'I believe that I am before the Unknown or Secret Tribunal, which is called Vehme-gericht.'

'Then are you aware,' answered the judge, 'that you would be safer if you were suspended by the hair over the Abyss of Schaffhausen,* or if you lay below an axe, which a thread of silk alone kept back from the fall. What have you done to deserve such a fate?'

'Let those reply by whom I am subjected to it,' answered Philipson, with the same composure as before.

'Speak, accuser,' said the president, 'to the four quarters of heaven!—To the ears of the Free Judges of this tribunal, and the faithful executors of their doom!—And to the face of the child of the cord, who denies or conceals his guilt, make good the substance of thine accusation!'

'Most dreaded,' answered the accuser, addressing the president, 'this man hath entered the sacred territory which is called the Red Land,—a stranger under a disguised name and profession. When he was yet on the eastern side of the Alps, at Turin, in Lombardy, and elsewhere, he at various times spoke of the Holy Tribunal in terms of hatred and contempt, and declared that, were he Duke of Burgundy, he would not permit it to extend itself from Westphalia or Swabia into his dominions. Also I charge him, that, nourishing this malevolent intention against the Holy Tribunal, he who now appears before the bench as child of the cord has intimated his intention to wait upon the court of the Duke of Burgundy, and use his influence with him, which he boasts will prove effectual, to stir him up to prohibit the meetings of the Holy Vehme in his dominions, and to inflict on their officers, and the executors of their mandates, the punishment due to robbers and assassins.'

'This is a heavy charge, brother!' said the president of the assembly, when the accuser ceased speaking—'How do you purpose to make it good?'

'According to the tenor of those secret statutes, the perusal of which is prohibited to all but the initiated,' answered the accuser.

'It is well,' said the president; 'but I ask thee once more, What are those means of proof?—You speak to holy and to initiated ears.'

'I will prove my charge,' said the accuser, 'by the confession of the party himself, and by my own oath upon the holy emblems of the Secret Judgment — that is, the steel and the cord.'

'It is a legitimate offer of proof,' said a member of the aristocratic bench of the assembly; 'and it much concerns the safety of the system to which we are bound by such deep oaths, a system handed down to us from the most Christian and holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne, for the conversion of the heathen Saracens, and punishing such of them as revolted again to their pagan practices, that such criminals should be looked to. This Duke Charles of Burgundy hath already crowded his army with foreigners, whom he can easily employ against this sacred court, more especially with English, a fierce insular people, wedded to their own usages, and hating those of every other nation. It is not unknown to us that the Duke hath already encouraged opposition to the officials of the tribunal in more than one part of his German dominions; and that, in consequence, instead of submitting to their doom with reverent resignation, children of the cord have been found bold enough to resist the executioners of the Vehme, striking, wounding, and even slaying those who have received commission to put them to death. This contumacy must be put an end to; and if the accused shall be proved to be one of those by whom such doctrines are harboured and inculcated, I say let the steel and cord do their work on him.'

A general murmur seemed to approve what the speaker had said; for all were conscious that the power of the tribunal depended much more on the opinion of its being deeply and firmly rooted in the general system, than upon any regard or esteem for an institution, of which all felt the severity. It followed that those of the members who enjoyed consequence by means of their station in the ranks of the Vehme, saw the necessity of supporting its terrors by occasional examples of severe punishment; and none could be more readily sacrificed than an unknown and wandering foreigner. All this rushed upon Philipson's mind, but did not prevent his making a steady reply to the accusation.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'good citizens, burgesses, or by whatever other name you please to be addressed, know that in my former days I have stood in as great peril as now, and have never turned my heel to save my life. Cords and

* [An allusion to the imposing falls of the Rhine near Schaffhausen in Switzerland.]

daggers are not calculated to strike terror into those who have seen swords and lances. My answer to the accusation is, that I am an Englishman, one of a nation accustomed to yield and to receive open-handed and equal justice dealt forth in the broad light of day. I am, however, a traveller, who knows that he has no right to oppose the rules and laws of other nations, because they do not resemble those of his own. But this caution can only be called for in lands where the system about which we converse is in full force and operation. If we speak of the institutions of Germany, being at the time in France or Spain, we may, without offence to the country in which they are current, dispute concerning them, as students debate upon a logical thesis in a university. The accuser objects to me, that at Turin, or elsewhere in the north of Italy, I spoke with censure of the institution under which I am now judged. I will not deny that I remember something of the kind; but it was in consequence of the question being in a manner forced upon me by two guests, with whom I chanced to find myself at table. I was much and earnestly solicited for an opinion ere I gave one.'

'And was that opinion,' said the presiding judge, 'favourable or otherwise to the Holy and Secret Vehme-gericht? Let truth rule your tongue — remember, life is short, judgment is eternal!'

'I would not save my life at the expense of a falsehood. My opinion was unfavourable; and I expressed myself thus:—No laws or judicial proceedings can be just or commendable, which exist and operate by means of a secret combination. I said that justice could only live and exist in the open air, and that when she ceased to be public, she degenerated into revenge and hatred. I said that a system, of which your own jurists have said, *Non frater a fratre, non hospes a hospite, tutus*, was too much adverse to the laws of nature, to be connected with or regulated by those of religion.'

These words were scarcely uttered, when there burst a murmur from the judges highly unfavourable to the prisoner,—'He blasphemes the Holy Vehme—Let his mouth be closed for ever!'

'Hear me,' said the Englishman, 'as you will one day wish to be yourselves heard! I say such were my sentiments, and so I expressed them—I say also, I had a right to express these opinions, whether sound or erroneous, in a neutral country, where this tribunal neither did, nor could, claim any jurisdiction. My sentiments are still the same. I would avow them if that sword were at my bosom, or that cord around my throat. But I deny that I have ever spoken against the institutions of your Vehme in a country where it had its course as a national mode of justice. Far more strongly, if possible, do I denounce the absurdity of the falsehood which represents me, a wandering foreigner, as commissioned to traffic with the Duke of Burgundy about such high matters, or to form a conspiracy for the destruction of a system to which so many seem warmly attached. I never said such a thing, and I never thought it.'

'Accuser,' said the presiding judge, 'thou hast heard the accused—What is thy reply?'

'The first part of the charge,' said the accuser, 'he hath confessed in this high presence, namely, that his foul tongue hath basely slandered our holy mysteries; for which he deserves that it should be torn out of his throat. I myself, on my oath of office, will aver, as use and law is, that the rest of the accusation, namely, that which taxes him as having entered into machinations for the destruction of the Vehmique institutions, is as true as those which he has found himself unable to deny.'

'In justice,' said the Englishman, 'the accusation, if not made good by satisfactory proof, ought to be left to the oath of the party accused, instead of permitting the accuser to establish by his own deposition the defects in his own charge.'

'Stranger,' replied the presiding judge, 'we permit to thy ignorance a longer and more full defence than consists with our usual forms. Know that the right of sitting among these venerable judges confers on the person of him who enjoys it a sacredness of character which ordinary men cannot attain to. The oath of one of the initiated must counterbalance the most solemn asseveration of every one that is not acquainted with our holy secrets. In the Vehmique Court all must be Vehmique. The averment of the Emperor, he being uninitiated, would not have so much weight in our counsels as that of one of the meanest of these officials. The affirmation of the accuser can only be rebutted by the oath of a member of the same tribunal, being of superior rank.'

'Then God be gracious to me, for I have no trust save in Heaven!' said the Englishman in solemn accents. 'Yet I will not fall without an effort. I call upon thee thyself, dark spirit, who presidest in this most deadly assembly—I call upon thyself to declare, on thy faith and honour, whether thou holdest me guilty of what is thus boldly averred by this false calumniator—I call upon thee by thy sacred character—by the name of'——

'Hold!' replied the presiding judge. 'The name by which we are known in open air must not be pronounced in this subterranean judgment-seat.'

He then proceeded to address the prisoner and the assembly—'I, being called on in evidence, declare that the charge against thee is so far true as it is acknowledged by thyself, namely, that thou hast, in other lands than the Red Soil,* spoken lightly of this holy institution of justice. But I believe in my soul, and will bear witness on my honour, that the rest of the accusation is incredible and false. And this I swear, holding my hand on the dagger and the cord.—What is your judgment, my brethren, upon the case which you have investigated?'

A member of the first-seated and highest class

* The parts of Germany subjected to the operation of the Secret Tribunal were called, from the blood which it spilt, or from some other reason (Mr. Palgrave suggests the ground tincture of the ancient banner of the district), the Red Soil. Westphalia, as the limits of that country were understood in the Middle Ages, which are considerably different from the present boundaries, was the principal theatre of the Vehme.

amongst the judges, muffled like the rest, but the tone of whose voice, and the stoop of whose person, announced him to be more advanced in years than the other two who had before spoken, arose with difficulty, and said with a trembling voice,—

'The child of the cord who is before us, has been convicted of folly and rashness in slandering our holy institution. But he spoke his folly to ears which had never heard our sacred laws—He has therefore been acquitted by irrefragable testimony of combining for the impotent purpose of undermining our power, or stirring up princes against our holy association, for which death were too light a punishment—He hath been foolish, then, but not criminal; and as the holy laws of the Vehme bear no penalty save that of death, I propose for judgment that the child of the cord be restored without injury to society, and to the upper world, having been first duly admonished of his errors.'

'Child of the cord,' said the presiding judge, 'thou hast heard thy sentence of acquittal. But as thou desirest to sleep in an unbloody grave, let me warn thee that the secrets of this night shall remain with thee, as a secret not to be communicated to father nor mother, to spouse, son, or daughter; neither to be spoken aloud nor whispered; to be told in words or written in characters; to be carved or to be painted, or to be otherwise communicated, either directly or by parable and emblem. Obey this behest, and thy life is in surety. Let thy heart then rejoice within thee, but let it rejoice with trembling. Never more let thy vanity persuade thee that thou art secure from the servants and Judges of the Holy Vehme. Though a thousand leagues lie between thee and the Red Land, and thou speakest in that where our power is not known; though thou shouldst be sheltered by thy native island, and defended by thy kindred ocean, yet, even there, I warn thee to cross thyself when thou dost so much as think of the Holy and Invisible Tribunal, and to retain thy thoughts within thine own bosom; for the avenger may be beside thee, and thou mayst die in thy folly. Go hence, be wise, and let the fear of the Holy Vehme never pass from before thine eyes.'

At the concluding words, all the lights were at once extinguished with a hissing noise. Philipson felt once more the grasp of the hands of the officials, to which he resigned himself as the safest course. He was gently prostrated on his pallet-bed, and transported back to the place from which he had been advanced to the foot of the altar. The cordage was again applied to the platform, and Philipson was sensible that his couch rose with him for a few moments, until a slight shock apprised him that he was again brought to a level with the floor of the chamber in which he had been lodged on the preceding night, or rather morning. He pondered over the events that had passed, in which he was sensible that he owed Heaven thanks for a great deliverance. Fatigue at length prevailed over anxiety, and he fell into a deep and profound sleep, from which he was only awakened by returning light. He resolved on an instant departure from so dangerous a spot, and, without seeing any one of the household but the old ostler, pursued his journey to Strassburg and reached that city without further accident.

CHAPTER XXI.

Away with these!—True Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties, streams, and dells—
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells,
From grey but leafy walls, where ruin greenly dwells.
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE, *Canto III.*

WHEN Arthur Philipson left his father, to go on board the bark which was to waft him across the Rhine, he took but few precautions for his own subsistence, during a separation of which he calculated the duration to be very brief. Some necessary change of raiment, and a very few pieces of gold, were all which he thought it needful to withdraw from the general stock; the rest of the baggage and money he left with the sumpter-horse, which he concluded his father might need, in order to sustain his character as an English trader. Having embarked with his horse and his slender appointments on board a fishing skiff, she instantly raised her temporary mast, spread a sail across the yard, and, supported by the force of the wind against the downward power of the current, moved across the river obliquely in the direction of Kirch-hoff, which, as we have said, lies somewhat lower on the river than Hans-Chapelle. Their passage was so favourable, that they reached the opposite side in a few minutes, but not until Arthur, whose eye and thoughts were on the left bank, had seen his father depart from the Chapel of the Ferry, accompanied by two horsemen, whom he readily concluded to be the guide Bartholomew, and some chance traveller who had joined him; but the second of whom was in truth the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, as has been already mentioned.

This augmentation of his father's company was, he could not but think, likely to be attended with an increase of his safety, since it was not probable he would suffer a companion to be forced upon him, and one of his own choosing might be a protection, in case his guide should prove treacherous. At any rate, he had to rejoice that he had seen his father depart in safety from the spot where they had reason to apprehend some danger awaited him. He resolved, therefore, to make no stay at Kirch-hoff, but to pursue his way, as fast as possible, towards Strassburg, and rest, when darkness compelled him to stop in one of the *dorfs*, or villages, which were situated on the German side of the Rhine. At Strassburg, he trusted, with the sanguine spirit of youth, he might again be able to rejoin his father; and if he could not altogether subdue his anxiety on their separation, he fondly nourished the hope that he might meet him in safety. After some short refreshment and repose afforded to his horse, he lost no time in proceeding on his journey down the eastern bank of the broad river.

He was now upon the most interesting side of the Rhine, walled in and repelled as the river is on that shore by the most romantic cliffs, now mantled with vegetation of the richest hue, tinged with all the variegated colours of autumn; now surmounted by fortresses, over whose gates were displayed the pennons of their proud owners; or studded with hamlets, where the richness of the soil supplied to the poor labourer the food of which the oppressive hand of his superior threatened altogether to deprive him. Every stream which here contributes its waters to the Rhine winds through its own tributary dell, and each valley possesses a varying and separate character, some rich with pastures, cornfields, and vineyards, some frowning with crags and precipices, and other romantic beauties.

The principles of taste were not then explained or analyzed as they have been since, in countries where leisure has been found for this investigation. But the feelings arising from so rich a landscape as is displayed by the valley of the Rhine, must have been the same in every bosom, from the period when our Englishman took his solitary journey through it, in doubt and danger, till that in which it heard the indignant Childe Harold bid a proud farewell to his native country, in the vain search of a land in which his heart might throb less fiercely.

Arthur enjoyed the scene, although the fading daylight began to remind him that, alone as he was, and travelling with a very valuable charge, it would be matter of prudence to look out for some place of rest during the night. Just as he had formed the resolution of inquiring at the next habitation he passed, which way he should follow for this purpose, the road he pursued descended into a beautiful amphitheatre filled with large trees, which protected from the heats of summer the delicate and tender herbage of the pasture. A large brook flowed through it and joined the Rhine. At a short mile up the brook, its waters made a crescent round a steep craggy eminence, crowned with flanking walls, and Gothic towers and turrets, enclosing a feudal castle of the first order. A part of the savanna that has been mentioned had been irregularly cultivated for wheat, which had grown a plentiful crop. It was gathered in, but the patches of deep yellow stubble contrasted with the green of the undisturbed pasture land, and with the seared and dark-red foliage of the broad oaks which stretched their arms athwart the level space. There a lad, in a rustic dress, was employed in the task of netting a brood of partridges with the assistance of a trained spaniel; while a young woman, who had the air rather of a domestic in some family of rank, than that of an ordinary villager, sat on the stump of a decayed tree, to watch the progress of the amusement. The spaniel, whose duty it was to drive the partridges under the net, was perceptibly disturbed at the approach of the traveller; his attention was divided, and he was obviously in danger of marring the sport, by barking and putting up the covey, when the maiden quitted her seat, and, advancing towards Philipson, requested him for courtesy to pass at a greater distance, and not interfere with their amusement.

The traveller willingly complied with her request.

'I will ride, fair damsel,' he said, 'at whatever distance you please. And allow me, in guerdon, to ask whether there is convent, castle, or good man's house, where a stranger, who is belated and weary, might receive a night's hospitality?'

The girl, whose face he had not yet distinctly seen, seemed to suppress some desire to laugh, as she replied, 'Hath not yon castle, think you,' pointing to the distant towers, 'some corner which might accommodate a stranger in such extremity?'

'Space enough, certainly,' said Arthur; 'but perhaps little inclination to grant it.'

'I myself,' said the girl, 'being one, and a formidable part of the garrison, will be answerable for your reception. But as you parley with me in such hostile fashion, it is according to martial order that I should put down my visor.'

So saying, she concealed her face under one of those riding masks, which at that period women often wore when they went abroad, whether for protecting their complexion, or screening themselves from intrusive observation. But ere she could accomplish this operation, Arthur had detected the merry countenance of Annette Veilchen, a girl who, though her attendance on Anne of Geierstein was in a menial capacity, was held in high estimation at Geierstein. She was a bold wench, unaccustomed to the distinctions of rank, which were little regarded in the simplicity of the Helvetian hills, and she was ready to laugh, jest, and flirt with the young men of the Landamman's family. This attracted no attention, the mountain manners making little distinction between the degrees of attendant and mistress, further than that the mistress was a young woman who required help, and the maiden one who was in a situation to offer and afford it. This kind of familiarity would perhaps have been dangerous in other lands, but the simplicity of Swiss manners, and the turn of Annette's disposition, which was resolute and sensible, though rather bold and free, when compared to the manners of more civilised countries, kept all intercourse betwixt her and the young men of the family in the strict path of honour and innocence.

Arthur himself had paid considerable attention to Annette, being naturally, from his feelings towards Anne of Geierstein, heartily desirous to possess the good graces of her attendant; a point which was easily gained by the attentions of a handsome young man, and the generosity with which he heaped upon her small presents of articles of dress or ornament, which the damsel, however faithful, could find no heart to refuse.

The assurance that he was in Anne's neighbourhood, and that he was likely to pass the night under the same roof, both of which circumstances were intimated by the girl's presence and language, sent the blood in a hastier current through Arthur's veins; for though, since he had crossed the river, he had sometimes nourished hopes of again seeing her who had made so strong an impression on his imagination, yet his understanding had as often told him how slight was the chance of their meeting, and it was even now

chilled by the reflection, that it could be followed only by the pain of a sudden and final separation. He yielded himself, however, to the prospect of promised pleasure, without attempting to ascertain what was to be its duration or its consequence. Desirous, in the meantime, to hear as much of Anne's circumstances as Annette chose to tell, he resolved not to let that merry maiden perceive that she was known by him, until she chose of her own accord to lay aside her mystery.

While these thoughts passed rapidly through his imagination, Annette bade the lad drop his nets, and directed him that, having taken two of the best fed partridges from the covey, and carried them into the kitchen, he was to set the rest at liberty.

'I must provide supper,' said she to the traveller, 'since I am bringing home unexpected company.'

Arthur earnestly expressed his hope that his experiencing the hospitality of the castle would occasion no trouble to the inmates, and received satisfactory assurances upon the subject of his scruples.

'I would not willingly be the cause of inconvenience to your mistress,' pursued the traveller.

'Look you there,' said Annette Veilchen; 'I have said nothing of master or mistress, and this poor forlorn traveller has already concluded in his own mind that he is to be harboured in a lady's bower!'

'Why, did you not tell me,' said Arthur, somewhat confused at his blunder, 'that you were the person of second importance in the place? A damsel, I judged, could only be an officer under a female governor.'

'I do not see the justness of the conclusion,' replied the maiden. 'I have known ladies bear offices of trust in lords' families; nay, and over the lords themselves.'

'Am I to understand, fair damsel, that you hold so predominant a situation in the castle which we are now approaching, and of which I pray you to tell me the name.'

'The name of the castle is Arnheim,' said Annette.

'Your garrison must be a large one,' said Arthur, looking at the extensive building, 'if you are able to man such a labyrinth of walls and towers.'

'In that point,' said Annette, 'I must needs own we are very deficient. At present we rather hide in the castle than inhabit it; and yet it is well enough defended by the reports which frighten every other person who might disturb its seclusion.'

'And yet you yourselves dare to reside in it?' said the Englishman, recollecting the tale which had been told by Rudolph Donnerhugel, concerning the character of the Barons of Arnheim, and the final catastrophe of the family.

'Perhaps,' replied his guide, 'we are too intimate with the cause of such fears to feel ourselves strongly oppressed with them—perhaps we have means of encountering the supposed terrors proper to ourselves—perhaps, and it is not the least likely conjecture, we have no choice of a better place of refuge. Such seems to be your own fate at present, sir, for the tops of the distant hills are gradually losing the lights of the evening; and if you rest not in Arnheim, well contented or not, you are likely to find no safe lodging for many a mile.'

As she thus spoke, she separated from Arthur, taking, with the fowler who attended her, a very steep but short footpath, which ascended straight up to the site of the castle; at the same time motioning to the young Englishman to follow a horse-track, which, more circuitous, led to the same point, and, though less direct, was considerably more easy.

He soon stood before the south front of Arnheim Castle, which was a much larger building than he had conceived, either from Rudolph's description, or from the distant view. It had been erected at many different periods, and a considerable part of the edifice was less in the strict Gothic than in what has been termed the Saracenic style, in which the imagination of the architect is more florid than that which is usually indulged in the North,—rich in minarets, cupolas, and similar approximations to Oriental structures. This singular building bore a general appearance of desolation and desertion, but Rudolph had been misinformed when he declared that it had become ruinous. On the contrary, it had been maintained with considerable care; and when it fell into the hands of the Emperor, although no garrison was maintained within its precincts, care was taken to keep the building in repair; and though the prejudices of the country people prevented any one from passing the night within the fearful walls, yet it was regularly visited from time to time by a person having commission from the Imperial Chancery to that effect. The occupation of the domain around the castle was a valuable compensation for this official person's labour, and he took care not to endanger the loss of it by neglecting his duty. Of late this officer had been withdrawn, and now it appeared that the young Baroness of Arnheim had found refuge in the deserted towers of her ancestors.

The Swiss damsel did not leave the youthful traveller time to study particularly the exterior of the castle, or to construe the meaning of emblems and mottoes, seemingly of an Oriental character, with which the outside was inscribed, and which expressed in various modes, more or less directly, the attachment of the builders of this extensive pile to the learning of the Eastern sages. Ere he had time to take more than a general survey of the place, the voice of the Swiss maiden called him to an angle of the wall in which there was a projection, from whence a long plank extended over a dry moat, and was connected with a window in which Annette was standing.

'You have forgotten your Swiss lessons already,' said she, observing that Arthur went rather timidly about crossing the temporary and precarious drawbridge.

The reflection that Anne, her mistress, might make the same observation, recalled the young traveller to the necessary degree of composure. He passed over the plank with the same *sang froid* with which he had learned to brave the far more terrific bridge beneath the ruinous Castle of Geierstein. He had no sooner entered the window than Annette, taking off her mask,

bade him welcome to Germany, and to old friends with new names.

'Anne of Geierstein,' she said, 'is no more; but you will presently see the Lady Baroness of Arnheim, who is extremely like her; and I, who was Annette Veilchen in Switzerland, the servant to a damsel who was not esteemed much greater than myself, am now the young Baroness's waiting-woman, and make everybody of less quality stand back.'

'If, in such circumstances,' said young Philipson, 'you have the influence due to your consequence, let me beseech of you to tell the Baroness, since we must now call her so, that my present intrusion on her is occasioned by my ignorance.'

'Away, away,' said the girl, laughing; 'I know better what to say in your behalf. You are not the first poor man and pedlar that has got the graces of a great lady; but I warrant you it was not by making humble apologies, and talking of unintentional intrusion. I will tell her of love which all the Rhine cannot quench, and which has driven you hither, leaving you no other choice than to come or to perish!'

'Nay but, Annette, Annette'——

'Fie on you for a fool,—make a shorter name of it,—cry Anne, Anne! and there will be more prospect of your being answered.'

So saying, the wild girl ran out of the room, delighted, as a mountaineer of her description was likely to be, with the thought of having done as she would desire to be done by, in her benevolent exertions to bring two lovers together, when on the eve of inevitable separation.

In this self-approving disposition, Annette sped up a narrow turnpike stair to a closet, or dressing-room, where her young mistress was seated, and exclaimed, with open mouth,—'Anne of Gei——I mean my Lady Baroness, they are come—they are come!'

'The Philipsons?' said Anne, almost breathless as she asked the question.

'Yes—no'— answered the girl; 'that is, yes,—for the best of them is come, and that is Arthur.'

'What meanest thou, girl? Is not Seignor Philipson, the father, along with his son?'

'Not he, indeed,' answered Veilchen, 'nor did I ever think of asking about him. He was no friend of mine, nor of any one else, save the old Landamman; and well met they were for a couple of wiseacres, with eternal proverbs in their mouths and care upon their brows.'

'Unkind, inconsiderate girl, what hast thou done?' said Anne of Geierstein. 'Did I not warn and charge thee to bring them both hither? and you have brought the young man alone to a place where we are nearly in solitude? What will he—what can he think of me?'

'Why, what should I have done?' said Annette, remaining firm in her argument. 'He was alone, and should I have sent him down to the *dorf* to be murdered by the Rhinegrave's lanzknechts? All is fish, I trow, that comes to their net; and how is he to get through this country, so beset with wandering soldiers, robber barons (I beg your ladyship's pardon), and roguish Italians, flocking to the Duke of Burgundy's standard?—Not to mention the greatest terror of all, that is never in one shape or other absent from one's eye or thought.'

'Hush, hush, girl! add not utter madness to the excess of folly; but let us think what is to be done. For our sake, for his own, this unfortunate young man must leave this castle instantly.'

'You must take the message yourself, then, Anne—I beg pardon, most noble Baroness;—it may be very fit for a lady of high birth to send such a message, which, indeed, I have heard the minnesingers tell in their romances; but I am sure it is not a meet one for me, or any frank-hearted Swiss girl, to carry. No more foolery; but remember, if you were born Baroness of Arnheim, you have been bred and brought up in the bosom of the Swiss hills, and should conduct yourself like an honest and well-meaning damsel.'

'And in what does your wisdom reprehend my folly, good Mademoiselle Annette?' replied the baroness.

'Ay, marry! now our noble blood stirs in our veins. But remember, gentle my lady, that it was a bargain between us when I left yonder noble mountains, and the free air that blows over them, to coop myself up in this land of prisons and slaves, that I should speak my mind to you as freely as I did when our heads lay on the same pillow.'

'Speak, then,' said Anne, studiously averting her face as she prepared to listen; 'but beware that you say nothing which it is unfit for me to hear.'

'I will speak nature and common sense; and if your noble ears are not made fit to hear and understand these, the fault lies in them, and not in my tongue. Look you, you have saved this youth from two great dangers,—one at the earth-shoot at Geierstein, the other this very day, when his life was beset. A handsome young man he is, well spoken, and well qualified to gain deservedly a lady's favour. Before you saw him, the Swiss youth were at least not odious to you. You danced with them,—you jested with them,—you were the general object of their admiration,—and, as you well know, you might have had your choice through the canton—Why, I think it possible a little urgency might have brought you to think of Rudolph Donnerhugel as your mate.'

'Never, wench, never!' exclaimed Anne.

'Be not so very positive, my lady. Had he recommended himself to the uncle in the first place, I think, in my poor sentiment, he might at some lucky moment have carried the niece. But since we have known this young Englishman, it has been little less than contemning, despising, and something like hating, all the men whom you could endure well enough before.'

'Well, well,' said Anne, 'I will detest and hate thee more than any of them, unless you bring your matters to an end.'

'Softly, noble lady, fair and easy go far. All this argues you love the young man, and let those say that you are wrong who think there is anything wonderful in the matter. There is much to justify you, and nothing that I know against it.'

'What, foolish girl! Remember my birth

forbids me to love a mean man—my condition to love a poor man—my father's commands to love one whose addresses are without his consent; above all, my maidenly pride forbids me fixing my affections on one who cares not for me,—nay, perhaps, is prejudiced against me by appearances.'

'Here is a fine homily!' said Annette; 'but I can clear every point of it as easily as Father Francis does his text in a holiday sermon. Your birth is a silly dream, which you have only learned to value within these two or three days, when, having come to German soil, some of the old German weed, usually called family pride, has begun to germinate in your heart. Think of such folly as you thought when you lived at Geierstein, that is, during all the rational part of your life, and this great terrible prejudice will sink into nothing. By condition I conceive you mean estate. But Philipson's father, who is the most free-hearted of men, will surely give his son as many zecchins as will stock a mountain farm. You have firewood for the cutting, and land for the occupying, since you are surely entitled to part of Geierstein, and gladly will your uncle put you in possession of it. You can manage the dairy; Arthur can shoot, hunt, fish, plough, harrow, and reap.'

Anne of Geierstein shook her head, as if she greatly doubted her lover's skill in the last of the accomplishments enumerated.

'Well, well, he can learn, then,' said Annette Veilchen; 'and you will only live the harder the first year or so. Besides, Sigismund Biederman will aid him willingly, and he is a very horse at labour; and I know another besides, who is a friend'——

'Of thine own, I warrant,' quoth the young baroness.

'Marry, it is my poor friend Martin Sprenger; and I'll never be so false-hearted as to deny my bachelor.'

'Well, well, but what is to be the end of all this?' said the baroness impatiently.

'The end of it, in my opinion,' said Annette, 'is very simple. Here are priests and prayer-books within a mile—go down to the parlour, speak your mind to your lover, or hear him speak his mind to you; join hands, go quietly back to Geierstein in the character of man and wife, and get everything ready to receive your uncle on his return. This is the way that a plain Swiss wench would cut off the romance of a German baroness'——

'And break the heart of her father,' said the young lady, with a sigh.

'It is more tough than you are aware of,' replied Annette; 'he hath not lived without you so long but that he will be able to spare you for the rest of his life, a great deal more easily than you, with all your new-fangled ideas of quality, will be able to endure his schemes of wealth and ambition, which will aim at making you the wife of some illustrious count, like De Hagenbach, whom we saw not long since make such an edifying end, to the great example of all robber-chivalry upon the Rhine.'

'Thy plan is naught, wench; a childish vision of a girl who never knew more of life than she has heard told over her milking-pail. Remember that my uncle entertains the highest ideas of family discipline, and that to act contrary to my father's will would destroy us in his good opinion. Why else am I here? wherefore has he resigned his guardianship? and why am I obliged to change the habits that are dear to me, and assume the manners of a people that are strange, and therefore unpleasing to me?'

'Your uncle,' said Annette firmly, 'is Landamman of the Canton of Unterwalden; respects its freedom, and is the sworn protector of its laws, of which, when you, a denizen of the Confederacy, claim the protection, he cannot refuse it to you.'

'Even then,' said the young baroness, 'I should forfeit his good opinion, his more than paternal affection; but it is needless to dwell upon this. Know that although I could have loved the young man, whom I will not deny to be as amiable as your partiality paints him—Know'—she hesitated for a moment—'that he has never spoken a word to me on such a subject as you, without knowing either his sentiments or mine, would intrude on my consideration.'

'Is it possible?' answered Annette. 'I thought—I believed, though I have never pressed on your confidence—that you must—attached as you were to each other—have spoken together, like true maid and true bachelor, before now. I have done wrong, when I thought to do for the best.—Is it possible!—such things have been heard of even in our canton—is it possible he can have harboured so unutterably base purposes, as that Martin of Breisach, who made love to Adela of the Sundgau, enticed her to folly—the thing, though almost incredible, is true,—fled—fled from the country and boasted of his villany, till her cousin Raymond silenced for ever his infamous triumph, by beating his brains out with his club, even in the very street of the villain's native town? By the Holy Mother of Einsiedlen! could I suspect this Englishman of meditating such treason, I would saw the plank across the moat till a fly's weight would break it, and it should be at six fathom deep that he should abye the perfidy which dared to meditate dishonour against an adopted daughter of Switzerland.'

As Annette spoke, all the fire of her mountain-courage flashed from her eyes, and she listened reluctantly while Anne of Geierstein endeavoured to obliterate the dangerous impression which her former words had impressed on her simple but faithful attendant.

'On my word,' she said—'on my soul—you do Arthur Philipson injustice—foul injustice, in intimating such a suspicion;—his conduct towards me has ever been upright and honourable—a friend to a friend—a brother to a sister—could not, in all he has done and said, have been more respectful, more anxiously affectionate, more undeviatingly candid. In our frequent interviews and intercourse he has indeed seemed very kind—very attached. But had I been disposed—at times I may have been too much so—to listen to him with endurance,'—the young lady here put her hand on her forehead, but the tears streamed through her slender fingers,—'he has never spoken of any love—any preference; if he indeed entertains any,

some obstacle, insurmountable on his part, has interfered to prevent him.'

'Obstacle?' replied the Swiss damsel. 'Ay, doubtless — some childish bashfulness — some foolish idea about your birth being so high above his own—some dream of modesty pushed to extremity, which considers as impenetrable the ice of a spring frost. This delusion may be broken by a moment's encouragement, and I will take the task on myself to spare your blushes, my dearest Anne.'

'No, no; for Heaven's sake, no, Veilchen!' answered the baroness, to whom Annette had so long been a companion and confidant, rather than a domestic. 'You cannot anticipate the nature of the obstacles which may prevent his thinking on what you are so desirous to promote. Hear me—My early education, and the instructions of my kind uncle, have taught me to know something more of foreigners and their fashions than I ever could have learned in our happy retirement of Geierstein; I am well-nigh convinced that these Philipsons are of rank, as they are of manners and bearing, far superior to the occupation which they appear to hold. The father is a man of deep observation, of high thoughts and pretension, and lavish of gifts, far beyond what consists with the utmost liberality of a trader.'

'That is true,' said Annette; 'I will say for myself, that the silver chain he gave me weighs against ten silver crowns; and the cross which Arthur added to it, the day after the long ride we had together up towards Mont Pilatus, is worth, they tell me, as much more. There is not the like of it in the Cantons. Well, what then? They are rich, so are you. So much the better.'

'Alas! Annette, they are not only rich, but noble. I am persuaded of this; for I have observed often that even the father retreated, with an air of quiet and dignified contempt, from discussions with Donnerhugel and others, who, in our plain way, wished to fasten a dispute upon him. And when a rude observation or blunt pleasantry was pointed at the son, his eyes flashed, his cheek coloured, and it was only a glance from his father which induced him to repress the retort of no friendly character which rose to his lips.'

'You have been a close observer,' said Annette. 'All this may be true, but I noted it not. But what then, I say once more? If Arthur has some fine noble name in his own country, are not you yourself Baroness of Arnheim? And I will frankly allow it as something of worth, if it smooths the way to a match, where I think you must look for happiness—I hope so, else I am sure it should have no encouragement from me.'

'I do believe so, my faithful Veilchen; but alas! how can you, in the state of natural freedom in which you have been bred, know, or even dream, of the various restraints which this gilded or golden chain of rank and nobility hangs upon those whom it fetters and encumbers, I fear, as much as it decorates? In every country the distinction of rank binds men to certain duties. It may carry with it restrictions which may prevent alliances in foreign countries —it often may prevent them from consulting their inclinations when they wed in their own. It leads to alliances in which the heart is never consulted, to treaties of marriage which are often formed when the parties are in the cradle, or in leading-strings, but which are not the less binding on them in honour and faith. Such may exist in the present case. These alliances are often blended and mixed up with State policy; and if the interest of England, or what he deems such, should have occasioned the elder Philipson to form such an engagement, Arthur would break his own heart—the heart of any one else—rather than make false his father's word.'

'The more shame to them that formed such an engagement!' said Annette. 'Well, they talk of England being a free country; but if they can bar young men and women of the natural privilege to call their hands and hearts their own, I would as soon be a German serf.—Well, lady, you are wise, and I am ignorant. But what is to be done? I have brought this young man here, expecting, God knows, a happier issue to your meeting. But it is clear you cannot marry him without his asking you. Now, although I confess that, if I could think him willing to forfeit the hand of the fairest maid of the Cantons, either from want of manly courage to ask it, or from regard to some ridiculous engagement, formed betwixt his father and some other nobleman of their island of noblemen, I would not in either case grudge him a ducking in the moat; yet it is another question whether we should send him down to be murdered among those cut-throats of the Rhinegrave; and unless we do so, I know not how to get rid of him.'

'Then let the boy William give attendance on him here, and do you see to his accommodation. It is best we do not meet.'

'I will,' said Annette; 'yet what am I to say for you? Unhappily, I let him know that you were here.'

'Alas, imprudent girl! Yet why should I blame thee,' said Anne of Geierstein, 'when the imprudence has been so great on my own side? It is myself who, suffering my imagination to rest too long upon this young man and his merits, have led me into this entanglement. But I will show thee that I can overcome this folly, and I will not seek in my own error a cause for evading the duties of hospitality. Go, Veilchen, get some refreshment ready. Thou shalt sup with us, and thou must not leave us. Thou shalt see me behave as becomes both a German lady and a Swiss maiden. Get me first a candle, however, my girl, for I must wash these tell-tales, my eyes, and arrange my dress.'

To Annette this whole explanation had been one scene of astonishment, for, in the simple ideas of love and courtship in which she had been brought up amid the Swiss mountains, she had expected that the two lovers would have taken the first opportunity of the absence of their natural guardians, and have united themselves for ever; and she had even arranged a little secondary plot, in which she herself and Martin Sprenger, her faithful bachelor, were to reside with the young couple as friends and

dependents. Silenced, therefore, but not satisfied, by the objections of her young mistress, the zealous Annette retreated, murmuring to herself,—'That little hint about her dress is the only natural and sensible word she has said in my hearing. Please God, I will return and help her in the twinkling of an eye. That dressing my mistress is the only part of a waiting-lady's life that I have the least fancy for—it seems so natural for one pretty maiden to set off another—in faith we are but learning to dress ourselves at another time.'

And with this sage remark Annette Veilchen tripped down-stairs.

CHAPTER XXII.

Tell me not of it—I could ne'er abide
The mummery of all that forced civility.
'Pray seat yourself, my lord.' With cringing hams
The speech is spoken, and with bended knee,
Heard by the smiling courtier.—'Before you, sir?
It must be on the earth, then.' Hang it all!
The pride which cloaks itself in such poor fashion
Is scarcely fit to swell a beggar's bosom.

OLD PLAY.

UP-STAIRS and down-stairs tripped Annette Veilchen, the soul of all that was going on in the only habitable corner of the huge Castle of Arnheim. She was equal to every kind of service, and therefore popped her head into the stable to be sure that William attended properly to Arthur's horse, looked into the kitchen to see that the old cook Marthon roasted the partridges in due time (an interference for which she received little thanks), rummaged out a flask or two of Rhine wine from the huge Dom Daniel * of a cellar, and, finally, just peeped into the parlour to see how Arthur was looking; when, having the satisfaction to see he had, in the best manner he could, sedulously arranged his person, she assured him that he should shortly see her mistress, who was rather indisposed, yet could not refrain from coming down to see so valued an acquaintance.

Arthur blushed when she spoke thus, and seemed so handsome in the waiting-maid's eye, that she could not help saying to herself, as she went to her young lady's room—'Well, if true love cannot manage to bring that couple together, in spite of all the obstacles that they stand boggling at, I will never believe that there is such a thing as true love in the world, let Martin Sprenger say what he will, and swear to it on the Gospels.'

When she reached the young baroness's apartment, she found, to her surprise, that instead of having put on what finery she possessed, that young lady's choice had preferred the same simple kirtle which she had worn during the first day that Arthur had dined at Geierstein. Annette looked at first puzzled and doubtful, then suddenly recognised the good taste which had dictated the attire, and exclaimed—'You are right—you are right—it is best to meet him as a free-hearted Swiss maiden.'

Anne also smiled as she replied—'But, at the same time, in the walls of Arnheim, I must appear in some respect as the daughter of my father.—Here, girl, aid me to put this gem upon the riband which binds my hair.'

It was an aigrette, or plume, composed of two feathers of a vulture, fastened together by an opal, which changed to the changing light with a variability which enchanted the Swiss damsel, who had never seen anything resembling it in her life.

'Now, Baroness Anne,' said she, 'if that pretty thing be really worn as a sign of your rank, it is the only thing belonging to your dignity that I should ever think of coveting; for it doth shimmer and change colour after a most wonderful fashion, even something like one's own cheek when one is fluttered.'

'Alas, Annette!' said the baroness, passing her hand across her eyes, 'of all the gauds which the females of my house have owned, this perhaps hath been the most fatal to its possessors.'

'And why then wear it?' said Annette. 'Why wear it now of all days in the year?'

'Because it reminds me of my duty to my father and family. And now, girl, look thou sit with us at table, and leave not the apartment; and see thou fly not to and fro to help thyself or others with anything on the board, but remain quiet and seated till William helps you to what you have occasion for.'

'Well, that is a gentle fashion which I like well enough,' said Annette, 'and William serves us so debonairly, that it is a joy to see him; yet ever and anon I feel as I were not Annette Veilchen herself, but only Annette Veilchen's picture, since I can neither rise, sit down, run about, nor stand still, without breaking some rule of courtly breeding. It is not so, I daresay, with you who are always mannerly.'

'Less courtly than thou seemest to think,' said the high-born maiden; 'but I feel the restraint more on the greensward, and under heaven's free air, than when I undergo it closed within the walls of an apartment.'

'Ah, true—the dancing,' said Annette; 'that was something to be sorry for, indeed.'

'But most am I sorry, Annette, that I cannot tell whether I act precisely right or wrong in seeing this young man, though it must be for the last time. Were my father to arrive!—Were Ital Schreckenwald to return'——

'Your father is too deeply engaged on some of his dark and mystic errands,' said the flippant Swiss; 'sailed to the mountains of the Brockenberg,† where witches hold their sabbath, or gone on a hunting-party with the Wild Huntsman.'‡

'Fie, Annette, how dare you talk thus of my father?'

'Why, I know little of him personally,' said the damsel, 'and you yourself do not know much more. And how should that be false which all men say is true?'

* [Dom-Daniel was the huge cavern lying 'under the roots of the ocean,' in which evil spirits, enchanters, and other wicked beings were confined.]

† [The Brocken, a mountain of the Harz chain in the centre of Germany, figures very prominently in the weird legends of that country, chiefly as the place where the witches hold conclave at stated seasons.]

‡ [A spectral being who hunts through the air when storms rage fiercest.]

'Why, fool, what do they say?'

'Why, that the Count is a wizard—that your grandmother was a will-of-wisp, and old Ital Schreckenwald a born devil incarnate; and there is some truth in that, whatever comes of the rest.'

'Where is he?'

'Gone down to spend the night in the village, to see the Rhinegrave's men quartered, and keep them in some order, if possible; for the soldiers are disappointed of pay which they had been promised; and when this happens, nothing resembles a lanzknecht except a chafed bear.'

'Go we down, then, girl; it is perhaps the last night which we may spend, for years, with a certain degree of freedom.'

I will not pretend to describe the marked embarrassment with which Arthur Philipson and Anne of Geierstein met; neither lifted their eyes, neither spoke intelligibly, as they greeted each other, and the maiden herself did not blush more deeply than her modest visitor; while the good-humoured Swiss girl, whose ideas of love partook of the freedom of a more Arcadian country and its customs, looked on with eyebrows a little arched, much in wonder, and a little in contempt, at a couple who, as she might think, acted with such unnatural and constrained reserve. Deep was the reverence and the blush with which Arthur offered his hand to the young lady, and her acceptance of the courtesy had the same character of extreme bashfulness, agitation, and embarrassment. In short, though little or nothing intelligible passed between this very handsome and interesting couple, the interview itself did not on that account lose any interest. Arthur handed the maiden, as was the duty of a gallant of the day, into the next room, where their repast was prepared; and Annette, who watched with singular attention everything which occurred, felt with astonishment that the forms and ceremonies of the higher orders of society had such an influence, even over her free-born mind, as the rites of the Druids over that of the Roman general, when he said,

I scorn them, yet they awe me.

'What can have changed them?' said Annette; 'when at Geierstein, they looked but like another girl and bachelor, only that Anne is so very handsome; but now they move in time and manner as if they were leading a stately pavin, and behave to each other with as much formal respect as if he were Landamman of the Unterwalden, and she the first lady of Berne. 'Tis all very fine, doubtless, but it is not the way that Martin Sprenger makes love.'

Apparently the circumstances in which each of the young people were placed, recalled to them the habits of lofty and somewhat formal courtesy to which they might have been accustomed in former days; and while the baroness felt it necessary to observe the strictest decorum, in order to qualify the reception of Arthur into the interior of her retreat, he, on the other hand, endeavoured to show, by the profoundness of his respect, that he was incapable of misusing the kindness with which he had been treated. They placed themselves at table, scrupulously observing the distance which might become a 'virtuous gentleman and maid.' The youth William did the service of the entertainment with deftness and courtesy, as one well accustomed to such duty; and Annette, placing herself between them, and endeavouring, as closely as she could, to adhere to the ceremonies which she saw them observe, made practice of the civilities which were expected from the attendant of a baroness. Various, however, were the errors which she committed. Her demeanour in general was that of a greyhound in the slips, ready to start up every moment; and she was only withheld by the recollection that she was to ask for that which she had far more mind to help herself to.

Other points of etiquette were transgressed in their turn, after the repast was over, and the attendant had retired. The waiting damsel often mingled too unceremoniously in the conversation, and could not help calling her mistress by her Christian name of Anne, and, in defiance of all decorum, addressed her, as well as Philipson, with the pronoun *thou*, which then, as well as now, was a dreadful solecism in German politeness. Her blunders were so far fortunate, that, by furnishing the young lady and Arthur with a topic foreign to the peculiarities of their own situation, they enabled them to withdraw their attentions from its embarrassments, and to exchange smiles at poor Annette's expense. She was not long of perceiving this, and, half nettled, half availing herself of the apology to speak her mind, said, with considerable spirit, 'You have both been very merry, forsooth, at my expense, and all because I wished rather to rise and seek what I wanted, than wait till the poor fellow, who was kept trotting between the board and beauffet, found leisure to bring it to me. You laugh at me now, because I call you by your names, as they were given to you in the blessed church at your christening; and because I say to you *thee* and *thou*, addressing my Yuncker and my Yungfrau as I would do if I were on my knees praying to Heaven. But for all your new-world fancies, I can tell you, you are but a couple of children, who do not know your own minds, and are jesting away the only leisure given you to provide for your own happiness. Nay, frown not, my sweet Mistress Baroness; I have looked at Mont Pilatus too often to fear a gloomy brow.'

'Peace, Annette,' said her mistress, 'or quit the room.'

'Were I not more your friend than I am my own,' said the headstrong and undaunted Annette, 'I would quit the room, and the castle to boot, and leave you to hold your house here with your amiable seneschal, Ital Schreckenwald.'

'If not for love, yet for shame, for charity, be silent, or leave the room.'

'Nay,' said Annette, 'my bolt is shot, and I have but hinted at what all upon Geierstein Green said, the night when the bow of Buttisholz was bended. You know what the old saw says'——

'Peace! peace, for Heaven's sake, or I must needs fly!' said the young baroness.

'Nay, then,' said Annette, considerably

changing her tone, as if afraid that her mistress should actually retire, 'if you must fly, necessity must have its course. I know no one who can follow.—This mistress of mine, Seignor Arthur, would require for her attendant not a homely girl of flesh and blood like myself, but a waiting-woman with substance composed of gossamer, and breath supplied by the spirit of ether. Would you believe it?—It is seriously held by many that she partakes of the race of spirits of the elements, which makes her so much more bashful than maidens of this everyday world.'

Anne of Geierstein seemed rather glad to lead away the conversation from the turn which her wayward maiden had given to it, and to turn it on more indifferent subjects, though these were still personal to herself.

'Seignor Arthur,' she said, 'thinks, perhaps, he has some room to nourish some such strange suspicion as your heedless folly expresses, and some fools believe, both in Germany and Switzerland. Confess, Seignor Arthur, you thought strangely of me when I passed your guard upon the bridge of Graffs-lust, on the night last past.'

The recollection of the circumstances which had so greatly surprised him at the time, so startled Arthur, that it was with some difficulty he commanded himself, so as to attempt an answer at all; and what he did say on the occasion was broken and unconnected.

'I did hear, I own—that is, Rudolph Donnerhugel reported—But that I believed that you, gentle lady, were other than a Christian maiden'——

'Nay, if Rudolph were the reporter,' said Annette, 'you would hear the worst of my lady and her lineage, that is certain. He is one of those prudent personages who depreciate and find fault with the goods he has thoughts of purchasing, in order to deter other offerers. Yes, he told you a fine goblin story, I warrant you, of my lady's grandmother; and truly, it so happened that the circumstances of the case gave, I daresay, some colour in your eyes to'——

'Not so, Annette,' answered Arthur; 'whatever might be said of your lady that sounded uncouth and strange, fell to the ground as incredible.'

'Not quite so much so, I fancy,' interrupted Annette, without heeding sign or frown. 'I strongly suspect I should have had much more trouble in dragging you hither to this castle, had you known you were approaching the haunt of the Nymph of the Fire, the Salamander, as they call her, not to mention the shock of again seeing the descendant of that Maiden of the Fiery Mantle.'

'Peace, once more, Annette,' said her mistress; 'since Fate has occasioned this meeting, let us not neglect the opportunity to disabuse our English friend of the absurd report he has listened to with doubt and wonder, perhaps, but not with absolute incredulity.

'Seignor Arthur Philipson,' she proceeded, 'it is true my grandfather by the mother's side, Baron Herman of Arnheim, was a man of great knowledge in abstruse sciences. He was also a presiding judge of a tribunal of which you must have heard, called the Holy Vehme. One night, a stranger, closely pursued by the agents of that body, which (crossing herself) it is not safe even to name, arrived at the castle and craved his protection, and the rights of hospitality. My grandfather, finding the advance which the stranger had made to the rank of Adept, gave him his protection, and became bail to deliver him to answer the charge against him, for a year and a day, which delay he was, it seems, entitled to require on his behalf. They studied together during that term, and pushed their researches into the mysteries of nature, as far, in all probability, as men have the power of urging them. When the fatal day drew nigh on which the guest must part from his host, he asked permission to bring his daughter to the castle, that they might exchange a last farewell. She was introduced with much secrecy, and, after some days, finding that her father's fate was so uncertain, the Baron, with the sage's consent, agreed to give the forlorn maiden refuge in his castle, hoping to obtain from her some additional information concerning the languages and the wisdom of the East. Dannischemend, her father, left this castle, to go to render himself up to the Vehme-gericht at Fulda. The result is unknown; perhaps he was saved by Baron Arnheim's testimony, perhaps he was given up to the steel and the cord. On such matters who dare speak?

'The fair Persian became the wife of her guardian and protector. Amid many excellences, she had one peculiarity allied to imprudence. She availed herself of her foreign dress and manners, as well as of a beauty which was said to have been marvellous, and an agility seldom equalled, to impose upon and terrify the ignorant German ladies, who, hearing her speak Persian and Arabic, were already disposed to consider her as over closely connected with unlawful arts. She was of a fanciful and imaginative disposition, and delighted to place herself in such colours and circumstances as might confirm their most ridiculous suspicions, which she considered only as matter of sport. There was no end to the stories to which she gave rise. Her first appearance in the castle was said to be highly picturesque, and to have inferred something of the marvellous. With the levity of a child, she had some childish passions, and while she encouraged the growth and circulation of the most extraordinary legends amongst some of the neighbourhood, she entered into disputes with persons of her own quality, concerning rank and precedence, on which the ladies of Westphalia have at all times set great store. This cost her her life; for, on the morning of the christening of my poor mother, the Baroness of Arnheim died suddenly, even while a splendid company was assembled in the castle chapel to witness the ceremony. It was believed that she died of poison, administered by the Baroness Steinfeldt, with whom she was engaged in a bitter quarrel, entered into chiefly on behalf of her friend and companion, the Countess Waldstetten.'

'And the opal gem?—and the sprinkling with water?' said Arthur Philipson.

'Ah!' replied the young baroness, 'I see you desire to hear the real truth of my family

history, of which you have yet learned only the romantic legend.—The sprinkling of water was necessarily had recourse to, on my ancestress's first swoon. As for the opal, I have heard that it did indeed grow pale, but only because it is said to be the nature of that noble gem, on the approach of poison. Some part of the quarrel with the Baroness Steinfeldt was about the right of the Persian maiden to wear this stone, which an ancestor in my family won in battle from the Soldan of Trebizond.* All these things were confused in popular tradition, and the real facts turned into a fairy tale.'

'But you have said nothing,' suggested Arthur Philipson, 'on—on'——

'On what?' said his hostess.

'On your appearance last night.'

'Is it possible,' said she, 'that a man of sense, and an Englishman, cannot guess at the explanation which I have to give, though not, perhaps, very distinctly? My father, you are aware, has been a busy man in a disturbed country, and has incurred the hatred of many powerful persons. He is, therefore, obliged to move in secret, and avoid unnecessary observation. He was, besides, averse to meet his brother, the Landamman. I was therefore told, on our entering Germany, that I was to expect a signal where and when to join him,—the token was to be a small crucifix of bronze, which had belonged to my poor mother. In my apartment at Graffs-lust I found the token, with a note from my father, making me acquainted with a secret passage proper to such places, which, though it had the appearance of being blocked up, was in fact very slightly barricaded. By this I was instructed to pass to the gate, make my escape into the woods, and meet my father at a place appointed there.'

'A wild and perilous adventure,' said Arthur.

'I have never been so much shocked,' continued the maiden, 'as at receiving this summons, compelling me to steal away from my kind and affectionate uncle, and go I knew not whither. Yet compliance was absolutely necessary. The place of meeting was plainly pointed out. A midnight walk, in the neighbourhood of protection, was to me a trifle; but the precaution of posting sentinels at the gate might have interfered with my purpose, had I not mentioned it to some of my elder cousins, the Biedermans, who readily agreed to let me pass and repass unquestioned. But you know my cousins; honest and kind-hearted, they are of a rude way of thinking, and as incapable of feeling a generous delicacy as — some other persons.' (Here there was a glance towards Annette Veilchen.)—'They exacted from me, that I should conceal myself and my purpose from Sigismund; and as they are always making sport with the simple youth, they insisted that I should pass him in such a manner as might induce him to believe that I was a spiritual apparition, and out of his terrors for supernatural beings they expected to have much amusement. I was obliged to secure their connivance at my escape on their own terms; and indeed, I was too much grieved at the prospect of quitting my kind uncle, to think much of anything else. Yet my surprise was considerable, when, contrary to expectation, I found you on the bridge as sentinel, instead of my cousin Sigismund. Your own ideas I ask not for.'

'They were those of a fool,' said Arthur, 'of a thrice-sodden fool. Had I been aught else, I would have offered my escort. My sword'——

'I could not have accepted your protection,' said Anne calmly. 'My mission was in every respect a secret one. I met my father—some intercourse had taken place betwixt him and Rudolph Donnerhugel, which induced him to alter his purpose of carrying me away with him last night. I joined him, however, early this morning, while Annette acted for a time my part amongst the Swiss pilgrims. My father desired that it should not be known when or with whom I left my uncle and his escort. I need scarce remind you that I saw you in the dungeon.'

'You were the preserver of my life,' said the youth—'the restorer of my liberty.'

'Ask me not the reason of my silence. I was then acting under the agency of others, not under mine own. Your escape was effected, in order to establish a communication betwixt the Swiss without the fortress and the soldiers within. After the alarm at La Ferette, I learned from Sigismund Biederman that a party of banditti were pursuing your father and you, with a view to pillage and robbery. My father had furnished me with the means of changing Anne of Geierstein into a German maiden of quality. I set out instantly, and glad I am to have given you a hint which might free you from danger.'

'But my father?' said Arthur.

'I have every reason to hope he is well and safe,' answered the young lady. 'More than I were eager to protect both you and him—poor Sigismund amongst the first.—And now, my friend, these mysteries explained, it is time we part, and for ever.'

'Part!—and for ever!' repeated the youth, in a voice like a dying echo.

'It is our fate,' said the maiden. 'I appeal to you if it is not your duty—I tell you it is mine. You will depart with early dawn to Strassburg—and—and—we never meet again.'

With an ardour of passion which he could not repress, Arthur Philipson threw himself at the feet of the maiden, whose faltering tone had clearly expressed that she felt deeply in uttering the words. She looked round for Annette, but Annette had disappeared at this most critical moment; and her mistress for a second or two was not perhaps sorry for her absence.

'Rise,' she said, 'Arthur—rise. You must not give way to feelings that might be fatal to yourself and me.'

'Hear me, lady, before I bid you adieu, and for ever—the word of a criminal is heard, though he plead the worst cause—I am a belted knight, the son and heir of an Earl, whose name has been spread throughout England and France, and wherever valour has had fame.'

'Alas!' said she faintly, 'I have but too long suspected what you now tell me—Rise, I pray you, rise.'

* [A branch of the imperial dynasty of the Comneni (who reigned at Byzantium or Constantinople) ruled over the empire of Trebizonde in Asia Minor for two hundred and fifty years (till 1461).]

'Never till you hear me,' said the youth, seizing one of her hands, which trembled, but hardly could be said to struggle in his grasp.—'Hear me,' he said, with the enthusiasm of first love, when the obstacles of bashfulness and diffidence are surmounted—'My father and I are—I acknowledge it—bound on a most hazardous and doubtful expedition. You will very soon learn its issue for good or bad. If it succeed, you shall hear of me in my own character.—If I fall, I must—I will—I do claim a tear from Anne of Geierstein. If I escape, I have yet a horse, a lance, and a sword; and you shall hear nobly of him whom you have thrice protected from imminent danger.'

'Arise—arise,'—repeated the maiden, whose tears began to flow fast, as, struggling to raise her lover, they fell thick upon his head and face. 'I have heard enough—to listen to more were indeed madness, both for you and myself.'

'Yet one single word,' added the youth; 'while Arthur has a heart, it beats for you—while Arthur can wield an arm, it strikes for you, and in your cause.'

Annette now rushed into the room.

'Away, away!' she cried—'Schreckenwald has returned from the village with some horrible tidings, and I fear me he comes this way.'

Arthur had started to his feet at the first signal of alarm.

'If there is danger near your lady, Annette, there is at least one faithful friend by her side.'

Annette looked anxiously at her mistress.

'But Schreckenwald,' she said—'Schreckenwald, your father's steward—his confidant.—O, think better of it—I can hide Arthur somewhere.'

The noble-minded girl had already resumed her composure, and replied with dignity—'I have done nothing,' she said, 'to offend my father. If Schreckenwald be my father's steward, he is my vassal. I hide no guest to conciliate him. Sit down' (addressing Arthur), 'and let us receive this man—Introduce him instantly, Annette, and let us hear his tidings—and bid him remember that when he speaks to me he addresses his mistress.'

Arthur resumed his seat, still more proud of his choice from the noble and fearless spirit displayed by one who had so lately shown herself sensible to the gentlest feelings of the female sex.

Annette, assuming courage from her mistress's dauntless demeanour, clapped her hands together as she left the room, saying, but in a low voice, 'I see that after all it is something to be a baroness, if one can assert her dignity conformingly. How could I be so frightened for this rude man!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

——— Affairs that walk
(As they say spirits do) at midnight, have
In them a wilder nature than the business
That seeks despatch by day.
HENRY VIII. *Act* v.

THE approach of the steward was now boldly expected by the little party. Arthur, flattered at once and elevated by the firmness which Anne had shown when this person's arrival was announced, hastily considered the part which he was to act in the approaching scene, and prudently determined to avoid all active and personal interference, till he should observe, from the demeanour of Anne, that such was likely to be useful or agreeable to her. He resumed his place, therefore, at a distant part of the board, on which their meal had been lately spread, and remained there, determined to act in the manner Anne's behaviour should suggest as most prudent and fitting,—veiling, at the same time, the most acute internal anxiety by an appearance of that deferential composure which one of inferior rank adopts when admitted to the presence of a superior. Anne, on her part, seemed to prepare herself for an interview of interest. An air of conscious dignity succeeded the extreme agitation which she had so lately displayed, and, busying herself with some articles of female work, she also seemed to expect with tranquillity the visit to which her attendant was disposed to attach so much alarm.

A step was heard upon the stair, hurried and unequal, as that of some one in confusion as well as haste; the door flew open, and Ital Schreckenwald entered.

This person, with whom the details given to the elder Philipson by the Landamman Biederman have made the reader in some degree acquainted, was a tall, well-made, soldierly-looking man. His dress, like that of persons of rank at the period in Germany, was more varied in colour, more cut and ornamented, slashed and jagged, than the habit worn in France and England. The never-failing hawk's feather decked his cap, secured with a medal of gold, which served as a clasp. His doublet was of buff, for defence, but *laid down*, as it was called in the tailor's craft, with rich lace on each seam, and displaying on the breast a golden chain, the emblem of his rank in the baron's household. He entered with rather a hasty step, and busy and offended look, and said somewhat rudely,—'Why, how now, young lady—wherefore this? Strangers in the castle at this period of night!'

Anne of Geierstein, though she had been long absent from her native country, was not ignorant of its habits and customs, and knew the haughty manner in which all who were noble exerted their authority over their dependents.

'Are you a vassal of Arnheim, Ital Schreckenwald, and do you speak to the Lady of Arnheim in her own castle with an elevated voice, a saucy look, and bonneted withal? Know your place; and, when you have demanded pardon for your insolence, and told your errand in such terms as befit your condition and mine, I may listen to what you have to say.'

Schreckenwald's hand, in spite of him, stole to his bonnet, and uncovered his haughty brow.

'Noble lady,' he said, in a somewhat milder tone, 'excuse me if my haste be unmannerly, but the alarm is instant. The soldiery of the Rhinegrave have mutinied, plucked down the banners of their master, and set up an independent ensign, which they call the pennon of Saint Nicholas, under which they declare that they will maintain peace with God, and war

with all the world. This castle cannot escape them, when they consider that the first course to maintain themselves must be to take possession of some place of strength. You must up, then, and ride with the very peep of dawn. For the present they are busy with the wine-skins of the peasants; but when they wake in the morning, they will unquestionably march hither; and you may chance to fall into the hands of those who will think of the terrors of the Castle of Arnheim as the figments of a fairy tale, and laugh at its mistress's pretensions to honour and respect.'

'Is it impossible to make resistance? The castle is strong,' said the young lady, 'and I am unwilling to leave the house of my fathers without attempting somewhat in our defence.'

'Five hundred men,' said Schreckenwald, 'might garrison Arnheim, battlement and tower. With a less number it were madness to attempt to keep such an extent of walls; and how to get twenty soldiers together, I am sure I know not. —So, having now the truth of the story, let me beseech you to dismiss this guest,—too young, I think, to be the inmate of a lady's bower,—and I will point to him the nighest way out of the castle; for this is a strait in which we must all be contented with looking to our own safety.'

'And whither is it that you propose to go?' said the baroness, continuing to maintain, in respect to Ital Schreckenwald, the complete and calm assertion of absolute superiority, to which the seneschal gave way with such marks of impatience as a fiery steed exhibits under the management of a complete cavalier.

'To Strassburg I propose to go,—that is, if it so please you,—with such slight escort as I can get hastily together by daybreak. I trust we may escape being observed by the mutineers; or, if we fall in with a party of stragglers, I apprehend but little difficulty in forcing my way.'

'And wherefore do you prefer Strassburg as a place of asylum?'

'Because I trust we shall there meet your Excellency's father, the noble Count Albert of Geierstein.'

'It is well,' said the young lady.—'You also, I think, Seignor Philipson, spoke of directing your course to Strassburg. If it consist with your convenience, you may avail yourself of the protection of my escort as far as that city, where you expect to meet your father.'

It will readily be believed that Arthur cheerfully bowed assent to a proposal which was to prolong their remaining in society together; and might possibly, as his romantic imagination suggested, afford him an opportunity, on a road beset with dangers, to render some service of importance.

Ital Schreckenwald attempted to remonstrate.

'Lady!—lady!'—he said, with some marks of impatience.

'Take breath and leisure, Schreckenwald,' said Anne, 'and you will be more able to express yourself with distinctness and with respectful propriety.'

The impatient vassal muttered an oath betwixt his teeth, and answered with forced civility,—'Permit me to state that our case requires we should charge ourselves with the care of no one but you. We shall be few enough for your defence, and I cannot permit any stranger to travel with us.'

'If,' said Arthur, 'I conceived that I was to be a useless encumbrance on the retreat of this noble young lady, worlds, Sir Squire, would not induce me to accept her offer. But I am neither child nor woman—I am a full-grown man, and ready to show such good service as manhood may, in defence of your lady.'

'If we must not challenge your valour and ability, young sir,' said Schreckenwald, 'who shall answer for your fidelity?'

'To question that elsewhere,' said Arthur, 'might be dangerous.'

But Anne interfered between them. 'We must straight to rest, and remain prompt for alarm, perhaps even before the hour of dawn. Schreckenwald, I trust to your care for due watch and ward.—You have men enough at least for that purpose.—And hear and mark—It is my desire and command that this gentleman be accommodated with lodgings here for this night, and that he travel with us to-morrow. For this I will be responsible to my father, and your part is only to obey my commands. I have long had occasion to know both the young man's father and himself, who were ancient guests of my uncle, the Landamman. On the journey you will keep the youth beside you, and use such courtesy to him as your rugged temper will permit.'

Ital Schreckenwald intimated his acquiescence with a look of bitterness, which it were vain to attempt to describe. It expressed spite, mortification, humbled pride, and reluctant submission. He did submit, however, and ushered young Philipson into a decent apartment with a bed, which the fatigue and agitation of the preceding day rendered very acceptable.

Notwithstanding the ardour with which Arthur expected the rise of the next dawn, his deep repose, the fruit of fatigue, held him until the reddening of the east, when the voice of Schreckenwald exclaimed, 'Up, Sir Englishman, if you mean to accomplish your boast of loyal service. It is time we were in the saddle, and we shall tarry for no sluggards.'

Arthur was on the floor of the apartment, and dressed in almost an instant, not forgetting to put on his shirt of mail and assume whatever weapons seemed most fit to render him an efficient part of the convoy. He next hastened to seek out the stable, to have his horse in readiness; and, descending for that purpose into the under storey of the lower mass of buildings, he was wandering in search of the way which led to the offices, when the voice of Annette Veilchen softly whispered, 'This way, Seignor Philipson; I would speak with you.'

The Swiss maiden, at the same time, beckoned him into a small room, where he found her alone.

'Were you not surprised,' she said, 'to see my lady queen it so over Ital Schreckenwald, who keeps every other person in awe with his stern looks and cross words? But the air of command seems so natural to her, that, instead of being a baroness, she might have been an

empress. It must come of birth, I think, after all; for I tried last night to take state upon me, after the fashion of my mistress, and, would you think it, the brute Schreckenwald threatened to throw me out of the window! But if ever I see Martin Sprenger again, I'll know if there is strength in a Swiss arm, and virtue in a Swiss quarterstaff.—But here I stand prating, and my lady wishes to see you for a minute ere we take to horse.'

'Your lady?' said Arthur, starting, 'why did you lose an instant?—why not tell me before?'

'Because I was only to keep you here till she came, and—here she is.'

Anne of Geierstein entered, fully attired for her journey. Annette, always willing to do as she would wish to be done by, was about to leave the apartment, when her mistress, who had apparently made up her mind concerning what she had to do or say, commanded her positively to remain.

'I am sure,' she said, 'Seignor Philipson will rightly understand the feelings of hospitality—I will say of friendship—which prevented my suffering him to be expelled from my castle last night, and which have determined me this morning to admit of his company on the somewhat dangerous road to Strassburg. At the gate of that town we part, I to join my father, you to place yourself under the direction of yours. From that moment intercourse between us ends, and our remembrance of each other must be as the thoughts which we pay to friends deceased.'

'Tender recollections,' said Arthur passionately, 'more dear to our bosoms than all we have surviving upon earth.'

'Not a word in that tone,' answered the maiden. 'With night delusion should end, and reason awaken with dawning. One word more—Do not address me on the road; you may, by doing so, expose me to vexatious and insulting suspicion, and yourself to quarrels and peril.—Farewell, our party is ready to take horse.'

She left the apartment, where Arthur remained for a moment deeply bewildered in grief and disappointment. The patience, nay, even favour, with which Anne of Geierstein had, on the previous night, listened to his passion, had not prepared him for the terms of reserve and distance which she now adopted towards him. He was ignorant that noble maids, if feeling or passion has for a moment swayed them from the strict path of principle and duty, endeavour to atone for it, by instantly returning, and severely adhering, to the line from which they have made a momentary departure. He looked mournfully on Annette, who, as she had been in the room before Anne's arrival, took the privilege of remaining a minute after her departure; but he read no comfort in the glances of the confidant, who seemed as much disconcerted as himself.

'I cannot imagine what hath happened to her,' said Annette; 'to me she is kind as ever, but to every other person about her she plays countess and baroness with a witness; and now she is begun to tyrannize over her own natural feelings—and—if this be greatness, Annette Veilchen trusts always to remain the penniless Swiss girl; she is mistress of her own freedom, and at liberty to speak with her bachelor when she pleases, so as religion and maiden modesty suffer nothing in the conversation. O, a single daisy twisted with content into one's hair, is worth all the opals in India, if they bind us to torment ourselves and other people, or hinder us from speaking our mind, when our heart is upon our tongue. But never fear, Arthur; for if she has the cruelty to think of forgetting you, you may rely on one friend who, while she has a tongue, and Anne has ears, will make it impossible for her to do so.'

So saying, away tripped Annette, having first indicated to Philipson the passage by which he would find the lower court of the castle. There his steed stood ready among about twenty others. Twelve of these were accoutred with war saddles and frontlets of proof, being intended for the use of as many cavaliers, or troopers, retainers of the family of Arnheim, whom the seneschal's exertions had been able to collect on the spur of the occasion. Two palfreys, somewhat distinguished by their trappings, were designed for Anne of Geierstein and her favourite female attendant. The other menials, chiefly boys and women-servants, had inferior horses. At a signal made, the troopers took their lances and stood by their steeds, till the females and menials were mounted and in order; they then sprang into their saddles, and began to move forward, slowly and with great precaution. Schreckenwald led the van, and kept Arthur Philipson close beside him. Anne and her attendant were in the centre of the little body, followed by the unwarlike train of servants, while two or three experienced cavaliers brought up the rear, with strict orders to guard against surprise.

On their being put into motion, the first thing which surprised Arthur was, that the horses' hoofs no longer sent forth the sharp and ringing sound arising from the collision of iron and flint, and, as the morning light increased, he could perceive that the fetlock and hoof of every steed, his own included, had been carefully wrapped around with a sufficient quantity of wool, to prevent the usual noise which accompanied their motions. It was a singular thing to behold the passage of the little body of cavalry down the rocky road which led from the castle, unattended with the noise which we are disposed to consider as inseparable from the motions of horse, the absence of which seemed to give a peculiar and almost an unearthly appearance to the cavalcade.

They passed in this manner the winding path which led from the Castle of Arnheim to the adjacent village, which, as was the ancient feudal custom, lay so near the fortress, that its inhabitants, when summoned by their lord, could instantly repair for its defence. But it was at present occupied by very different inhabitants, the mutinous soldiers of the Rhinegrave. When the party from Arnheim approached the entrance of the village, Schreckenwald made a signal to halt, which was instantly obeyed by his followers. He then rode forward in person to reconnoitre, accompanied by Arthur Philipson, both moving with the utmost steadiness and precaution. The

deepest silence prevailed in the deserted streets. Here and there a soldier was seen, seemingly designed for a sentinel, but uniformly fast asleep.

'The swinish mutineers!' said Schreckenwald; 'a fair night-watch they keep, and a beautiful morning's rouse would I treat them with, were not the point to protect yonder peevish wench.—Halt thou here, stranger, while I ride back and bring them on—there is no danger.'

Schreckenwald left Arthur as he spoke, who, alone in the street of a village filled with banditti, though they were lulled into temporary insensibility, had no reason to consider his case as very comfortable. The chorus of a wassel-song, which some reveller was trolling over in his sleep; or, in its turn, the growling of some village cur, seemed the signal for a hundred ruffians to start up around him. But, in the space of two or three minutes, the noiseless cavalcade, headed by Ital Schreckenwald, again joined him, and followed their leader, observing the utmost precaution not to give an alarm. All went well till they reached the farther end of the village, where, although the Baaren-hauter * who kept guard was as drunk as his companions on duty, a large shaggy dog which lay beside him was more vigilant. As the little troop approached, the animal sent forth a ferocious yell, loud enough to have broken the rest of the Seven Sleepers, and which effectually dispelled the slumbers of its master. The soldier snatched up his carabine and fired, he knew not well at what, or for what reason. The ball, however, struck Arthur's horse under him, and, as the animal fell, the sentinel rushed forward to kill or make prisoner the rider.

'Haste on, haste on, men of Arnheim! care for nothing but the young lady's safety,' exclaimed the leader of the band.

'Stay, I command you; — aid the stranger on your lives!'—said Anne, in a voice which, usually gentle and meek, she now made heard by those around her, like the note of a silver clarion. 'I will not stir till he is rescued.'

Schreckenwald had already spurred his horse for flight, but, perceiving Anne's reluctance to follow him, he dashed back, and, seizing a horse, which, bridled and saddled, stood picqueted near him, he threw the reins to Arthur Philipson; and pushing his own horse, at the same time, betwixt the Englishman and the soldier, he forced the latter to quit the hold he had on his person. In an instant Philipson was again mounted, when, seizing a battle-axe which hung at the saddle-bow of his new steed, he struck down the staggering sentinel, who was endeavouring again to seize upon him. The whole troop then rode off at a gallop, for the alarm began to grow general in the village; some soldiers were seen coming out of their quarters, and others were beginning to get upon horseback. Before Schreckenwald and his party had ridden a mile, they heard more than once the sound of bugles; and when they arrived upon the summit of an eminence commanding a view of the village, their leader, who during the retreat had placed himself in the rear of his company, now halted to reconnoitre the enemy they had left behind them. There was bustle and confusion in the street, but there did not appear to be any pursuit; so that Schreckenwald followed his route down the river, with speed and activity, indeed, but with so much steadiness, at the same time, as not to distress the slowest horse of his party.

When they had ridden two hours or more, the confidence of their leader was so much augmented, that he ventured to command a halt at the edge of a pleasant grove, which served to conceal their number, whilst both riders and horses took some refreshment, for which purpose forage and provisions had been borne along with them. Ital Schreckenwald, having held some communication with the baroness, continued to offer their travelling companion a sort of surly civility. He invited him to partake of his own mess, which was indeed little different from that which was served out to the other troopers, but was seasoned with a glass of wine from a more choice flask.

'To your health, brother,' he said; 'if you tell this day's story truly, you will allow that I was a true comrade to you two hours since, in riding through the village of Arnheim.'

'I will never deny it, fair sir,' said Philipson, 'and I return you thanks for your timely assistance; alike, whether it sprang from your mistress's order, or your own good-will.'

'Ho! ho! my friend,' said Schreckenwald, laughing, 'you are a philosopher, and can try conclusions while your horse lies rolling above you, and a Baaren-hauter aims his sword at your throat?—Well, since your wit hath discovered so much, I care not if you know that I should not have had much scruple to sacrifice twenty such smooth-faced gentlemen as yourself, rather than the young Baroness of Arnheim had incurred the slightest danger.'

'The propriety of the sentiment,' said Philipson, 'is so undoubtedly correct, that I subscribe to it, even though it is something discourteously expressed towards myself.'

In making this reply, the young man, provoked at the insolence of Schreckenwald's manner, raised his voice a little. The circumstance did not escape observation, for, on the instant, Annette Veilchen stood before them, with her mistress's commands on them both to speak in whispers, or rather to be altogether silent.

'Say to your mistress that I am mute,' said Philipson.

'Our mistress the Baroness says,' continued Annette, with an emphasis on the title, to which she began to ascribe some talismanic influence—'the Baroness, I tell you, says that silence much concerns our safety, for it were most hazardous to draw upon this little fugitive party the notice of any passengers who may pass along the road during the necessary halt; and so, sirs, it is the Baroness's request that you will continue the exercise of your teeth as fast as you can, and forbear that of your tongues till you are in a safer condition.'

'My lady is wise,' answered Ital Schreckenwald, 'and her maiden is witty. I drink,

* *Baaren-hauter*—he of the bear's hide—a nickname for a German private soldier.

Mistress Annette, in a cup of Rudesheimer,* to the continuance of her sagacity, and of your amiable liveliness of disposition. Will it please you, fair mistress, to pledge me in this generous liquor?'

'Out, thou German wine-flask!—Out, thou eternal swill-flagon!—Heard you ever of a modest maiden who drank wine before she had dined?'

'Remain without the generous inspiration, then,' said the German, 'and nourish thy satirical vein on sour cider or acid whey.'

A short space having been allowed to refresh themselves, the little party again mounted their horses, and travelled with such speed, that long before noon they arrived at the strongly-fortified town of Kehl, opposite to Strassburg, on the eastern bank of the Rhine.

It is for local antiquaries to discover whether the travellers crossed from Kehl to Strassburg by the celebrated bridge of boats which at present maintains the communication across the river, or whether they were wafted over by some other mode of transportation. It is enough that they passed in safety, and had landed on the other side, where—whether she dreaded that he might forget the charge she had given him, that here they were to separate, or whether she thought that something more might be said in the moment of parting—the young baroness, before remounting her horse, once more approached Arthur Philipson, who too truly guessed the tenor of what she had to say.

'Gentle stranger,' she said, 'I must now bid you farewell. But first let me ask if you know whereabouts you are to seek your father?'

'In an inn called the Flying Stag,' said Arthur dejectedly; 'but where that is situated in this large town I know not.'

'Do you know the place, Ital Schreckenwald?'

'I, young lady?—Not I—I know nothing of Strassburg and its inns. I believe most of our party are as ignorant as I am.'

'You and they speak German, I suppose,' said the baroness dryly, 'and can make inquiry more easily than a foreigner? Go, sir, and forget not that humanity to the stranger is a religious duty.'

With that shrug of the shoulders which testifies a displeased messenger, Ital went to make some inquiry, and, in his absence, brief as it was, Anne took an opportunity to say apart—'Farewell!—farewell! Accept this token of friendship, and wear it for my sake. May you be happy!'

Her slender fingers dropped into his hand a very small parcel. He turned to thank her, but she was already at some distance; and Schreckenwald, who had taken his place by his side, said in his harsh voice, 'Come, Sir Squire, I have found out your place of rendezvous, and I have but little time to play the gentleman-usher.'

He then rode on; and Philipson, mounted on his military charger, followed him in silence to the point where a large street joined, or rather crossed, that which led from the quay on which they had landed.

'Yonder swings the Flying Stag,' said Ital, pointing to an immense sign, which, mounted on a huge wooden frame, crossed almost the whole breadth of the street. 'Your intelligence can, I think, hardly abandon you, with such a guide-post in your eye.'

So saying, he turned his horse without further farewell, and rode back to join his mistress and her attendants.

Philipson's eyes rested on the same group for a moment, when he was recalled to a sense of his situation by the thoughts of his father; and, spurring his jaded horse down the cross street, he reached the hostelry of the Flying Stag.

* [A variety of Rhine wine, grown at Rüdesheim, nearly opposite Bingen.]

CHAPTER XXIV.

> ——— I was, I must confess,
> Great Albion's Queen in former golden days;
> But now mischance hath trod my title down,
> And with dishonour laid me on the ground;
> Where I must take like seat unto my fortune,
> And to my humble seat conform myself.
>
> HENRY VI. *Part III.*

THE hostelry of the Flying Stag, in Strassburg, was, like every inn in the Empire at that period, conducted with much the same discourteous inattention to the wants and accommodation of the guests, as that of John Mengs. But the youth and good looks of Arthur Philipson, circumstances which seldom or never fail to produce some effect where the fair are concerned, prevailed upon a short, plump, dimpled, blue-eyed, fair-skinned yungfrau, the daughter of the landlord of the Flying Stag (himself a fat old man, pinned to the oaken chair in the *stube*), to carry herself to the young Englishman with a degree of condescension which, in the privileged race to which she belonged, was little short of degradation. She not only put her light buskins and her pretty ankles in danger of being soiled by tripping across the yard to point out an unoccupied stable, but, on Arthur's inquiry after his father, condescended to recollect that such a guest as he described had lodged in the house last night, and had said he expected to meet there a young person, his fellow-traveller.

'I will send him out to you, fair sir,' said the little yungfrau, with a smile, which, if things of the kind are to be valued by their rare occurrence, must have been reckoned inestimable.

She was as good as her word. In a few instants the elder Philipson entered the stable, and folded his son in his arms.

'My son—my dear son!' said the Englishman, his usual stoicism broken down and melted by natural feeling and parental tenderness,—'Welcome to me at all times—welcome, in a period of doubt and danger—and most welcome of all, in a moment which forms the very crisis of our fate. In a few hours I shall know what we may expect from the Duke of Burgundy.—Hast thou the token?'

Arthur's hand first sought that which was nearest to his heart, both in the literal and allegorical sense—the small parcel, namely,

which Anne had given him at parting. But he recollected himself in the instant, and presented to his father the packet which had been so strangely lost and recovered at La Ferette.

'It hath run its own risk since you saw it,' he observed to his father, 'and so have I mine. I received hospitality at a castle last night, and behold a body of lanzknechts in the neighbourhood began in the morning to mutiny for their pay. The inhabitants fled from the castle to escape their violence, and, as we passed their leaguer in the grey of the morning, a drunken Baaren-hauter shot my poor horse, and I was forced, in the way of exchange, to take up with his heavy Flemish animal, with its steel saddle and its clumsy chaffron.'

'Our road is beset with perils,' said his father. 'I too have had my share, having been in great danger' (he told not its precise nature) 'at an inn where I rested last night. But I left it in the morning, and proceeded hither in safety. I have at length, however, obtained a safe escort to conduct me to the Duke's camp near Dijon; and I trust to have an audience of him this evening. Then, if our last hope should fail, we will seek the seaport of Marseilles, hoist sail for Candia or for Rhodes,* and spend our lives in defence of Christendom, since we may no longer fight for England.'

Arthur heard these ominous words without reply; but they did not the less sink upon his heart, deadly as the doom of the judge which secludes the criminal from society and all its joys, and condemns him to an eternal prison-house. The bells from the cathedral began to toll at this instant, and reminded the elder Philipson of the duty of hearing mass, which was said at all hours in some one or other of the separate chapels which are contained in that magnificent pile. His son followed, on an intimation of his pleasure.

In approaching the access to this superb cathedral, the travellers found it obstructed, as is usual in Catholic countries, by the number of mendicants of both sexes, who crowded round the entrance to give the worshippers an opportunity of discharging the duty of alms-giving, so positively enjoined as a chief observance of their Church. The Englishmen extricated themselves from their importunity by bestowing, as is usual on such occasions, a donative of small coin upon those who appeared most needy, or most deserving of their charity. One tall woman stood on the steps close to the door, and extended her hand to the elder Philipson, who, struck with her appearance, exchanged for a piece of silver the copper coins which he had been distributing amongst others.

'A marvel!' she said, in the English language, but in a tone calculated only to be heard by him alone, although his son also caught the sound and sense of what she said,—'Ay, a miracle!—An Englishman still possesses a silver piece, and can afford to bestow it on the poor!'

Arthur was sensible that his father started somewhat at the voice or words, which bore, even in his ear, something of deeper import than the observation of an ordinary mendicant. But, after a glance at the female who thus addressed him, his father passed onwards into the body of the church, and was soon engaged in attending to the solemn ceremony of the mass, as it was performed by a priest at the altar of a chapel, divided from the main body of the splendid edifice, and dedicated, as it appeared from the image over the altar, to Saint George; that military saint, whose real history is so obscure, though his popular legend rendered him an object of peculiar veneration during the feudal ages. The ceremony was begun and finished with all customary forms. The officiating priest, with his attendants, withdrew, and though some of the few worshippers who had assisted at the solemnity remained telling their beads, and occupied with the performance of their private devotions, far the greater part left the chapel to visit other shrines, or to return to the prosecution of their secular affairs.

But Arthur Philipson remarked that, whilst they dropped off one after another, the tall woman who had received his father's alms continued to kneel near the altar; and he was yet more surprised to see that his father himself, who, he had many reasons to know, was desirous to spend in the church no more time than the duties of devotion absolutely claimed, remained also on his knees, with his eyes resting on the form of the veiled devotee (such she seemed from her dress), as if his own motions were to be guided by hers. By no idea which occurred to him was Arthur able to form the least conjecture as to his father's motives—he only knew that he was engaged in a critical and dangerous negotiation, liable to influence or interruption from various quarters; and that political suspicion was so generally awake both in France, Italy, and Flanders, that the most important agents were often obliged to assume the most impenetrable disguises, in order to insinuate themselves without suspicion into the countries where their services were required. Louis XI. in particular, whose singular policy seemed in some degree to give a character to the age in which he lived, was well known to have disguised his principal emissaries and envoys in the fictitious garbs of mendicant monks, minstrels, gipsies, and other privileged wanderers of the meanest description.

Arthur concluded, therefore, that it was not improbable that this female might, like themselves, be something more than her dress imported; and he resolved to observe his father's deportment towards her, and regulate his own actions accordingly. A bell at last announced that mass, upon a more splendid scale, was about to be celebrated before the high altar of the cathedral itself, and its sound withdrew from the sequestered chapel of Saint George the few who had remained at the shrine of the military saint, excepting the father and son, and the female penitent who kneeled opposite to them. When the last of the worshippers had retired, the female arose and advanced towards the elder Philipson, who, folding his

* [At the date of this novel, Crete (Candia) was in the possession of Venice; Rhodes was garrisoned by the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John; whilst almost all the rest of the Levantine Orient was subject to the conquering Turks.]

arms on his bosom, and stooping his head, in an attitude of obeisance which his son had never before seen him assume, appeared rather to wait what she had to say, than to propose addressing her.

There was a pause. Four lamps, lighted before the shrine of the saint, cast a dim radiance on his armour and steed, represented as he was in the act of transfixing with his lance the prostrate dragon, whose outstretched wings and writhing neck were in part touched by their beams. The rest of the chapel was dimly illuminated by the autumnal sun, which could scarce find its way through the stained panes of the small lanceolated window, which was its only aperture to the open air. The light fell doubtful and gloomy, tinged with the various hues through which it passed, upon the stately, yet somewhat broken and dejected form of the female, and on those of the melancholy and anxious father, and his son, who, with all the eager interest of youth, suspected and anticipated extraordinary consequences from so singular an interview.

At length the female approached to the same side of the shrine with Arthur and his father, as if to be more distinctly heard, without being obliged to raise the slow, solemn voice in which she had spoken.

'Do you here worship,' she said, 'the Saint George of Burgundy, or the Saint George of merry England, the flower of chivalry?'

'I serve,' said Philipson, folding his hands humbly on his bosom, 'the saint to whom this chapel is dedicated, and the Deity with whom I hope for his holy intercession, whether here or in my native country.'

'Ay—you,' said the female, 'even you can forget—you, even you, who have been numbered among the mirror of knighthood—can forget that you have worshipped in the royal fane of Windsor—that you have there bent a *gartered* knee,* where kings and princes kneeled around you—you can forget this, and make your orisons at a foreign shrine, with a heart undisturbed with the thoughts of what you have been,—praying, like some poor peasant, for bread and life during the day that passes over you.'

'Lady,' replied Philipson, 'in my proudest hours, I was, before the Being to whom I preferred my prayers, but as a worm in the dust—In his eyes I am now neither less nor more, degraded as I may be in the opinion of my fellow reptiles.'

'How canst thou think thus?' said the devotee; 'and yet it is well with thee that thou canst. But what have thy losses been, compared to mine!'

She put her hand to her brow, and seemed for a moment overpowered by agonizing recollections.

Arthur pressed to his father's side, and inquired, in a tone of interest which could not be repressed, 'Father, who is this lady?—Is it my mother?'

'No, my son,' answered Philipson;—'peace, for the sake of all you hold dear or holy!'

The singular female, however, heard both the question and answer, though expressed in a whisper.

'Yes,' she said, 'young man—I am—I should say I was—your mother; the mother, the protectress, of all that was noble in England—I am Margaret of Anjou.'

Arthur sank on his knees before the dauntless widow of Henry the Sixth, who so long, and in such desperate circumstances, upheld by unyielding courage and deep policy the sinking cause of her feeble husband; and who, if she occasionally abused victory by cruelty and revenge, had made some atonement by the indomitable resolution with which she had supported the fiercest storms of adversity. Arthur had been bred in devoted adherence to the now dethroned line of Lancaster, of which his father was one of the most distinguished supporters; and his earliest deeds of arms, which, though unfortunate, were neither obscure nor ignoble, had been done in their cause. With an enthusiasm belonging to his age and education, he in the same instant flung his bonnet on the pavement, and knelt at the feet of his ill-fated sovereign.

Margaret threw back the veil which concealed those noble and majestic features, which even yet—though rivers of tears had furrowed her cheeks—though care, disappointment, domestic grief, and humbled pride, had quenched the fire of her eye, and wasted the smooth dignity of her forehead—even yet showed the remains of that beauty which once was held unequalled in Europe. The apathy with which a succession of misfortunes and disappointed hopes had chilled the feelings of the unfortunate princess, was for a moment melted by the sight of the fair youth's enthusiasm. She abandoned one hand to him, which he covered with tears and kisses, and with the other stroked with maternal tenderness his curled locks, as she endeavoured to raise him from the posture he had assumed. His father, in the meanwhile, shut the door of the chapel, and placed his back against it, withdrawing himself thus from the group, as if for the purpose of preventing any stranger from entering during a scene so extraordinary.

'And thou, then,' said Margaret, in a voice where female tenderness combated strangely with her natural pride of rank, and with the calm, stoical indifference induced by the intensity of her personal misfortunes; 'thou, fair youth, art the last scion of the noble stem, so many fair boughs of which have fallen in our hapless cause. Alas, alas! what can I do for thee? Margaret has not even a blessing to bestow! So wayward is her fate, that her benedictions are curses, and she has but to look on you, and wish you well, to insure your speedy and utter ruin. I—I have been the fatal poison-tree, whose influence has blighted and destroyed all the fair plants that arose beside and around me, and brought death upon every one, yet am myself unable to find it!'

'Noble and royal mistress,' said the elder Englishman, 'let not your princely courage, which has borne such extremities, be dismayed, now that they are passed over, and that a chance at least of happier times is approaching to you and to England.'

* [He wore the insignia of the Order of the Garter below his left knee.]

'To England, to *me*, noble Oxford!' said the forlorn and widowed queen.—'If to-morrow's sun could place me once more on the throne of England, could it give back to me what I have lost? I speak not of wealth or power—they are as nothing in the balance—I speak not of the hosts of noble friends who have fallen in defence of me and mine—Somersets, Percys, Staffords, Cliffords—they have found their place in fame, in the annals of their country—I speak not of my husband, he has exchanged the state of a suffering saint upon earth, for that of a glorified saint in heaven—But O, Oxford! my son—my Edward!—Is it possible for me to look on this youth, and not remember that thy Countess and I on the same night gave birth to two fair boys? How oft we endeavoured to prophesy their future fortunes, and to persuade ourselves that the same constellation which shone on their birth, would influence their succeeding life, and hold a friendly and equal bias till they reached some destined goal of happiness and honour! Thy Arthur lives; but, alas! my Edward, born under the same auspices, fills a bloody grave!'

She wrapped her head in her mantle, as if to stifle the complaints and groans which maternal affection poured forth at these cruel recollections. Philipson, or the exiled Earl of Oxford, as we may now term him, distinguished in those changeful times by the steadiness with which he had always maintained his loyalty to the line of Lancaster, saw the imprudence of indulging his sovereign in her weakness.

'Royal mistress,' he said, 'life's journey is that of a brief winter's day, and its course will run on, whether we avail ourselves of its progress or no. My sovereign is, I trust, too much mistress of herself to suffer lamentation for what is past to deprive her of the power of using the present time. I am here in obedience to your command; I am to see Burgundy forthwith, and if I find him pliant to the purpose to which we would turn him, events may follow which will change into gladness our present mourning. But we must use our opportunity with speed as well as zeal. Let me know, then, madam, for what reason your majesty hath come hither, disguised and in danger? Surely it was not merely to weep over this young man that the high-minded Queen Margaret left her father's court, disguised herself in mean attire, and came from a place of safety to one of doubt at least, if not of danger?'

'You mock me, Oxford,' said the unfortunate queen, 'or you deceive yourself, if you think you still serve that Margaret whose word was never spoken without a reason, and whose slightest action was influenced by a motive. Alas! I am no longer the same firm and rational being. The feverish character of grief, while it makes one place hateful to me, drives me to another in very impotence and impatience of spirit. My father's residence, thou say'st, is safe; but is it tolerable for such a soul as mine? Can one who has been deprived of the noblest and richest kingdom of Europe—one who has lost hosts of noble friends—one who is a widowed consort, a childless mother—one upon whose head Heaven hath poured forth its last vial of unmitigated wrath—can she stoop to be the companion of a weak old man, who, in sonnets and in music, in mummery and folly, in harping and rhyming, finds a comfort for all that poverty has that is distressing; and, what is still worse, even a solace in all that is ridiculous and contemptible?'

'Nay, with your leave, madam,' said her counsellor, 'blame not the good King René, because, persecuted by fortune, he has been able to find out for himself humbler sources of solace which your prouder spirit is disposed to disdain. A contention among his minstrels has for him the animation of a knightly combat; and a crown of flowers, twined by his troubadours, and graced by their sonnets, he accounts a valuable compensation for the diadems of Jerusalem, of Naples, and of both Sicilies, of which he only possesses the empty titles.'

'Speak not to me of the pitiable old man,' said Margaret; 'sunk below even the hatred of his worst enemies, and never thought worthy of anything more than contempt. I tell thee, noble Oxford, I have been driven nearly mad with my forced residence at Aix, in the paltry circle which he calls his court. My ears, tuned as they now are only to sounds of affliction, are not so weary of the eternal tinkling of harps, and squeaking of rebecks, and snapping of castanets—my eyes are not so tired of the beggarly affectation of court ceremonial, which is only respectable when it implies wealth and expresses power—as my very soul is sick of the paltry ambition which can find pleasure in spangles, tassels, and trumpery, when the reality of all that is great and noble hath passed away. No, Oxford, if I am doomed to lose the last cast which fickle fortune seems to offer me, I will retreat into the meanest convent in the Pyrenean hills, and at least escape the insult of the idiot gaiety of my father.—Let him pass from our memory as from the page of history, in which his name will never be recorded. I have much of more importance both to hear and to tell.—And now, my Oxford, what news from Italy? Will the Duke of Milan afford us assistance with his counsels or with his treasures?'

'With his counsels willingly, madam; but how you will relish them I know not, since he recommends to us submission to our hapless fate, and resignation to the will of Providence.'

'The wily Italian! Will not, then, Galeasso* advance any part of his hoards, or assist a friend, to whom he hath in his time full often sworn faith?'

'Not even the diamonds which I offered to deposit in his hands,' answered the earl, 'could make him unlock his treasury to supply us with ducats for our enterprise. Yet he said, if Charles of Burgundy should think seriously of an exertion in our favour, such was his regard for that great prince, and his deep sense of your Majesty's misfortunes, that he would consider what the state of his exchequer, though much exhausted, and the condition of his subjects, though impoverished by taxes and talliages, would permit him to advance in your behalf.'

'The double-faced hypocrite!' said Margaret. 'If the assistance of the princely Burgundy lends us a chance of regaining what is our own, then

* [Galeazzo Maria Sforza was at this time Duke of Milan.]

he will give us some paltry parcel of crowns, that our restored prosperity may forget his indifference to our adversity! — But what of Burgundy? I have ventured hither to tell you what I have learned, and to hear report of your proceedings — a trusty watch provides for the secrecy of our interview. My impatience to see you brought me hither in this mean disguise. I have a small retinue at a convent a mile beyond the town — I have had your arrival watched by the faithful Lambert—and now I come to know your hopes or your fears, and to tell you my own.'

'Royal lady,' said the earl, 'I have not seen the Duke. You know his temper to be wilful, sudden, haughty, and unpersuadable. If he can adopt the calm and sustained policy which the times require, I little doubt his obtaining full amends of Louis, his sworn enemy, and even of Edward, his ambitious brother-in-law. But if he continues to yield to extravagant fits of passion, with or without provocation, he may hurry into a quarrel with the poor but hardy Helvetians, and is likely to engage in a perilous contest, in which he cannot be expected to gain anything, while he undergoes a chance of the most serious losses.'

'Surely,' replied the queen, 'he will not trust the usurper Edward, even in the very moment when he is giving the greatest proof of treachery to his alliance?'

'In what respect, madam?' replied Oxford. 'The news you allude to has not reached me.'

'How, my lord? Am I then the first to tell you that Edward of York has crossed the sea with such an army as scarce even the renowned Henry V., my father-in-law, ever transported from France to Italy?'

'So much I have indeed heard was expected,' said Oxford; 'and I anticipated the effect as fatal to our cause.'

'Edward is arrived,' said Margaret, 'and the traitor and usurper hath sent defiance to Louis of France, and demanded of him the crown of that kingdom as his own right — that crown which was placed on the head of my unhappy husband when he was yet a child in the cradle.'

'It is then decided — the English are in France?' answered Oxford, in a tone expressive of the deepest anxiety. — 'And whom brings Edward with him on this expedition?'

'All—all the bitterest enemies of our house and cause—The false, the traitorous, the dishonoured George, whom he calls Duke of Clarence—the blood-drinker, Richard—the licentious Hastings—Howard—Stanley—in a word, the leaders of all those traitors whom I would not name, unless by doing so my curses could sweep them from the face of the earth.'

'And — I tremble to ask,' said the earl—'does Burgundy prepare to join them as a brother of the war, and make common cause with this Yorkish host against King Louis of France?'

'By my advices,' replied the queen, 'and they are both private and sure, besides that they are confirmed by the bruit of common fame—No, my good Oxford, no!'

'For that may the saints be praised!' answered Oxford. 'Edward of York—I will not malign even an enemy—is a bold and fearless leader—But he is neither Edward the Third, nor the heroic Black Prince—nor is he that fifth Henry of Lancaster, under whom I won my spurs, and to whose lineage the thoughts of his glorious memory would have made me faithful, had my plighted vows of allegiance ever permitted me to entertain a thought of varying, or of defection. Let Edward engage in war with Louis without the aid of Burgundy, on which he has reckoned. Louis is indeed no hero, but he is a cautious and skilful general, more to be dreaded, perhaps, in these politic days, than if Charlemagne could again raise the Oriflamme,* surrounded by Roland and all his paladins. Louis will not hazard such fields as those of Cressy, of Poictiers, or of Agincourt. With a thousand lances from Hainault, and twenty thousand crowns from Burgundy, Edward shall risk the loss of England, while he is engaged in a protracted struggle for the recovery of Normandy and Guienne. But what are the movements of Burgundy?'

'He has menaced Germany,' said Margaret, 'and his troops are now employed in overruning Lorraine, of which he has seized the principal towns and castles.'

'Where is Ferrand de Vaudemont—a youth, it is said, of courage and enterprise, and claiming Lorraine in right of his mother, Yolande of Anjou, the sister of your Grace?'

'Fled,' replied the queen, 'into Germany or Helvetia.'

'Let Burgundy beware of him,' said the experienced earl; 'for should the disinherited youth obtain confederates in Germany, and allies among the hardy Swiss, Charles of Burgundy may find him a far more formidable enemy than he expects. We are strong for the present, only in the Duke's strength, and if it is wasted in idle and desultory efforts, our hopes, alas! vanish with his power, even if he should be found to have the decided will to assist us. My friends in England are resolute not to stir without men and money from Burgundy.'

'It is a fear,' said Margaret, 'but not our worst fear. I dread more the policy of Louis, who, unless my espials have grossly deceived me, has even already proposed a secret peace to Edward, offering with large sums of money to purchase England to the Yorkists, and a truce of seven years.'

'It cannot be,' said Oxford. 'No Englishman, commanding such an army as Edward must now lead, dares for very shame to retire from France without a manly attempt to recover his lost provinces.'

'Such would have been the thoughts of a rightful prince,' said Margaret, 'who left behind him an obedient and faithful kingdom. Such may not be the thoughts of this Edward, misnamed Plantagenet, base perhaps in mind as in blood, since they say his real father was one Blackburn, an archer of Middleham—usurper, at least, if not bastard—such will not be his

* [The ancient royal standard of France was so called, being made of red silk with flame-like edging, and fastened to a gilded pole.]

thoughts.* Every breeze that blows from England will bring with it apprehensions of defection amongst those over whom he has usurped authority! He will not sleep in peace till he returns to England with those cut-throats, whom he relies upon for the defence of his stolen crown. He will engage in no war with Louis, for Louis will not hesitate to soothe his pride by humiliation—to gorge his avarice and pamper his voluptuous prodigality by sums of gold—and I fear much we shall soon hear of the English army retiring from France, with the idle boast that they have displayed their banners once more, for a week or two, in the provinces which were formerly their own.'

'It the more becomes us to be speedy in moving Burgundy to decision,' replied Oxford; 'and for that purpose I post to Dijon. Such an army as Edward's cannot be transported over the narrow seas in several weeks. The probability is, that they must winter in France, even if they should have truce with King Louis. With a thousand Hainault lances from the eastern part of Flanders, I can be soon in the north, where we have many friends, besides the assurance of help from Scotland. The faithful west will rise at a signal—a Clifford can be found, though the mountain mists have hid him from Edward's researches—the Welsh will assemble at the rallying word of Tudor—the Red Rose raises its head once more—and so, God save King Henry!'

'Alas!' said the queen—'But no husband—no friend of mine—the son but of my mother-in-law by a Welsh chieftain—cold, they say, and crafty — But be it so — let me only see Lancaster triumph, and obtain revenge upon York, and I will die contented!'

'It is then your pleasure that I should make the proffers expressed by your Grace's former mandates, to induce Burgundy to stir himself in our cause? If he learns the proposal of a truce betwixt France and England, it will sting sharper than aught I can say.'

'Promise all, however,' said the queen. 'I know his inmost soul—it is set upon extending the dominions of his House in every direction. For this he has seized Gueldres—for this he now overruns and occupies Lorraine — for this he covets such poor remnants of Provence as my father still calls his own. With such augmented territories, he proposes to exchange his ducal diadem for an arched crown of independent sovereignty. Tell the Duke, Margaret can assist his views—tell him that my father René shall disown the opposition made to the Duke's seizure of Lorraine—He shall do more—he shall declare Charles his heir in Provence, with my ample consent—tell him, the old man shall cede his dominions to him upon the instant that his Hainaulters embark for England, some small pension deducted to maintain a concert of fiddlers and a troop of morrice-dancers. These are René's only earthly wants. Mine are still fewer —revenge upon York, and a speedy grave! — For the paltry gold which we may need, thou hast jewels to pledge—For the other conditions, security if required.'

'For these, madam, I can pledge my knightly word, in addition to your royal faith; and if more is required, my son shall be a hostage with Burgundy.'

'O no — no!' exclaimed the dethroned queen, touched by perhaps the only tender feeling which repeated and extraordinary misfortunes had not chilled into insensibility,—'Hazard not the life of the noble youth—he that is the last of the loyal and faithful House of Vere—he that should have been the brother-in-arms of my beloved Edward—he that had so nearly been his companion in a bloody and untimely grave! Do not involve this poor child in these fatal intrigues, which have been so baneful to his family. Let him go with me. Him at least I will shelter from danger whilst I live, and provide for when I am no more.'

'Forgive me, madam,' said Oxford, with the firmness which distinguished him. 'My son, as you deign to recollect, is a De Vere, destined, perhaps, to be the last of his name. Fall he may, but it must not be without honour. To whatever dangers his duty and allegiance call him, be it from sword or lance, axe or gibbet, to these he must expose himself frankly, when his doing so can mark his allegiance. His ancestors have shown him how to brave them all.'

'True, true,' exclaimed the unfortunate queen, raising her arms wildly, — 'All must perish—all that have honoured Lancaster—all that have loved Margaret, or whom she has loved! The destruction must be universal—the young must fall with the old—not a lamb of the scattered flock shall escape!'

'For God's sake, gracious madam,' said Oxford, 'compose yourself!—I hear them knock on the chapel door.'

'It is the signal of parting,' said the exiled queen, collecting herself. 'Do not fear, noble Oxford, I am not often thus; but how seldom do I see those friends, whose faces and voices can disturb the composure of my despair! Let me tie this relic about thy neck, good youth, and fear not its evil influence, though you receive it from an ill-omened hand. It was my husband's, blessed by many a prayer, and sanctified by many a holy tear; even my unhappy hands cannot pollute it. I should have bound it on my Edward's bosom on the dreadful morning of Tewkesbury fight; but he armed early—went to the field without seeing me, and all my purpose was vain.'

She passed a golden chain round Arthur's neck as she spoke, which contained a small gold crucifix of rich but barbarous manufacture. It had belonged, said tradition, to Edward the Confessor. The knock at the door of the chapel was repeated.

'We must not tarry,' said Margaret; 'let us part here—you for Dijon—I to Aix, my abode of unrest in Provence. Farewell—we may meet in a better hour—yet how can I hope it? Thus I said on the morning before the fight of Saint Albans—thus on the dark dawning of Towton—thus on the yet more bloody field of Tewkesbury —and what was the event? Yet hope is a plant which cannot be rooted out of a noble breast, till the last heart-string crack as it is pulled away.'

* The Lancastrian party threw the imputation of bastardy (which was totally unfounded) upon Edward IV.

So saying, she passed through the chapel door, and mingled in the miscellaneous assemblage of personages who worshipped or indulged their curiosity, or consumed their idle hours amongst the aisles of the cathedral.

Philipson and his son, both deeply impressed with the singular interview which had just taken place, returned to their inn, where they found a pursuivant, with the Duke of Burgundy's badge and livery, who informed them that if they were the English merchants who were carrying wares of value to the court of the Duke, he had orders to afford them the countenance of his escort and inviolable character. Under his protection they set out from Strassburg; but such was the uncertainty of the Duke of Burgundy's motions, and such the numerous obstacles which occurred to interrupt their journey, in a country disturbed by the constant passage of troops and preparation for war, that it was evening on the second day ere they reached the plain near Dijon, on which the whole, or great part of his power, lay encamped.

CHAPTER XXV.

Thus said the Duke—thus did the Duke infer.
RICHARD III.

THE eyes of the elder traveller were well accustomed to sights of martial splendour, yet even he was dazzled with the rich and glorious display of the Burgundian camp, in which, near the walls of Dijon, Charles, the wealthiest prince in Europe, had displayed his own extravagance, and encouraged his followers to similar profusion. The pavilions of the meanest officers were of silk and samite, while those of the nobility and great leaders glittered with cloth of silver, cloth of gold, variegated tapestry, and other precious materials, which in no other situation would have been employed as a cover from the weather, but would themselves have been thought worthy of the most careful protection. The horsemen and infantry who mounted guard were arrayed in the richest and most gorgeous armour. A beautiful and very numerous train of artillery was drawn up near the entrance of the camp, and in its commander, Philipson (to give the earl the travelling name to which our readers are accustomed) recognised Henry Colvin, an Englishman of inferior birth, but distinguished for his skill in conducting these terrible engines, which had of late come into general use in war. The banners and pennons which were displayed by every knight, baron, and man of rank, floated before their tents, and the owners of these transitory dwellings sat at the door half-armed, and enjoyed the military contests of the soldiers, in wrestling, pitching the bar, and other athletic exercises.

Long rows of the noblest horses were seen at picquet, prancing and tossing their heads, as impatient of the inactivity to which they were confined, or were heard neighing over the provender which was spread plentifully before them. The soldiers formed joyous groups around the minstrels and strolling jugglers, or were engaged in drinking parties at the sutler's tent; others strolled about with folded arms, casting their eyes now and then to the sinking sun, as if desirous that the hour should arrive which would put an end to a day unoccupied, and therefore tedious.

At length the travellers reached, amidst the dazzling varieties of this military display, the pavilion of the Duke himself, before which floated heavily in the evening breeze the broad and rich banner, in which glowed the armorial bearings and quarterings of a prince, duke of six provinces, and count of fifteen counties, who was, from his power, his disposition, and the success which seemed to attend his enterprises, the general dread of Europe. The pursuivant made himself known to some of the household, and the Englishmen were immediately received with courtesy, though not such as to draw attention upon them, and conveyed to a neighbouring tent, the residence of a general officer, which they were given to understand was destined for their accommodation, and where their packages accordingly were deposited, and refreshments offered them.

'As the camp is filled,' said the domestic who waited upon them, 'with soldiers of different nations and uncertain dispositions, the Duke of Burgundy, for the safety of your merchandise, has ordered you the protection of a regular sentinel. In the meantime, be in readiness to wait on his Highness, seeing you may look to be presently sent for.'

Accordingly, the elder Philipson was shortly after summoned to the Duke's presence, introduced by a back entrance into the ducal pavilion, and into that part of it which, screened by close curtains and wooden barricades, formed Charles's own separate apartment. The plainness of the furniture, and the coarse apparatus of the Duke's toilet, formed a strong contrast to the appearance of the exterior of the pavilion; for Charles, whose character was in that, as in other things, far from consistent, exhibited in his own person during war an austerity, or rather coarseness of dress, and sometimes of manners also, which was more like the rudeness of a German lanzknecht, than the bearing of a prince of exalted rank; while, at the same time, he encouraged and enjoined a great splendour of expense and display amongst his vassals and courtiers, as if to be rudely attired, and to despise every restraint, even of ordinary ceremony, were a privilege of the sovereign alone. Yet, when it pleased him to assume state in person and manners, none knew better than Charles of Burgundy how he ought to adorn and demean himself.

Upon his toilet appeared brushes and combs which might have claimed dismissal as past the term of service, over-worn hats and doublets, dog-leashes, leather belts, and such other paltry articles; amongst which lay at random, as it seemed, the great diamond called Sanci,—the three rubies termed the Three Brothers of Antwerp,—another great diamond called the Lamp of Flanders, and other precious stones of scarcely inferior value and rarity. This extraordinary display somewhat resembled the character of the Duke himself, who mixed cruelty with justice,

magnanimity with meanness of spirit, economy with extravagance, and liberality with avarice; being, in fact, consistent in nothing excepting in his obstinate determination to follow the opinion he had once formed, in every situation of things, and through all variety of risks.

In the midst of the valueless and inestimable articles of his wardrobe and toilet, the Duke of Burgundy called out to the English traveller, 'Welcome, Herr Philipson—welcome, you of a nation whose traders are princes, and their merchants the mighty ones of the earth. What new commodities have you brought to gull us with? You merchants, by Saint George, are a wily generation.'

'Faith, no new merchandise I, my lord,' answered the elder Englishman; 'I bring but the commodities which I showed your Highness the last time I communicated with you, in the hope of a poor trader, that your Grace may find them more acceptable upon a review, than when you first saw them.'

'It is well, Sir—Philipville, I think they call you?—you are a simple trader, or you take me for a silly purchaser, that you think to gull me with the same wares which I fancied not formerly. Change of fashion, man—novelty—is the motto of commerce; your Lancaster wares have had their day, and I have bought of them like others, and was like enough to have paid dear for them too. York is all the vogue now.'

'It may be so among the vulgar,' said the Earl of Oxford; 'but for souls like your Highness, faith, honour, and loyalty are jewels which change of fancy or mutability of taste cannot put out of fashion.'

'Why, it may be, noble Oxford,' said the Duke, 'that I preserve in my secret mind some veneration for these old-fashioned qualities, else how should I have such regard for your person, in which they have ever been distinguished? But my situation is painfully urgent, and should I make a false step at this crisis, I might break the purposes of my whole life. Observe me, Sir Merchant. Here has come over your old competitor, Blackburn, whom some call Edward of York and of London, with a commodity of bows and bills such as never entered France since King Arthur's time; and he offers to enter into joint adventure with me, or, in plain speech, to make common cause with Burgundy, till we smoke out of his earths the old fox Louis, and nail his hide to the stable-door. In a word, England invites me to take part with him against my most wily and inveterate enemy, the King of France; to rid myself of the chain of vassalage, and to ascend into the rank of independent princes;—how think you, noble Earl, can I forego this seducing temptation?'

'You must ask this of some of your counsellors of Burgundy,' said Oxford; 'it is a question fraught too deeply with ruin to my cause, for me to give a fair opinion on it.'

'Nevertheless,' said Charles, 'I ask thee as an honourable man, what objections you see to the course proposed to me? Speak your mind, and speak it freely.'

'My lord, I know it is in your Highness's nature to entertain no doubts of the facility of executing anything which you have once determined shall be done. Yet, though this prince-like disposition may in some cases prepare for its own success, and has often done so, there are others in which persisting in our purpose, merely because we have once willed it, leads not to success, but to ruin. Look, therefore, at this English army; winter is approaching, where are they to be lodged? how are they to be victualled? by whom are they to be paid? Is your Highness to take all the expense and labour of fitting them for the summer campaign? for, rely on it, an English army never was, nor will be, fit for service till they have been out of their own island long enough to accustom them to military duty. They are men, I grant, the fittest for soldiers in the world; but they are not soldiers as yet, and must be trained to become such at your Highness's expense.'

'Be it so,' said Charles; 'I think the Low Countries can find food for the beef-consuming knaves for a few weeks, and villages for them to lie in, and officers to train their sturdy limbs to war, and provost-marshals enough to reduce their refractory spirit to discipline.'

'What happens next?' said Oxford. 'You march to Paris, add to Edward's usurped power another kingdom; restore to him all the possessions which England ever had in France, Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Gascony, and all besides.—Can you trust this Edward when you shall have thus fostered his strength, and made him far stronger than this Louis whom you have united to pull down?'

'By Saint George, I will not dissemble with you! It is in that very point that my doubts trouble me. Edward is indeed my brother-in-law, but I am a man little inclined to put my head under my wife's girdle.'

'And the times,' said Philipson, 'have too often shown the inefficiency of family alliances to prevent the most gross breaches of faith.'

'You say well, Earl. Clarence betrayed his father-in-law; Louis poisoned his brother—Domestic affections, pshaw! they sit warm enough by a private man's fireside, but they cannot come into fields of battle, or princes' halls, where the wind blows cold. No, my alliance with Edward by marriage were little succour to me in time of need. I would as soon ride an unbroken horse, with no better bridle than a lady's garter. But what, then, is the result? He wars on Louis; whichever gains the better, I, who must be strengthened in their mutual weakness, receive the advantage.—The Englishmen slay the French with their cloth-yard shafts; and the Frenchmen, by skirmishes, waste, weaken, and destroy the English. With spring I take the field with an army superior to both, and then, Saint George for Burgundy!'

'And if, in the meanwhile, your Highness will deign to assist, even in the most trifling degree, a cause the most honourable that ever knight laid lance in rest for,—a moderate sum of money, and a small body of Hainault lances, who may gain both fame and fortune by the service, may replace the injured heir of Lancaster in the possession of his native and rightful dominion.'

'Ay, marry, Sir Earl,' said the Duke, 'you come roundly to the point; but we have seen,

and indeed partly assisted at, so many turns betwixt York and Lancaster, that we have some doubt which is the side to which Heaven has given the right, and the inclinations of the people the effectual power; we are surprised into absolute giddiness by so many extraordinary revolutions of fortune as England has exhibited.'

'A proof, my lord, that these mutations are not yet ended, and that your generous aid may give to the better side an effectual turn of advantage.'

'And lend my cousin, Margaret of Anjou, my arm to dethrone my wife's brother? Perhaps he deserves small goodwill at my hands, since he and his insolent nobles have been urging me with remonstrances, and even threats, to lay aside all my own important affairs, and join Edward, forsooth, in his knight-errant expedition against Louis. I will march against Louis at my own time, and not sooner; and, by Saint George! neither island king nor island noble shall dictate to Charles of Burgundy. You are fine conceited companions, you English of both sides, that think the matters of your own bedlam island are as interesting to all the world as to yourselves. But neither York nor Lancaster; neither brother Blackburn, nor cousin Margaret of Anjou, not with John de Vere to back her, shall gull me. Men lure no hawks with empty hands.'

Oxford, familiar with the Duke's disposition, suffered him to exhaust himself in chafing, that any one should pretend to dictate his course of conduct, and, when he was at length silent, replied with calmness—'Do I live to hear the noble Duke of Burgundy, the mirror of European chivalry, say that no reason has been shown to him for an adventure where a helpless queen is to be redressed—a royal house raised from the dust? Is there not immortal *los* and honour—the trumpet of fame to proclaim the sovereign, who alone, in a degenerate age, has united the duties of a generous knight with those of a princely sovereign'——

The Duke interrupted him, striking him at the same time on the shoulder—'And King René's five hundred fiddlers to tune their cracked violins in my praise! and King René himself to listen to them, and say—"Well fought, Duke—well played, fiddler!" I tell thee, John of Oxford, when thou and I wore maiden armour, such words as fame, honour, *los*, knightly glory, lady's love, and so forth, were good mottoes for our snow-white shields, and a fair enough argument for splintering lances—Ay, and in tilt-yard, though somewhat old for these fierce follies, I would jeopard my person in such a quarrel yet, as becomes a knight of the order. But when we come to paying down of crowns, and embarking of large squadrons, we must have to propose to our subjects some substantial excuse for plunging them in war; some proposal for the public good—or, by Saint George! for our own private advantage, which is the same thing. This is the course the world runs, and, Oxford, to tell the plain truth, I mean to hold the same bias.'

'Heaven forbid that I should expect your Highness to act otherwise than with a view to your subjects' welfare—the increase, that is, as your Grace happily expresses it, of your own power and dominion. The money we require is not in benevolence, but in loan; and Margaret is willing to deposit these jewels, of which I think your Grace knows the value, till she shall repay the sum which your friendship may advance in her necessity.'

'Ha, ha!' said the Duke, 'would our cousin make a pawnbroker of us, and have us deal with her like a Jewish usurer with his debtor?—Yet, in faith, Oxford, we may need the diamonds, for if this business were otherwise feasible, it is possible that I myself must become a borrower to aid my cousin's necessities. I have applied to the States of the Duchy, who are now sitting, and expect, as is reasonable, a large supply. But there are restless heads and close hands among them, and they may be niggardly—So place the jewels on the table in the meanwhile. —Well, say I am to be no sufferer in purse by this feat of knight-errantry which you propose to me, still princes enter not into war without some view of advantage?'

'Listen to me, noble sovereign. You are naturally bent to unite the great estates of your father, and those you have acquired by your own arms, into a compact and firm dukedom'——

'Call it kingdom,' said Charles; 'it is the worthier word.'

'Into a kingdom, of which the crown shall sit as fair and even on your Grace's brow as that of France on your present suzerain, Louis.'

'It needs not such shrewdness as yours to descry that such is my purpose,' said the Duke; 'else wherefore am I here with helm on my head and sword by my side? And wherefore are my troops seizing on the strong places in Lorraine, and chasing before them the beggarly De Vaudemont, who has the insolence to claim it as his inheritance? Yes, my friend, the aggrandisement of Burgundy is a theme for which the Duke of that fair province is bound to fight, while he can put foot in stirrup.'

'But think you not,' said the English earl, 'since you allow me to speak freely with your Grace, on the footing of old acquaintanceship, think you not that in this chart of your dominions, otherwise so fairly bounded, there is something on the southern frontier which might be arranged more advantageously for a King of Burgundy?'

'I cannot guess whither you would lead me,' said the Duke, looking at a map of the duchy and his other possessions, to which the Englishman had pointed his attention, and then turning his broad keen eye upon the face of the banished earl.

'I would say,' replied the latter, 'that, to so powerful a prince as your Grace, there is no safe neighbour but the sea. Here is Provence, which interferes betwixt you and the Mediterranean; Provence, with its princely harbours, and fertile cornfields and vineyards. Were it not well to include it in your map of sovereignty, and thus touch the middle sea with one hand, while the other rested on the sea-coast of Flanders?'

'Provence, said you?'—replied the Duke eagerly; 'why, man, my very dreams are of Provence. I cannot smell an orange but it reminds me of its perfumed woods and bowers,

its olives, citrons, and pomegranates. But how to frame pretensions to it? Shame it were to disturb René, the harmless old man, nor would it become a near relation. Then he is the uncle of Louis; and most probably, failing his daughter Margaret, or perhaps in preference to her, he hath named the French king his heir.'

'A better claim might be raised up in your Grace's own person,' said the Earl of Oxford, 'if you will afford Margaret of Anjou the succour she requires by me.'

'Take the aid thou requirest,' replied the Duke; 'take double the amount of it in men and money! Let me but have a claim upon Provence, though thin as a single thread of thy Queen Margaret's hair, and let me alone for twisting it into the tough texture of a quadruple cable.—But I am a fool to listen to the dreams of one who, ruined himself, can lose little by holding forth to others the most extravagant hopes.'

Charles breathed high, and changed complexion as he spoke.

'I am not such a person, my lord Duke,' said the earl. 'Listen to me—René is broken with years, fond of repose, and too poor to maintain his rank with the necessary dignity; too good-natured, or too feeble-minded, to lay further imposts on his subjects; weary of contending with bad fortune, and desirous to resign his territories'——

'His territories!' said Charles.

'Yes, all he actually possesses; and the much more extensive dominions which he has claim to, but which have passed from his sway.'

'You take away my breath!' said the Duke. 'René resign Provence! and what says Margaret—the proud, the high-minded Margaret—will she subscribe to so humiliating a proceeding?'

'For the chance of seeing Lancaster triumph in England, she would resign, not only dominion, but life itself. And in truth, the sacrifice is less than it may seem to be. It is certain that, when René dies, the King of France will claim the old man's county of Provence as a male fief, and there is no one strong enough to back Margaret's claim of inheritance, however just it may be.'

'It is just,' said Charles; 'it is undeniable! I will not hear of its being denied or challenged—that is, when once it is established in our own person. It is the true principle of the war for the public good, that none of the great fiefs be suffered to revert again to the crown of France, least of all while it stands on a brow so astucious and unprincipled as that of Louis. Burgundy joined to Provence—a dominion from the German Ocean to the Mediterranean. Oxford—thou art my better angel!'

'Your Grace must, however, reflect,' said Oxford, 'that honourable provision must be made for King René.'

'Certainly, man, certainly; he shall have a score of fiddlers and jugglers, to play, roar, and recite to him from morning till night. He shall have a court of Troubadours, who shall do nothing but drink, flute, and fiddle to him, and pronounce *arrests* of *love*, to be confirmed or reversed by an appeal to himself, the supreme *Roi d'Amour*. And Margaret shall also be honourably sustained, in the manner you may point out.'

'That will be easily settled,' answered the English earl. 'If our attempts on England succeed, she will need no aid from Burgundy. If she fails, she retires into a cloister, and it will not be long that she will need the honourable maintenance which, I am sure, your Grace's generosity will willingly assign her.'

'Unquestionably,' answered Charles; 'and on a scale which will become us both;—but, by my halidome, John of Vere, the abbess into whose cloister Margaret of Anjou shall retire, will have an ungovernable penitent under her charge. Well do I know her; and, Sir Earl, I will not clog our discourse by expressing any doubts, that if she pleases she can compel her father to resign his estates to whomsoever she will. She is like my brache Gorgon, who compels whatsoever hound is coupled with her to go the way she chooses, or she strangles him if he resists. So has Margaret acted with her simple-minded husband; and I am aware that her father, a fool of a different cast, must of necessity be equally tractable. I think *I* could have matched her,—though my very neck aches at the thought of the struggles we should have had for mastery. But you look grave, because I jest with the pertinacious temper of my unhappy cousin.'

'My lord,' said Oxford, 'whatever are or have been the defects of my mistress, she is in distress, and almost in desolation. She is my sovereign, and your Highness's cousin not the less.'

'Enough said, Sir Earl,' answered the Duke. 'Let us speak seriously. Whatever we may think of the abdication of King René, I fear we shall find it difficult to make Louis XI. see the matter as favourably as we do. He will hold that the county of Provence is a male fief, and that neither the resignation of René nor the consent of his daughter can prevent its reverting to the crown of France, as the King of Sicily, as they call him, hath no male issue.'

'That, may it please your Grace, is a question for battle to decide; and your Highness has successfully braved Louis for a less important stake. All I can say is, that if your Grace's active assistance enables the young Earl of Richmond to succeed in his enterprise, you shall have the aid of three thousand English archers, if old John of Oxford, for want of a better leader, were to bring them over himself.'

'A noble aid,' said the Duke; 'graced still more by him who promises to lead them. Thy succour, noble Oxford, were precious to me, did you but come with your sword by your side, and a single page at your back. I know you well, both heart and head. But let us to this gear; exiles, even the wisest, are privileged in promises, and sometimes—excuse me, noble Oxford—impose on themselves as well as on their friends. What are the hopes on which you desire me again to embark on so troubled and uncertain an ocean as these civil contests of yours?'

The Earl of Oxford produced a schedule, and explained to the Duke the plan of his expedition, to be backed by an insurrection of the friends of Lancaster, of which it is enough to say that it was bold to the verge of temerity; but yet so well compacted and put together as to bear, in those times of rapid revolution, and under a

leader of Oxford's approved military skill and political sagacity, a strong appearance of probable success.

While Duke Charles mused over the particulars of an enterprise attractive and congenial to his own disposition,—while he counted over the affronts which he had received from his brother-in-law, Edward IV., the present opportunity for taking a signal revenge, and the rich acquisition which he hoped to make in Provence by the cession in his favour of René of Anjou and his daughter, the Englishman failed not to press on his consideration the urgent necessity of suffering no time to escape.

'The accomplishment of this scheme,' he said, 'demands the utmost promptitude. To have a chance of success, I must be in England, with your Grace's auxiliary forces, before Edward of York can return from France with his army.'

'And, having come hither,' said the Duke, 'our worthy brother will be in no hurry to return again. He will meet with black-eyed French women and ruby-coloured French wine, and brother Blackburn is no man to leave such commodities in a hurry.'

'My lord Duke, I will speak truth of my enemy. Edward is indolent and luxurious when things are easy around him, but let him feel the spur of necessity, and he becomes as eager as a pampered steed. Louis, too, who seldom fails in finding means to accomplish his ends, is bent upon determining the English king to recross the sea—therefore, speed, noble prince—speed is the soul of your enterprise.'

'Speed!' said the Duke of Burgundy,—'Why, I will go with you and see the embarkation myself; and tried, approved soldiers you shall have, such as are nowhere to be found save in Artois and Hainault.'

'But pardon yet, noble Duke, the impatience of a drowning wretch urgently pressing for assistance.—When shall we to the coast of Flanders, to order this important measure?'

'Why, in a fortnight, or perchance a week, or, in a word, so soon as I shall have chastised to purpose a certain gang of thieves and robbers, who, as the scum of the cauldron will always be uppermost, have got up into the fastnesses of the Alps, and from thence annoy our frontiers by contraband traffic, pillage, and robbery.'

'Your Highness means the Swiss Confederates?'

'Ay, the peasant churls give themselves such a name. They are a sort of manumitted slaves of Austria, and, like a bandog whose chain is broken, they avail themselves of their liberty to annoy and rend whatever comes in their way.'

'I travelled through their country from Italy,' said the exiled earl, 'and I heard it was the purpose of the Cantons to send envoys to solicit peace of your Highness.'

'Peace!' exclaimed Charles. 'A proper sort of peaceful proceedings those of their embassy have been! Availing themselves of a mutiny of the burghers of La Ferette, the first garrison town which they entered, they stormed the walls, seized on Archibald de Hagenbach, who commanded the place on my part, and put him to death in the market-place. Such an insult must be punished, Sir John de Vere; and if you do not see me in the storm of passion which it well deserves, it is because I have already given orders to hang up the base runagates who call themselves ambassadors.'

'For God's sake, noble Duke,' said the Englishman, throwing himself at Charles's feet—'for your own character, for the sake of the peace of Christendom, revoke such an order if it is really given!'

'What means this passion?' said Duke Charles.—'What are these men's lives to thee, excepting that the consequences of a war may delay your expedition for a few days?'

'May render it altogether abortive,' said the earl; 'nay, *must* needs do so.—Hear me, lord Duke. I was with these men on a part of their journey.'

'You!' said the Duke—'you a companion of the paltry Swiss peasants? Misfortune has sunk the pride of English nobility to a low ebb, when you selected such associates.'

'I was thrown amongst them by accident,' said the earl. 'Some of them are of noble blood, and are, besides, men for whose peaceable intentions I ventured to constitute myself their warrant.'

'On my honour, my Lord of Oxford, you graced them highly, and me no less, in interfering between the Swiss and myself! Allow me to say that I condescend, when, in deference to past friendship, I permit you to speak to me of your own English affairs. Methinks you might well spare me your opinion upon topics with which you have no natural concern.'

'My Lord of Burgundy,' replied Oxford, 'I followed your banner to Paris, and had the good luck to rescue you in the fight at Mont L'Hery,* when you were beset by the French men-at-arms'——

'We have not forgot it,' said Duke Charles; 'and it is a sign that we keep the action in remembrance that you have been suffered to stand before us so long, pleading the cause of a set of rascals, whom we are required to spare from the gallows that groans for them, because, forsooth, they have been the fellow-travellers of the Earl of Oxford!'

'Not so, my lord. I ask their lives only because they are upon a peaceful errand, and the leaders amongst them, at least, have no accession to the crime of which you complain.'

The Duke traversed the apartment with unequal steps, in much agitation, his large eyebrows drawn down over his eyes, his hands clenched, and his teeth set, until at length he seemed to take a resolution. He rung a hand-bell of silver, which stood upon his table.

'Here, Contay,' he said to the gentleman of his chamber who entered, 'are these mountain fellows yet executed?'

'No, may it please your Highness; but the executioner waits them so soon as the priest hath confessed them.'

'Let them live,' said the Duke. 'We will hear to-morrow in what manner they propose to justify their proceedings towards us.'

Contay bowed and left the apartment; then, turning to the Englishman, the Duke said, with an indescribable mixture of haughtiness with

* [Fought between Louis XI. of France and certain of his nobles on 16th July 1465.]

familiarity, and even kindness, but having his brows cleared, and his looks composed,—'We are now clear of obligation, my Lord of Oxford—you have obtained life for life—nay, to make up some inequality which there may be betwixt the value of the commodities bestowed, you have obtained six lives for one. I will, therefore, pay no more attention to you, should you again upbraid me with the stumbling horse at Mont L'Hery, or your own achievements on that occasion. Most princes are contented with privately hating such men as have rendered them extraordinary services—I feel no such disposition—I only detest being reminded of having had occasion for them.—Pshaw! I am half-choked with the effort of foregoing my own fixed resolution. So ho! who waits there? Bring me to drink.'

An usher entered, bearing a large silver flagon, which, instead of wine, was filled with tisanne, slightly flavoured by aromatic herbs.

'I am so hot and choleric by nature,' said the Duke, 'that our leeches prohibit me from drinking wine. But you, Oxford, are bound by no such regimen. Get thee to thy countryman Colvin, the general of our artillery. We commend thee to his custody and hospitality till to-morrow, which must be a busy day, since I expect to receive the answer of these wiseacres of the Dijon Assembly of Estates; and have also to hear (thanks to your lordship's interference) these miserable Swiss envoys, as they call themselves. Well, no more on't.—Good-night. You may communicate freely with Colvin, who is, like yourself, an old Lancastrian.—But hark ye, not a word respecting Provence—not even in your sleep.—Contay, conduct this English gentleman to Colvin's tent. He knows my pleasure respecting him.'

'So please your Grace,' answered Contay, 'I left the English gentleman's son with Monsieur de Colvin.'

'What! thine own son, Oxford? And with thee here? Why did you not tell me of him? Is he a true scion of the ancient tree?'

'It is my pride to believe so, my lord. He has been the faithful companion of all my dangers and wanderings.'

'Happy man!' said the Duke, with a sigh. 'You, Oxford, have a son to share your poverty and distress—I have none to be partner and successor to my greatness.'

'You have a daughter, my lord,' said the noble De Vere, 'and it is to be hoped she will one day wed some powerful prince, who may be the stay of your Highness's house.'

'Never! By Saint George, never!' answered the Duke sharply and shortly. 'I will have no son in-law, who may make the daughter's bed a stepping-stone to reach the father's crown. Oxford, I have spoken more freely than I am wont, perhaps more freely than I ought—but I hold some men trustworthy, and believe you, Sir John de Vere, to be one of them.'

The English nobleman bowed, and was about to leave his presence, but the Duke presently recalled him.

'There is one thing more, Oxford.—The cession of Provence is not quite enough. René and Margaret must disavow this hot-brained Ferrand de Vaudemont, who is making some foolish stir in Lorraine, in right of his mother Yolande.'

'My lord,' said Oxford, 'Ferrand is the grandson of King René, the nephew of Queen Margaret; but yet'——

'But yet, by Saint George, his rights, as he calls them, on Lorraine must positively be disowned. You talk of their family feelings, while you are urging me to make war on my own brother-in-law!'

'René's best apology for deserting his grandson,' answered Oxford, 'will be his total inability to support and assist him. I will communicate your Grace's condition, though it is a hard one.'

So saying, he left the pavilion.

CHAPTER XXVI.

> I humbly thank your Highness;
> And am right glad to catch this good occasion
> Most thoroughly to be winnow'd, where my chaff
> And corn shall fly asunder.
>
> KING HENRY VIII.

COLVIN, the English officer to whom the Duke of Burgundy, with splendid pay and appointments, committed the charge of his artillery, was owner of the tent assigned for the Englishman's lodging, and received the Earl of Oxford with the respect due to his rank, and to the Duke's especial orders upon that subject. He had been himself a follower of the Lancaster faction, and of course was well disposed towards one of the very few men of distinction whom he had known personally, and who had constantly adhered to that family through the train of misfortunes by which they seemed to be totally overwhelmed. A repast, of which his son had already partaken, was offered to the earl by Colvin, who omitted not to recommend, by precept and example, the good wine of Burgundy, from which the sovereign of the province was himself obliged to refrain.

'His Grace shows command of passion in that,' said Colvin. 'For, sooth to speak, and only conversing betwixt friends, his temper grows too headlong to bear the spur which a cup of cordial beverage gives to the blood, and he, therefore, wisely restricts himself to such liquid as may cool rather than inflame his natural fire of disposition.'

'I can perceive as much,' said the Lancastrian noble. 'When I first knew the noble Duke, who was then Earl of Charalois, his temper, though always sufficiently fiery, was calmness to the impetuosity which he now displays on the smallest contradiction. Such is the course of an uninterrupted flow of prosperity. He has ascended, by his own courage and the advantage of circumstances, from the doubtful place of a feudatory and tributary prince, to rank with the most powerful sovereigns in Europe, and to assume independent majesty. But I trust the noble starts of generosity, which atoned for his wilful and wayward temper, are not more few than formerly?'

'I have good right to say that they are not,' replied the soldier of fortune, who understood

generosity in the restricted sense of liberality. 'The Duke is a noble and open-handed master.'

'I trust his bounty is conferred on men who are as faithful and steady in their service as you, Colvin, have ever been. But I see a change in your army. I know the banners of most of the old houses in Burgundy—How is it that I observe so few of them in the Duke's camp? I see flags, and pennons, and pennoncelles; but even to me, who have been so many years acquainted with the nobility both of France and Flanders, their bearings are unknown.'

'My noble Lord of Oxford,' answered the officer, 'it ill becomes a man who lives on the Duke's pay to censure his conduct; but his Highness hath of late trusted too much, as it seems to me, to the hired arms of foreign levies, and too little to his own native subjects and retainers. He holds it better to take into his pay large bands of German and Italian mercenary soldiers, than to repose confidence in the knights and squires who are bound to him by allegiance and feudal faith. He uses the aid of his own subjects but as the means of producing him sums of money, which he bestows on his hired troops. The Germans are honest knaves enough while regularly paid; but Heaven preserve me from the Duke's Italian bands, and that Campo-Basso their leader, who waits but the highest price to sell his Highness like a sheep for the shambles!'

'Think you so ill of him?' demanded the earl.

'So very ill, indeed, that I believe,' replied Colvin, 'there is no sort of treachery which the heart can devise, or the arm perpetrate, that hath not ready reception in his breast, and prompt execution at his hand. It is painful, my lord, for an honest Englishman like me to serve in an army where such traitors have command. But what can I do, unless I could once more find me a soldier's occupation in my native country? I often hope it will please merciful Heaven again to awaken those brave civil wars in my own dear England, where all was fair fighting, and treason was unheard of.'

Lord Oxford gave his host to understand that there was a possibility that his pious wish of living and dying in his own country, and in the practice of his profession, was not to be despaired of. Meantime he requested of him that early on the next morning he would procure him a pass and an escort for his son, whom he was compelled to despatch forthwith to Nancy, the residence of King René.

'What!' said Colvin, 'is my young Lord of Oxford to take a degree in the court of love? for no other business is listened to at King René's capital, save love and poetry.'

'I am not ambitious of such distinction for him, my good host,' answered Oxford; 'but Queen Margaret is with her father, and it is but fitting that the youth should kiss her hand.'

'Enough spoken,' said the veteran Lancastrian. 'I trust, though winter is fast approaching, the Red Rose may bloom in spring.'

He then ushered the Earl of Oxford to the partition of the tent which he was to occupy, in which there was a couch for Arthur also—their host, as Colvin might be termed, assuring them that, with peep of day, horses and faithful attendants should be ready to speed the youth on his journey to Nancy.

'And now, Arthur,' said his father, 'we must part once more. I dare give thee, in this land of danger, no written communication to my mistress, Queen Margaret; but say to her that I have found the Duke of Burgundy wedded to his own views of interest, but not averse to combine them with hers. Say that I have little doubt that he will grant us the required aid, but not without the expected resignation in his favour by herself and King René. Say I would never have recommended such a sacrifice for the precarious chance of overthrowing the House of York, but that I am satisfied that France and Burgundy are hanging like vultures over Provence, and that the one or other, or both princes, are ready, on her father's demise, to pounce on such possessions as they have reluctantly spared to him during his life. An accommodation with Burgundy may therefore, on the one hand, insure his active co-operation in the attempt on England; and, on the other, if our high-spirited princess complies not with the Duke's request, the justice of her cause will give no additional security to her hereditary claims on her father's dominions. Bid Queen Margaret, therefore, unless she should have changed her views, obtain King René's formal deed of cession, conveying his estates to the Duke of Burgundy, with her Majesty's consent. The necessary provisions to the King and to herself may be filled up at her Grace's pleasure, or they may be left blank. I can trust to the Duke's generosity to their being suitably arranged. All that I fear is, that Charles may embroil himself'——

'In some silly exploit, necessary for his own honour and the safety of his dominions,' answered a voice behind the lining of the tent; 'and, by doing so, attend to his own affairs more than to ours? Ha, Sir Earl!'

At the same time the curtain was drawn aside, and a person entered, in whom, though clothed with the jerkin and bonnet of a private soldier of the Walloon* Guard, Oxford instantly recognised the Duke of Burgundy's harsh features and fierce eyes, as they sparkled from under the fur and feather with which the cap was ornamented.

Arthur, who knew not the prince's person, started at the intrusion, and laid his hand on his dagger; but his father made a signal which stayed his hand, and he gazed with wonder on the solemn respect with which the earl received the intrusive soldier. The first word informed him of the cause.

'If this masking be done in proof of my faith, noble Duke, permit me to say it is superfluous.'

'Nay, Oxford,' answered the Duke, 'I was a courteous spy; for I ceased to play the eavesdropper at the very moment when I had reason to expect you were about to say something to anger me.'

'As I am a true knight my lord Duke, if you had remained behind the arras, you would

* [The Walloons, descendants of the ancient Gauls of Cæsar's day, inhabit the south-eastern provinces of Belgium.]

only have heard the same truths which I am ready to tell in your Grace's presence, though it may have chanced they might have been more bluntly expressed.'

'Well, speak them then, in whatever phrase thou wilt—they lie in their throats that say Charles of Burgundy was ever offended by advice from a well-meaning friend.'

'I would, then, have said,' replied the English earl, 'that all which Margaret of Anjou had to apprehend was, that the Duke of Burgundy, when buckling on his armour to win Provence for himself, and to afford to her his powerful assistance to assert her rights in England, was likely to be withdrawn from such high objects by an imprudently eager desire to avenge himself of imaginary affronts, offered to him, as he supposed, by certain confederacies of Alpine mountaineers, over whom it is impossible to gain any important advantage, or acquire reputation, while, on the contrary, there is a risk of losing both. These men dwell amongst rocks and deserts which are almost inaccessible, and subsist in a manner so rude, that the poorest of your subjects would starve if subjected to such diet. They are formed by nature to be the garrison of the mountain fortresses in which she has placed them;—for Heaven's sake meddle not with them, but follow forth your own nobler and more important objects, without stirring a nest of hornets, which, once in motion, may sting you into madness.'

The Duke had promised patience, and endeavoured to keep his word; but the swollen muscles of his face, and his flashing eyes, showed how painful to him it was to suppress his resentment.

'You are misinformed, my lord,' he said; 'these men are not the inoffensive herdsmen and peasants you are pleased to suppose them. If they were, I might afford to despise them. But, flushed with some victories over the sluggish Austrians, they have shaken off all reverence for authority, assume airs of independence, form leagues, make inroads, storm towns, doom and execute men of noble birth at their pleasure.—Thou art dull, and look'st as if thou dost not apprehend me. To rouse thy English blood, and make thee sympathize with my feelings to these mountaineers, know that these Swiss are very Scots to my dominions in their neighbourhood—poor, proud, ferocious; easily offended, because they gain by war; ill to be appeased, because they nourish deep revenge; ever ready to seize the moment of advantage, and attack a neighbour when he is engaged in other affairs. The same unquiet, perfidious, and inveterate enemies that the Scots are to England, are the Swiss to Burgundy and to my allies. What say you? Can I undertake anything of consequence till I have crushed the pride of such a people? It will be but a few days' work. I will grasp the mountain hedgehog, prickles and all, with my steel gauntlet.'

'Your Grace will then have shorter work with them,' replied the disguised nobleman, 'than our English kings have had with Scotland. The wars there have lasted so long, and proved so bloody, that wise men regret we ever began them.'

'Nay,' said the duke, 'I will not dishonour the Scots by comparing them in all respects to these mountain-churls of the Cantons. The Scots have blood and gentry among them, and we have seen many examples of both; these Swiss are a mere brood of peasants, and the few gentlemen of birth they can boast must hide their distinction in the dress and manners of clowns. They will, I think, scarce stand against a charge of Hainaulters.'

'Not if the Hainaulters find ground to ride upon. But'——

'Nay, to silence your scruples,' said the Duke, interrupting him, 'know that these people encourage, by their countenance and aid, the formation of the most dangerous conspiracies in my dominions. Look here—I told you that my officer, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach, was murdered when the town of Breisach was treacherously taken by these harmless Switzers of yours. And here is a scroll of parchment, which announces that my servant was murdered by doom of the Vehme-gericht, a band of secret assassins, whom I will not permit to meet in any part of my dominions. O, could I but catch them above ground as they are found lurking below, they should know what the life of a nobleman is worth! Then, look at the insolence of their attestation.'

The scroll bore, with the day and date adjected, that judgment had been done on Archibald de Hagenbach, for tyranny, violence, and oppression, by order of the Holy Vehme, and that it was executed by their officials, who were responsible for the same to their tribunal alone. It was countersigned in red ink, with the badges of the Secret Society, a coil of ropes and a drawn dagger.

'This document I found stuck to my toilet with a knife,' said the Duke; 'another trick by which they give mystery to their murderous jugglery.'

The thought of what he had undergone in John Mengs's house, and reflections upon the extent and omnipresence of these secret associations, struck even the brave Englishman with an involuntary shudder.

'For the sake of every saint in heaven,' he said, 'forbear, my lord, to speak of these tremendous societies, whose creatures are above, beneath, and around us. No man is secure of his life, however guarded, if it be sought by a man who is careless of his own. You are surrounded by Germans, Italians, and other strangers—How many amongst these may be bound by the secret ties which withdraw men from every other social bond, to unite them together in one inextricable, though secret compact! Beware, noble prince, of the situation on which your throne is placed, though it still exhibits all the splendour of power, and all the solidity of foundation that belongs to so august a structure. I—the friend of thy House—were it with my dying breath—must needs tell thee, that the Swiss hang like an avalanche over thy head; and the secret associations work beneath thee like the first throes of the coming earthquake. Provoke not the contest, and the snow will rest undisturbed on the mountain-side—the agitation of the subterranean vapours will be

hushed to rest; but a single word of defiance, or one flash of indignant scorn, may call their terrors into instant action.'

'You speak,' said the Duke, 'with more awe of a pack of naked churls, and a band of midnight assassins, than I have seen you show for real danger. Yet I will not scorn your counsel—I will hear the Swiss envoys patiently, and I will not, if I can help it, show the contempt with which I cannot but regard their pretensions to treat as independent States. On the secret associations I will be silent, till time gives me the means of acting in combination with the Emperor, the Diet, and the Princes of the Empire, that they may be driven from all their burrows at once.—Ha, Sir Earl, said I well?'

'It is well thought, my lord, but it may be unhappily spoken. You are in a position where one word, overheard by a traitor, might produce death and ruin.'

'I keep no traitors about me,' said Charles. 'If I thought there was such in my camp, I would rather die by them at once, than live in perpetual terror and suspicion.'

'Your Highness's ancient followers and servants,' said the earl, 'speak unfavourably of the Count of Campo-Basso, who holds so high a rank in your confidence.'

'Ay,' replied the Duke, with composure, 'it is easy to decry the most faithful servant in a court by the unanimous hatred of all the others. I warrant me your bull-headed countryman Colvin has been railing against the Count like the rest of them, for Campo-Basso sees nothing amiss in any department, but he reports it to me without fear or favour. And then his opinions are cast so much in the same mould as my own, that I can hardly get him to enlarge upon what he best understands, if it seems in any respect different from my sentiments. Add to this, a noble person, grace, gaiety, skill in the exercises of war, and in the courtly arts of peace—such is Campo-Basso; and, being such, is he not a gem for a prince's cabinet?'

'The very materials out of which a favourite is formed,' answered the Earl of Oxford, 'but something less adapted for making a faithful counsellor.'

'Why, thou mistrustful fool,' said the Duke, 'must I tell thee the very inmost secret respecting this man Campo-Basso, and will nothing short of it stay these imaginary suspicions which thy new trade of an itinerant merchant hath led thee to entertain so rashly?'

'If your Highness honours me with your confidence,' said the Earl of Oxford, 'I can only say that my fidelity shall deserve it.'

'Know, then, thou misbelieving mortal, that my good friend and brother, Louis of France, sent me private information, through no less a person than his famous barber, Oliver le Diable, that Campo-Basso had for a certain sum offered to put my person into his hands, alive or dead.—You start!'

'I do indeed—recollecting your Highness's practice of riding out lightly armed, and with a very small attendance, to reconnoitre the ground, and visit the outposts, and therefore the danger as if it were real, wheraes nothing can be more certain than that, if my cousin of France had ever received such an offer, he would have been the last person to have put me on my guard against the attempt. No—he knows the value I set on Campo-Basso's services, and forged the accusation to deprive me of them.'

'Pshaw!' answered the Duke.—'Thou seest how easily such a treacherous device might be carried into execution.'

'And yet, my lord,' replied the English earl, 'your Highness, by my counsel, will not unnecessarily or impatiently fling aside your armour of proof, or ride without the escort of some score of your trusty Walloons.'

'Tush, man, thou wouldst make a carbonado of a fever-stirred wretch like myself, betwixt the bright iron and the burning sun. But I will be cautious though I jest thus—and you, young man, may assure my cousin, Margaret of Anjou, that I will consider her affairs as my own. And remember, youth, that the secrets of princes are fatal gifts, if he to whom they are imparted blaze them abroad; but if duly treasured up, they enrich the bearer. And thou shalt have cause to say so, if thou canst bring back with thee from Aix the deed of resignation of which thy father hath spoken.—Good-night—good-night!'

He left the apartment.

'You have just seen,' said the Earl of Oxford to his son, 'a sketch of this extraordinary prince, by his own pencil. It is easy to excite his ambition or thirst of power, but well-nigh impossible to limit him to the just measures by which it is most likely to be gratified. He s ever like the young archer, startled from his mark by some swallow crossing his eye, even careless as he draws the string. Now irregularly and offensively suspicious—now unreservedly lavish of his confidence—not long since the enemy of the line of Lancaster, and the ally of her deadly foe—now its last and only stay and hope. God mend all!—it is a weary thing to look on the game and see how it might be won, while we are debarred by the caprice of others from the power of playing it according to our own skill. How much must depend on the decision of Duke Charles upon the morrow, and how little do I possess the power of influencing him, either for his own safety or our advantage! Good-night, my son, and let us trust events to Him who alone can control them.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

> My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
> Unapt to stir at these indignities,
> And you have found me; for, accordingly,
> You tread upon my patience.
>
> HENRY IV. *Part I.*

THE dawn of morning roused the banished Earl of Oxford and his son, and its lights were scarce abroad on the eastern heaven, ere their host Colvin entered, with an attendant bearing some bundles, which he placed on the floor of the tent, and instantly retired. The officer of the Duke's ordnance then announced that

he came with a message from the Duke of Burgundy.

'His Highness,' he said, 'has sent four stout yeomen, with a commission of credence to my young master of Oxford, and an ample purse of gold, to furnish his expenses to Aix, and while his affairs may detain him there. Also a letter of credence to King René, to insure his reception, and two suits of honour for his use, as for an English gentleman desirous to witness the festive solemnities of Provence, and in whose safety the Duke deigns to take deep interest. His further affairs there, if he hath any, his Highness recommends to him to manage with prudence and secrecy. His Highness hath also sent a couple of horses for his use,—one an ambling jennet for the road, and another a strong barbed horse of Flanders, in case he hath aught to do. It will be fitting that my young master change his dress, and assume attire more near his proper rank. His attendants know the road, and have power, in case of need, to summon, in the Duke's name, assistance from all faithful Burgundians. I have but to add, the sooner the young gentleman sets forward, it will be the better sign of a successful journey.'

'I am ready to mount the instant that I have changed my dress,' said Arthur.

'And I,' said his father, 'have no wish to detain him on the service in which he is now employed. Neither he nor I will say more than God be with you. How and where we are to meet again, who can tell?'

'I believe,' said Colvin, 'that must rest on the motions of the Duke, which perchance are not yet determined upon; but his Highness depends upon your remaining with him, my noble lord, till the affairs of which you come to treat may be more fully decided. Something I have for your lordship's private ear, when your son hath parted on his journey.'

While Colvin was thus talking with his father, Arthur, who was not above half dressed when he entered the tent, had availed himself of an obscure corner, in which he exchanged the plain garb belonging to his supposed condition as a merchant, for such a riding suit as became a young man of some quality attached to the court of Burgundy. It was not without a natural sensation of pleasure that the youth resumed an apparel suitable to his birth, and which no one was personally more fitted to become; but it was with much deeper feeling that he hastily, and as secretly as possible, flung round his neck, and concealed under the collar and folds of his ornamented doublet, a small thin chain of gold, curiously linked in what was called Morisco work. This was the contents of the parcel which Anne of Geierstein had indulged his feelings, and perhaps her own, by putting into his hands as they parted. The chain was secured by a slight plate of gold, on which a bodkin or a point of a knife had traced on the one side, in distinct though light characters, ADIEU FOR EVER! while, on the reverse, there was much more obscurely traced the word REMEMBER!—A. VON G.

All who may read this are, have been, or will be lovers; and there is none, therefore, who may not be able to comprehend why this token was carefully suspended around Arthur's neck, so that the inscription might rest on the region of his heart, without the interruption of any substance which could prevent the pledge from being agitated by every throb of that busy organ.

This being hastily insured, a few minutes completed the rest of his toilet; and he kneeled before his father to ask his blessing, and his further commands for Aix.

His father blessed him almost inarticulately, and then said, with recovered firmness, that he was already possessed of all the knowledge necessary for success on his mission.

'When you can bring me the deeds wanted,' he whispered, with more firmness, 'you will find me near the person of the Duke of Burgundy.'

They went forth of the tent in silence, and found before it the four Burgundian yeomen, tall and active-looking men, ready mounted themselves, and holding two saddled horses—the one accoutred for war, the other, a spirited jennet, for the purposes of the journey. One of them led a sumpter-horse, on which Colvin informed Arthur he would find the change of habit necessary when he should arrive at Aix; and at the same time delivered to him a heavy purse of gold.

'Thiebault,' he continued, pointing out the eldest of the attendant troopers, 'may be trusted—I will be warrant for his sagacity and fidelity. The other three are picked men, who will not fear their skin-cutting.'

Arthur vaulted into the saddle with a sensation of pleasure, which was natural to a young cavalier who had not for many months felt a spirited horse beneath him. The lively jennet reared with impatience. Arthur, sitting firm on his seat, as if he had been a part of the animal, only said, 'Ere we are long acquainted, thy spirit, my fair roan, will be something more tamed.'

'One word more, my son,' said his father, and whispered in Arthur's ear, as he stooped from the saddle; 'if you receive a letter from me, do not think yourself fully acquainted with the contents till the paper has been held opposite to a hot fire.'

Arthur bowed, and motioned to the elder trooper to lead the way, when all, giving rein to their horses, rode off through the encampment at a round pace, the young leader signing an adieu to his father and Colvin.

The earl stood like a man in a dream, following his son with his eyes, in a kind of reverie, which was only broken when Colvin said, 'I marvel not, my lord, that you are anxious about my young master; he is a gallant youth, well worth a father's caring for, and the times we live in are both false and bloody.'

'God and Saint Mary be my witness,' said the earl, 'that if I grieve, it is not for my own house only;—if I am anxious, it is not for the sake of my own son alone;—but it is hard to risk a last stake in a cause so perilous.—What commands brought you from the Duke?'

'His Grace,' said Colvin, 'will get on horseback after he has breakfasted. He sends you some garments, which, if not fitting your quality, are yet nearer to suitable apparel than those you now wear, and he desires that observing your

incognito as an English merchant of eminence, you will join him in his cavalcade to Dijon, where he is to receive the answer of the Estates of Burgundy concerning matters submitted to their consideration, and thereafter give public audience to the deputies from Switzerland. His Highness has charged me with the care of finding you suitable accommodation during the ceremonies of the day, which he thinks you will, as a stranger, be pleased to look upon. But he probably told you all this himself, for I think you saw him last night in disguise—Nay, look as strange as you will—the Duke plays that trick too often to be able to do it with secrecy; the very horse-boys know him while he traverses the tents of the common soldiery, and sutler women give him the name of the spied spy. If it were only honest Harry Colvin who knew this, it should not cross his lips. But it is practised too openly, and too widely known. Come, noble lord, though I must teach my tongue to forego that courtesy, will you along to breakfast?'

The meal, according to the practice of the time, was a solemn and solid one; and a favoured officer of the great Duke of Burgundy lacked no means, it may be believed, of rendering due hospitality to a guest having claims of such high respect. But ere the breakfast was over a clamorous flourish of trumpets announced that the Duke, with his attendants and retinue, was sounding to horse. Philipson, as he was still called, was, in the name of the Duke, presented with a stately charger, and with his host mingled in the splendid assembly which began to gather in front of the Duke's pavilion. In a few minutes the prince himself issued forth, in the superb dress of the Order of the Golden Fleece, of which his father Philip had been the founder, and Charles was himself the patron and sovereign. Several of his courtiers were dressed in the same magnificent robes, and with their followers and attendants displayed so much wealth and splendour of appearance, as to warrant the common saying that the Duke of Burgundy maintained the most magnificent court in Christendom. The officers of his household attended in their order, together with heralds and pursuivants, the grotesque richness of whose habits had a singular effect among those of the high clergy in their albes and dalmatiques, and of the knights and crown vassals who were arrayed in armour. Among these last, who were variously equipped, according to the different character of their service, rode Oxford, but in a peaceful habit, neither so plain as to be out of place among such splendour, nor so rich as to draw on him a special or particular degree of attention. He rode by the side of Colvin, his tall muscular figure and deep-marked features forming a strong contrast to the rough, almost ignoble, cast of countenance, and stout thick-set form, of the less distinguished soldier of fortune.

Ranged into a solemn procession, the rear of which was closed by a guard of two hundred picked arquebusiers, a description of soldiers who were just then coming into notice, and as many mounted men-at-arms, the Duke and his retinue, leaving the barriers of the camp, directed their march to the town, or rather city, of Dijon, in those days the capital of all Burgundy.

It was a town well secured with walls and ditches, which last were filled by means of a small river, named the Ouscbe, which combines its waters for that purpose with a torrent called Suzon. Four gates, with appropriate barbicans, outworks, and drawbridges, corresponded nearly to the cardinal points of the compass, and gave admission to the city. The number of towers, which stood high above its walls, and defended them at different angles, was thirty-three; and the walls themselves, which exceeded in most places the height of thirty feet, were built of stones hewn and squared, and were of great thickness. This stately city was surrounded on the outside with hills covered with vineyards, while from within its walls rose the towers of many noble buildings, both public and private, as well as the steeples of magnificent churches and of well-endowed convents, attesting the wealth and devotion of the House of Burgundy.

When the trumpets of the Duke's procession had summoned the burgher guard at the gate of Saint Nicholas, the drawbridge fell, the portcullis rose, the people shouted joyously, the windows were hung with tapestry, and as, in the midst of his retinue, Charles himself came riding on a milk-white steed, attended only by six pages under fourteen years old, with each a gilded partisan in his hand, the acclamations with which he was received on all sides showed that, if some instances of misrule had diminished his popularity, enough of it remained to render his reception into his capital decorous at least, if not enthusiastic. It is probable that the veneration attached to his father's memory counteracted for a long time the unfavourable effect which some of his own actions were calculated to produce on the public mind.

The procession halted before a large Gothic building in the centre of Dijon. This was then called Maison du Duc, as, after the union of Burgundy with France, it was termed Maison du Roy. The Maire of Dijon attended on the steps before this palace, accompanied by his official brethren, and escorted by a hundred able-bodied citizens, in black velvet cloaks, bearing half-pikes in their hands. The Maire kneeled to kiss the stirrup of the Duke, and at the moment when Charles descended from his horse, every bell in the city commenced so thundering a peal, that they might almost have awakened the dead who slept in the vicinity of the steeples, which rocked with their clangour. Under the influence of this stunning peal of welcome, the Duke entered the great hall of the building, at the upper end of which were erected a throne for the sovereign, seats for his more distinguished officers of state and higher vassals, with benches behind for persons of less note. On one of these, but in a spot from which he might possess a commanding view of the whole assembly, as well as of the Duke himself, Colvin placed the noble Englishman; and Charles, whose quick stern eye glanced rapidly over the party when they were seated, seemed, by a nod so slight as to be almost imperceptible to those around him, to give his approbation of the arrangement adopted.

When the Duke and his assistants were seated and in order, the Maire, again approaching in the most humble manner, and kneeling on the

lowest step of the ducal throne, requested to know if his Highness's leisure permitted him to hear the inhabitants of his capital express their devoted zeal to his person, and to accept the benevolence which, in the shape of a silver cup filled with gold pieces, he had the distinguished honour to place before his feet, in name of the citizens and community of Dijon.

Charles, who at no time affected much courtesy, answered briefly and bluntly, with a voice which was naturally harsh and dissonant, 'All things in their order, good Master Maire. Let us first hear what the Estates of Burgundy have to say to us; we will then listen to the burghers of Dijon.'

The Maire rose and retired, bearing in his hand the silver cup, and experiencing probably some vexation, as well as surprise, that its contents had not secured an instant and gracious acceptance.

'I expected,' said Duke Charles, 'to have met at this hour and place our Estates of the Duchy of Burgundy, or a deputation of them, with an answer to our message conveyed to them three days since by our Chancellor. Is there no one here on their part?'

The Maire, as none else made any attempt to answer, said that the members of the Estates had been in close deliberation the whole of that morning, and doubtless would instantly wait upon his Highness, when they heard that he had honoured the town with his presence.

'Go, Toison d'Or,' said the Duke to the herald of the Order of the Golden Fleece,* 'bear to these gentlemen the tidings that we desire to know the end of their deliberations; and that neither in courtesy nor in loyalty can they expect us to wait long. Be round with them, Sir Herald, or we shall be as round with you.'

While the herald was absent on his mission, we may remind our readers that in all feudalized countries (that is to say, in almost all Europe during the Middle Ages) an ardent spirit of liberty pervaded the constitution; and the only fault that could be found was, that the privileges and freedom for which the great vassals contended did not sufficiently descend to the lower orders of society, or extend protection to those who were most likely to need it. The two first ranks in the State, the nobles and clergy, enjoyed high and important privileges; and even the third estate, or citizens, had this immunity in peculiar, that no new duties, customs, or taxes of any kind could be exacted from them save by their own consent.

The memory of Duke Philip, the father of Charles, was dear to the Burgundians; for during twenty years that sage prince had maintained his rank amongst the sovereigns of Europe with much dignity, and had accumulated treasure without exacting or receiving any great increase of supplies from the rich countries which he governed. But the extravagant schemes and immoderate expense of Duke Charles had already excited the suspicion of his Estates; and the mutual good-will betwixt the prince and people began to be exchanged for suspicion and distrust on the one side, and defiance on the other. The refractory disposition of the Estates had of late increased; for they had disapproved of various wars in which their Duke had needlessly embarked; and from his levying such large bodies of mercenary troops, they came to suspect he might finally employ the wealth voted to him by his subjects, for the undue extension of his royal prerogative, and the destruction of the liberties of the people.

At the same time, the Duke's uniform success in enterprises which appeared desperate as well as difficult, esteem for the frankness and openness of his character, and dread of the obstinacy and headstrong tendency of a temper which could seldom bear persuasion, and never endured opposition, still threw awe and terror around the throne, which was materially aided by the attachment of the common people to the person of the present Duke, and to the memory of his father. It had been understood that upon the present occasion there was strong opposition amongst the Estates to the system of taxation proposed on the part of the Duke, and the issue was expected with considerable anxiety by the Duke's counsellors, and with fretful impatience by the sovereign himself.

After a space of about ten minutes had elapsed, the Chancellor of Burgundy, who was Archbishop of Vienne, and a prelate of high rank, entered the hall with his train; and, passing behind the ducal throne to occupy one of the most distinguished places in the assembly, he stopped for a moment to urge his master to receive the answer of his Estates in a private manner, giving him at the same time to understand that the result of the deliberations had been by no means satisfactory.

'By Saint George of Burgundy, my lord Archbishop,' answered the Duke sternly and loud, 'we are not a prince of a mind so paltry that we need to shun the moody looks of a discontented and insolent faction. If the Estates of Burgundy send a disobedient and disloyal answer to our paternal message, let them deliver it in open court, that the assembled people may learn how to decide between their Duke and those petty yet intriguing spirits, who would interfere with our authority.'

The Chancellor bowed gravely, and took his seat; while the English earl observed that most of the members of the assembly, excepting such as in doing so could not escape the Duke's notice, passed some observations to their neighbours, which were received with a half-expressed nod, shrug, or shake of the head, as men treat a proposal upon which it is dangerous to decide. At the same time, Toison d'Or, who acted as master of the ceremonies, introduced into the hall a committee of the Estates, consisting of twelve members, four from each branch of the Estates, announced as empowered to deliver the answer of that assembly to the Duke of Burgundy.

When the deputation entered the hall, Charles arose from his throne, according to ancient custom, and, taking from his head his bonnet, charged with a huge plume of feathers, 'Health and welcome,' he said, 'to my good subjects of the Estates of Burgundy!' All the numerous train of courtiers rose and uncovered their heads with the same ceremony. The members of the States

* The chief order of knighthood in the State of Burgundy.

then dropped on one knee, the four ecclesiastics, among whom Oxford recognised the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, approaching nearest to the Duke's person, the nobles kneeling behind them, and the burgesses in the rear of the whole.

'Noble Duke,' said the Priest of Saint Paul's, 'will it best please you to hear the answer of your good and loyal Estates of Burgundy by the voice of one member speaking for the whole, or by three persons, each delivering the sense of the body to which he belongs?'

'As you will,' said the Duke of Burgundy.

'A priest, a noble, and a free burgher,' said the churchman, still on one knee, 'will address your Highness in succession. For though, blessed be the God who leads brethren to dwell together in unity! we are agreed in the general answer, yet each body of the Estates may have special and separate reasons to allege for the common opinion.'

'We will hear you separately,' said Duke Charles, casting his hat upon his head, and throwing himself carelessly back into his seat. At the same time, all who were of noble blood, whether in the committee or amongst the spectators, vouched their right to be peers of their sovereign by assuming their bonnets; and a cloud of waving plumes at once added grace and dignity to the assembly.

When the Duke resumed his seat, the deputation arose from their knees, and the Black Priest of Saint Paul's, again stepping forth, addressed him in these words:—

'My lord Duke, your loyal and faithful clergy have considered your Highness's proposal to lay a talliage on your people, in order to make war on the Confederate Cantons in the country of the Alps. The quarrel, my liege lord, seems to your clergy an unjust and oppressive one on your Highness's part; nor can they hope that God will bless those who arm in it. They are therefore compelled to reject your Highness's proposal.'

The Duke's eye lowered gloomily on the deliverer of this unpalatable message. He shook his head, with one of those stern and menacing looks which the harsh composition of his features rendered them peculiarly qualified to express. 'You have spoken, Sir Priest,' was the only reply which he deigned to make.

One of the four nobles, the Sire de Myrebeau, then expressed himself thus:—

'Your Highness has asked of your faithful nobles to consent to new imposts and exactions, to be levied through Burgundy, for the raising of additional bands of hired soldiers for the maintenance of the quarrels of the State. My lord, the swords of the Burgundian nobles, knights, and gentlemen have been ever at your Highness's command, as those of our ancestors have been readily wielded for your predecessors. In your Highness's just quarrel we will go farther, and fight firmer, than any hired fellows who can be procured, whether from France, or Germany, or Italy. We will not give our consent that the people should be taxed for paying mercenaries to discharge that military duty which it is alike our pride and our exclusive privilege to render.'

'You have spoken, Sire de Myrebeau,' were again the only words of the Duke's reply. He uttered them slowly and with deliberation, as if afraid lest some phrase of imprudent violence should escape along with what he purposed to say. Oxford thought he cast a glance towards him before he spoke, as if the consciousness of his presence was some additional restraint on his passion. 'Now, Heaven grant,' he said to himself, 'that this opposition may work its proper effect, and induce the Duke to renounce an imprudent attempt, so hazardous and so unnecessary!'

While he muttered these thoughts, the Duke made a sign to one of the *tiers état*, or commons, to speak in his turn. The person who obeyed the signal was Martin Block, a wealthy butcher and grazier of Dijon. His words were these:—'Noble prince, our fathers were the dutiful subjects of your predecessors; we are the same to you; our children will be alike the liegemen of your successors. But touching the request your Chancellor has made to us, it is such as our ancestors never complied with; such as we are determined to refuse; and such as will never be conceded by the Estates of Burgundy, to any prince whatsoever, even to the end of time.'

Charles had borne with impatient silence the speeches of the two former orators, but this blunt and hardy reply of the Third Estate excited him beyond what his nature could endure. He gave way to the impetuosity of his disposition, stamped on the floor till the throne shook, and the high vault rung over their heads, and overwhelmed the bold burgher with reproaches. 'Beast of burden,' he said, 'am I to be stunned with thy braying too? The nobles may claim leave to speak, for they can fight; the clergy may use their tongues, for it is their trade; but thou, that hast never shed blood save that of bullocks, less stupid than thou art thyself—must thou and thy herd come hither, privileged, forsooth, to bellow at a prince's footstool? Know, brute as thou art, that steers are never introduced into temples but to be sacrificed, or butchers and mechanics brought before their sovereign, save that they may have the honour to supply the public wants from their own swelling hoards!'

A murmur of displeasure, which even the terror of the Duke's wrath could not repress, ran through the audience at these words; and the burgher of Dijon, a sturdy plebeian, replied, with little reverence,—'Our purses, my lord Duke, are our own—we will not put the strings of them into your Highness's hands, unless we are satisfied with the purposes to which the money is to be applied; and we know well how to protect our persons and our goods against foreign ruffians and plunderers.'

Charles was on the point of ordering the deputy to be arrested, when, having cast his eye towards the Earl of Oxford, whose presence, in despite of himself, imposed a certain degree of restraint upon him, he exchanged that piece of imprudence for another.

'I see,' he said, addressing the committee of Estates, 'that you are all leagued to disappoint my purposes, and doubtless to deprive me of all the power of a sovereign, save that of wearing a coronet, and being served on the knee like a

second Charles the Simple,* while the Estates of my kingdom divide the power among them. But you shall know that you have to do with Charles of Burgundy, a prince who, though he has deigned to consult you, is fully able to fight battles without the aid of his nobles, since they refuse him the assistance of their swords—to defray the expense without the help of his sordid burghers—and, it may be, to find out a path to heaven without the assistance of an ungrateful priesthood. I will show all that are here present how little my mind is affected, or my purpose changed, by your seditious reply to the message with which I honoured you.—Here, Toison d'Or, admit into our presence these men from the Confederated Towns and Cantons, as they call themselves, of Switzerland.'

Oxford, and all who really interested themselves in the Duke's welfare, heard, with the utmost apprehension, his resolution to give an audience to the Swiss envoys, prepossessed as he was against them, and in the moment when his mood was chafed to the uttermost by the refusal of the Estates to grant him supplies. They were aware that obstacles, opposed to the current of his passion, were like rocks in the bed of a river, whose course they cannot interrupt, while they provoke it to rage and foam. All were sensible that the die was cast, but none who were not endowed with more than mortal prescience could have imagined how deep was the pledge which depended upon it. Oxford, in particular, conceived that the execution of his plan of a descent upon England was the principal point compromised by the Duke in his rash obstinacy; but he suspected not—he dreamed not of supposing — that the life of Charles himself, and the independence of Burgundy as a separate kingdom, hung quivering in the same scales.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Why, 'tis a boisterous and cruel style,
> A style for challengers. Why, she defies us,
> Like Turk to Christian.
>
> As You Like It.

The doors of the hall were now opened to the Swiss deputies, who for the preceding hour had been kept in attendance on the outside of the building, without receiving the slightest of those attentions which among civilised nations are universally paid to the representatives of a foreign State. Indeed, their very appearance, dressed in coarse grey frocks, like mountain hunters or shepherds, in the midst of an assembly blazing with divers-coloured garments, gold and silver lace, embroidery, and precious stones, served to confirm the idea that they could only have come hither in the capacity of the most humble petitioners.

Oxford, however, who watched closely the deportment of his late fellow-travellers, failed not to observe that they retained each in his own person the character of firmness and indifference which formerly distinguished them. Rudolph Donnerhugel preserved his bold and haughty look; the Banneret the military indifference which made him look with apparent apathy on all around him; the burgher of Soleure was as formal and important as ever; nor did any of the three show themselves affected in the slightest degree by the splendour of the scene around them, or embarrassed by the consideration of their own comparative inferiority of appointments. But the noble Landamman, on whom Oxford chiefly bent his attention, seemed overwhelmed with a sense of the precarious state in which his country was placed; fearing, from the rude and unhonoured manner in which they were received, that war was unavoidable, while, at the same time, like a good patriot, he mourned over the consequences of ruin to the freedom of his country by defeat, or injury to her simplicity and virtuous indifference of wealth, by the introduction of foreign luxuries, and the evils attending on conquest.

Well acquainted with the opinions of Arnold Biederman, Oxford could easily explain his sadness, while his comrade Bonstetten, less capable of comprehending his friend's feelings, looked at him with the expression which may be seen in the countenance of a faithful dog, when the creature indicates sympathy with his master's melancholy, though unable to ascertain or appreciate its cause. A look of wonder now and then glided around the splendid assembly on the part of all the forlorn group, excepting Donnerhugel and the Landamman; for the indomitable pride of the one, and the steady patriotism of the other, could not for even an instant be diverted by external objects from their own deep and stern reflections.

After a silence of nearly five minutes, the Duke spoke, with the haughty and harsh manner which he might imagine belonged to his place, and which certainly expressed his character.

'Men of Berne, of Schwytz, or of whatever hamlet and wilderness you may represent, know that we had not honoured you, rebels as you are to the dominion of your lawful superiors, with an audience in our own presence, but for the intercession of a well-esteemed friend, who has sojourned among your mountains, and whom you may know by the name of Philipson, an Englishman, following the trade of a merchant, and charged with certain valuable matters of traffic to our court. To his intercession we have so far given way, that, instead of commanding you, according to your demerits, to the gibbet and the wheel in the Place de Morimont, we have condescended to receive you into our own presence, sitting in our *cour plénière*, to hear from you such submission as you can offer for your outrageous storm of our town of La Ferette, the slaughter of many of our liegemen, and the deliberate murder of the noble knight, Archibald of Hagenbach, executed in your presence, and by your countenance and device. Speak—if you can say aught in defence of your felony and treason, either to deprecate just punishment, or crave undeserved mercy.'

The Landamman seemed about to answer; but Rudolph Donnerhugel, with his characteristic boldness and hardihood, took the task of reply on himself. He confronted the proud Duke with

* [King of France from 893 to 929.]

an eye unappalled, and a countenance as stern as his own.

'We came not here,' he said, 'to compromise our own honour, or the dignity of the free people whom we represent, by pleading guilty in their name, or our own, to crimes of which we are innocent. And when you term us rebels, you must remember that a long train of victories, whose history is written in the noblest blood of Austria, has restored to the Confederacy of our communities the freedom of which an unjust tyranny in vain attempted to deprive us. While Austria was a just and beneficent mistress, we served her with our lives;—when she became oppressive and tyrannical, we assumed independence. If she has aught yet to claim from us, the descendants of Tell, Faust, and Stauffacher will be as ready to assert their liberties as their fathers were to gain them. Your Grace—if such be your title—has no concern with any dispute betwixt us and Austria. For your threats of gibbet and wheel, we are here defenceless men, on whom you may work your pleasure; but we know how to die, and our countrymen know how to avenge us.'

The fiery Duke would have replied by commanding the instant arrest, and probably the immediate execution, of the whole deputation. But his Chancellor, availing himself of the privilege of his office, rose, and, doffing his cap with a deep reverence to the Duke, requested leave to reply to the misproud young man, who had, he said, so greatly mistaken the purpose of his Highness's speech.

Charles, feeling perhaps at the moment too much irritated to form a calm decision, threw himself back in his chair of state, and with an impatient and angry nod gave his Chancellor permission to speak.

'Young man,' said that high officer, 'you have mistaken the meaning of the high and mighty sovereign in whose presence you stand. Whatever be the lawful rights of Austria over the revolted villages which have flung off their allegiance to their native superior, we have no call to enter on that argument. But that for which Burgundy demands your answer is, wherefore, coming here in the guise and with the character of peaceful envoys, on affairs touching your own communities and the rights of the Duke's subjects, you have raised war in our peaceful dominions, stormed a fortress, massacred its garrison, and put to death a noble knight, its commander?—all of them actions contrary to the law of nations, and highly deserving of the punishment with which you have been justly threatened, but with which I hope our gracious sovereign will dispense, if you express some sufficient reason for such outrageous insolence, with an offer of due submission to his Highness's pleasure, and satisfactory reparation for such a high injury.'

'You are a priest, grave sir?' answered Rudolph Donnerhugel, addressing the Chancellor of Burgundy. 'If there be a soldier in this assembly who will avouch your charge, I challenge him to the combat, man to man. We did not storm the garrison of La Ferette—we were admitted into the gates in a peaceful manner, and were there instantly surrounded by the soldiers of the late Archibald de Hagenbach, with the obvious purpose of assaulting and murdering us on our peaceful mission. I promise you there had been news of more men dying than us. But an uproar broke out among the inhabitants of the town, assisted, I believe, by many neighbours, to whom the insolence and oppression of Archibald de Hagenbach had become odious, as to all who were within his reach. We rendered them no assistance; and, I trust, it was not expected that we should interfere in the favour of men who had stood prepared to do the worst against us. But not a pike or sword belonging to us or our attendants was dipped in Burgundian blood. Archibald de Hagenbach perished, it is true, on a scaffold, and I saw him die with pleasure, under a sentence pronounced by a competent court, such as is recognised in Westphalia and its dependencies on this side of the Rhine. I am not obliged to vindicate their proceedings; but I aver that the Duke has received full proof of his regular sentence; and, in fine, that it was amply deserved by oppression, tyranny, and foul abuse of his authority, I will uphold against all gainsayers, with the body of a man. There lies my glove.'

And with an action suited to the language he used, the stern Swiss flung his right-hand glove on the floor of the hall. In the spirit of the age, with the love of distinction in arms which it nourished, and perhaps with the desire of gaining the Duke's favour, there was a general motion among the young Burgundians to accept the challenge, and more than six or eight gloves were hastily doffed by the young knights present, those who were more remote flinging them over the heads of the nearest, and each proclaiming his name and title as he proffered the gage of combat.

'I set at all,' said the daring young Swiss, gathering the gauntlets as they fell clashing around him. 'More, gentlemen, more! a glove for every finger! come on, one at once—fair lists, equal judges of the field, the combat on foot, and the weapons two-handed swords, and I will not budge for a score of you.'

'Hold, gentlemen; on your allegiance, hold!' said the Duke, gratified at the same time, and somewhat appeased, by the zeal which was displayed in his cause—moved by the strain of reckless bravery evinced by the challenger, with a hardihood akin to his own—perhaps also not unwilling to display, in the view of his *cour plénière*, more temperance than he had been at first capable of. 'Hold, I command you all.—Toison d'Or, gather up these gauntlets, and return them each to its owner. God and Saint George forbid that we should hazard the life of even the least of our noble Burgundian gentry against such a churl as this Swiss peasant, who never so much as mounted a horse, and knows not a jot of knightly courtesy, or the grace of chivalry.—Carry your vulgar brawls elsewhere, young man, and know that, on the present occasion, the Place Morimont were your only fitting lists, and the hangman your meet antagonist. And you, sirs, his companions—whose behaviour in suffering this swaggerer to take the lead amongst you, seems to show that the laws

of nature, as well as of society, are inverted, and that youth is preferred to age, and peasants to gentry—you white-bearded men, I say, is there none of you who can speak your errand in such language as it becomes a sovereign prince to listen to?'

'God forbid else,' said the Landamman, stepping forward and silencing Rudolph Donnerhugel, who was commencing an answer of defiance—'God forbid,' he said, 'noble Duke, that we should not be able to speak so as to be understood before your Highness, since, I trust, we shall speak the language of truth, peace, and justice. Nay, should it incline your Highness to listen to us the more favourably for our humility, I am willing to humble myself rather than you should shun to hear us. For my own part, I can truly say that, though I have lived, and by free choice have resolved to die, a husbandman and a hunter on the Alps of the Unterwald, I may claim by birth the hereditary right to speak before dukes and kings, and the Emperor himself. There is no one, my lord Duke, in this proud assembly who derives his descent from a nobler source than Geierstein.'

'We have heard of you,' said the Duke. 'Men call you the peasant-count. Your birth is your shame; or perhaps your mother's, if your father had happened to have a handsome ploughman, the fitting father of one who has become a willing serf.'

'No serf, my lord,' answered the Landamman, 'but a free man, who will neither oppress others, nor be himself tyrannized over. My father was a noble lord, my mother a most virtuous lady. But I will not be provoked, by taunt or scornful jest, to refrain from stating with calmness what my country has given me in charge to say. The inhabitants of the bleak and inhospitable regions of the Alps desire, mighty sir, to remain at peace with all their neighbours, and to enjoy the government they have chosen, as best fitted to their condition and habits, leaving all other states and countries to their free will in the same respects. Especially they desire to remain at peace and in unity with the princely House of Burgundy, whose dominions approach their possessions on so many points. My lord, they desire it, they entreat it, they even consent to pray for it. We have been termed stubborn, intractable, and insolent contemners of authority, and headers of sedition and rebellion. In evidence of the contrary, my lord Duke, I, who never bent a knee but to Heaven, feel no dishonour in kneeling before your Highness, as before a sovereign prince in the *cour plénière* of his dominions, where he has a right to exact homage from his subjects out of duty, and from strangers out of courtesy. No vain pride of mine,' said the noble old man, his eyes swelling with tears, as he knelt on one knee, 'shall prevent me from personal humiliation, when peace—that blessed peace, so dear to God, so inappreciably valuable to man—is in danger of being broken off.'

The whole assembly, even the Duke himself, were affected by the noble and stately manner in which the brave old man made a genuflection, which was obviously dictated by neither meanness nor timidity. 'Arise, sir,' said Charles; 'if we have said aught which can wound your private feelings, we retract it as publicly as the reproach was spoken, and sit prepared to hear you as a fair-meaning envoy.'

'For that, my noble lord, thanks; and I shall hold it a blessed day, if I can find words worthy of the cause I have to plead. My lord, a schedule in your Highness's hands has stated the sense of many injuries received at the hand of your Highness's officers, and those of Romont, Count of Savoy, your strict ally and adviser, we have a right to suppose, under your Highness's countenance. For Count Romont—he has already felt with whom he has to contend; but we have as yet taken no measures to avenge injuries, affronts, interruptions to our commerce, from those who have availed themselves of your Highness's authority to intercept our countrymen, spoil our goods, impress their persons, and even, in some instances, take their lives. The affray at La Ferette—I can vouch for what I saw—had no origin or abettance from us; nevertheless, it is impossible an independent nation can suffer the repetition of such injuries, and free and independent we are determined to remain, or to die in defence of our rights. What then must follow, unless your Highness listens to the terms which I am commissioned to offer? War, a war to extermination; for so long as one of our Confederacy can wield a halberd, so long, if this fatal strife once commences, there will be war betwixt your powerful realms and our poor and barren States. And what can the noble Duke of Burgundy gain by such a strife?—is it wealth and plunder? Alas, my lord, there is more gold and silver on the very bridlebits of your Highness's household troops, than can be found in the public treasures or private hoards of our whole Confederacy. Is it fame and glory you aspire to? There is little honour to be won by a numerous army over a few scattered bands, by men clad in mail over half-armed husbandmen and shepherds—of such conquest small were the glory. But if, as all Christian men believe, and as it is the constant trust of my countrymen, from memory of the times of our fathers,—if the Lord of Hosts should cast the balance in behalf of the fewer numbers and worse-armed party, I leave it with your Highness to judge what would, in that event, be the diminution of worship and fame. Is it extent of vassalage and dominion your Highness desires, by warring with your mountain neighbours? Know that you may, if it be God's will, gain our barren and rugged mountains; but, like our ancestors of old, we will seek refuge in wilder and more distant solitudes, and when we have resisted to the last, we will starve in the icy wastes of the glaciers. Ay, men, women, and children, we will be frozen into annihilation together, ere one free Switzer will acknowledge a foreign master.'

The speech of the Landamman made an obvious impression on the assembly. The Duke observed it, and his hereditary obstinacy was irritated by the general disposition which he saw entertained in favour of the ambassador. This evil principle overcame some impression which the address of the noble Biederman had not failed to make upon him. He answered with a lowering brow,

interrupting the old man as he was about to continue his speech—'You argue falsely, Sir Count, or Sir Landamman, or by whatever name you call yourself, if you think we war on you from any hope of spoil, or any desire of glory. We know as well as you can tell us that there is neither profit nor fame to be achieved by conquering you. But sovereigns, to whom Heaven has given the power, must root out a band of robbers, though there is dishonour in measuring swords with them; and we hunt to death a herd of wolves, though their flesh is carrion, and their skins are nought.'

The Landamman shook his grey head, and replied without testifying emotion, and even with something approaching to a smile—'I am an older woodsman than you, my lord Duke—and, it may be, a more experienced one. The boldest, the hardiest hunter will not safely drive the wolf to his den. I have shown your Highness the poor chance of gain, and the great risk of loss, which even you, powerful as you are, must incur by risking a war with determined and desperate men. Let me now tell what we are willing to do to secure a sincere and lasting peace with our powerful neighbour of Burgundy. Your Grace is in the act of engrossing Lorraine, and it seems probable, under so vigorous and enterprising a prince, your authority may be extended to the shores of the Mediterranean—be our noble friend and sincere ally, and our mountains, defended by warriors familiar with victory, will be your barriers against Germany and Italy. For your sake we will admit the Count of Savoy to terms, and restore to him our conquests, on such conditions as your Highness shall yourself judge reasonable. Of past subjects of offence on the part of your lieutenants and governors upon the frontier, we will be silent, so we have assurance of no such aggressions in future. Nay more, and it is my last and proudest offer, we will send three thousand of our youth to assist your Highness in any war which you may engage in, whether against Louis of France, or the Emperor of Germany. They are a different set of men—proudly and truly may I state it—from the scum of Germany and Italy, who form themselves into mercenary bands of soldiers. And if Heaven should decide your Highness to accept our offer, there will be one corps in your army which will leave their carcasses on the field ere a man of them break their plighted troth.'

A swarthy, but tall and handsome man, wearing a corselet richly engraved with arabesque work, started from his seat with the air of one provoked beyond the bounds of restraint. This was the Count de Campo-Basso, commander of Charles's Italian mercenaries, who possessed, as has been alluded to, much influence over the Duke's mind, chiefly obtained by accommodating himself to his master's opinions and prejudices, and placing before the Duke specious arguments to justify him for following his own way.

'This lofty presence must excuse me,' he said, 'if I speak in defence of my honour, and those of my bold lances, who have followed my fortunes from Italy to serve the bravest prince in Christendom. I might, indeed, pass over without resentment the outrageous language of this grey-haired churl, whose words cannot affect a knight and a nobleman more than the yelling of a peasant's mastiff. But when I hear him propose to associate his bands of mutinous, misgoverned ruffians with your Highness's troops, I must let him know that there is not a horse-boy in my ranks who would fight in such fellowship. No, even I myself, bound by a thousand ties of gratitude, could not submit to strive abreast with such comrades. I would fold up my banners, and lead five thousand men to seek, not a nobler master, for the world has none such, but wars in which we might not be obliged to blush for our assistants.'

'Silence, Campo-Basso,' said the Duke, 'and be assured you serve a prince who knows your worth too well to exchange it for the untried and untrustful services of those whom we have only known as vexatious and malignant neighbours.'

Then addressing himself to Arnold Biederman, he said coldly and sternly, 'Sir Landamman, we have heard you fairly. We have heard you, although you come before us with hands dyed deep in the blood of our servant, Sir Archibald de Hagenbach; for, supposing he was murdered by a villanous association,—which, by Saint George! shall never, while we live and reign, raise its pestilential head on this side of the Rhine,—yet it is not the less undeniable and undenied, that you stood by in arms, and encouraged the deed the assassins performed under your countenance. Return to your mountains, and be thankful that you return in life. Tell those who sent you that I will be presently on their frontiers. A deputation of your most notable persons, who meet me with halters round their necks, torches in their left hands, in their right their swords held by the point, may learn on what conditions we will grant you peace.'

'Then farewell peace and welcome war,' said the Landamman; 'and be its plagues and curses on the heads of those who choose blood and strife rather than peace and union. We will meet you on our frontiers with our naked swords, but the hilts, not their points, shall be in our grasp. Charles of Burgundy, Flanders, and Lorraine, Duke of seven dukedoms, Count of seventeen earldoms, I bid you defiance; and declare war against you in the name of the Confederated Cantons, and such others as shall adhere to them. There,' he said, 'are my letters of defiance.'

The herald took from Arnold Biederman the fatal denunciation.

'Read it not, Toison d'Or!' said the haughty Duke. 'Let the executioner drag it through the streets at his horse's tail, and nail it to the gibbet, to show in what account we hold the paltry scroll, and those who sent it.—Away, sirs,' speaking to the Swiss, 'trudge back to your wildernesses with such haste as your feet can use. When we next meet, you shall better know whom you have offended.—Get our horse ready—the council is broken up.'

The Maire of Dijon, when all were in motion to leave the hall, again approached the Duke, and timidly expressed some hopes that his Highness would deign to partake of a banquet which the magistracy had prepared, in expectation he might do them such an honour.

'No, by Saint George of Burgundy, Sir Maire,' said Charles, with one of the withering glances by which he was wont to express indignation mixed with contempt; 'you have not pleased us so well with our breakfast as to induce us to trust our dinner to the loyalty of our good town of Dijon.'

So saying, he rudely turned off from the mortified chief magistrate, and, mounting his horse, rode back to his camp, conversing earnestly on the way with the Count of Campo-Basso.

'I would offer you dinner, my Lord of Oxford,' said Colvin to that nobleman, when he alighted at his tent, 'but I foresee, ere you could swallow a mouthful, you will be summoned to the Duke's presence; for it is our Charles's way, when he has fixed on a wrong course, to wrangle with his friends and counsellors, in order to prove it is a right one. Marry, he always makes a convert of yon supple Italian.'

Colvin's augury was speedily realized; for a page almost immediately summoned the English merchant Philipson to attend the Duke. Without waiting an instant, Charles poured forth an incoherent tide of reproaches against the Estates of his dukedom, for refusing him their countenance in so slight a matter, and launched out in explanations of the necessity which he alleged there was for punishing the audacity of the Swiss. 'And thou too, Oxford,' he concluded, 'art such an impatient fool as to wish me to indulge in a distant war with England, and transport forces over the sea, when I have such insolent mutineers to chastise on my own frontiers?'

When he was at length silent, the English earl laid before him, with respectful earnestness, the danger that appeared to be involved in engaging with a people, poor indeed, but universally dreaded from their discipline and courage, and that under the eye of so dangerous a rival as Louis of France, who was sure to support the Duke's enemies underhand, if he did not join them openly. On this point the Duke's resolution was immoveable. 'It shall never,' he said, 'be told of me, that I uttered threats which I dared not execute. These boors have declared war against me, and they shall learn whose wrath it is that they have wantonly provoked; but I do not, therefore, renounce thy scheme, my good Oxford. If thou canst procure me this same cession of Provence, and induce old René to give up the cause of his grandson, Ferrand of Vaudemont, in Lorraine, thou wilt make it well worth my while to send thee brave aid against my brother Blackburn, who, while he is drinking healths pottle-deep in France, may well come to lose his lands in England. And be not impatient because I cannot at this very instant send men across the seas. The march which I am making towards Neufchatel, which is, I think, the nearest point where I shall find these churls, will be but like a morning's excursion. I trust you will go with us, old companion. I should like to see if you have forgotten, among yonder mountains, how to back a horse and lay a lance in rest.'

'I will wait on your Highness,' said the earl, 'as is my duty, for my motions must depend upon your pleasure. But I will not carry arms, especially against those people of Helvetia, from whom I have experienced hospitality, unless it be for my own personal defence.'

'Well,' replied the Duke, 'e'en be it so; we shall have in you an excellent judge, to tell us who best discharges his devoir against the mountain clowns.'

At this point in the conversation there was a knocking at the entrance of the pavilion, and the Chancellor of Burgundy presently entered in great haste and anxiety. 'News, my lord—news of France and England,' said the prelate, and then, observing the presence of a stranger, he looked at the Duke, and was silent.

'It is a faithful friend, my lord Bishop,' said the Duke; 'you may tell your news before him.'

'It will soon be generally known,' said the Chancellor—'Louis and Edward are fully accorded.' Both the Duke and the English earl started.

'I expected this,' said the Duke, 'but not so soon.'

'The kings have met,' answered his minister.

'How—in battle?' said Oxford, forgetting himself in his extreme eagerness.

The Chancellor was somewhat surprised, but, as the Duke seemed to expect him to give an answer, he replied, 'No, Sir Stranger, not in battle, but upon appointment, and in peace and amity.'

'The sight must have been worth seeing,' said the Duke; 'when the old fox Louis, and my brother Black—I mean my brother Edward—met. Where held they their rendezvous?'

'On a bridge over the Seine, at Picquigny.'

'I would thou hadst been there,' said the Duke, looking to Oxford, 'with a good axe in thy hand, to strike one fair blow for England, and another for Burgundy. My grandfather was treacherously slain at just such a meeting, at the bridge of Montereau,* upon the Yonne.'

'To prevent a similar chance,' said the Chancellor, 'a strong barricade, such as closes the cages in which men keep wild beasts, was raised in the midst of the bridge, and prevented the possibility of their even touching each other's hands.'

'Ha, ha! By Saint George, that smells of Louis's craft and caution; for the Englishman, to give him his due, is as little acquainted with fear as with policy. But what terms have they made? Where do the English army winter? What towns, fortresses, and castles are surrendered to them, in pledge or in perpetuity?'

'None, my liege,' said the Chancellor. 'The English army returns into England, as fast as shipping can be procured to transport them; and Louis will accommodate them with every sail and oar in his dominions, rather than they should not instantly evacuate France.'

'And by what concessions has Louis bought a peace so necessary to his affairs?'

'By fair words,' said the Chancellor, 'by liberal presents, and by some five hundred tuns of wine.'

'Wine!' exclaimed the Duke—'Heard'st thou ever the like, Seignor Philipson? Why, your

* [John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, was treacherously slain by the attendants of the Dauphin Charles, son of Charles VI., King of France, on the bridge of Montereau, in 1419.]

countrymen are little better than Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Marry, I must confess I never saw an Englishman who loved a dry-lipped bargain.'

'I can scarce believe this news,' said the Earl of Oxford. 'If this Edward were content to cross the sea with fifty thousand Englishmen merely to return again, there are in his camp both proud nobles and haughty commons enough to resist his disgraceful purpose.'

'The money of Louis,' said the statesman, 'has found noble hands willing to clutch it. The wine of France has flooded every throat in the English army—the riot and uproar was unbounded—and at one time the town of Amiens, where Louis himself resided, was full of so many English archers, all of them intoxicated, that the person of the King of France was almost in their hands. Their sense of national honour has been lost in the universal revel; and those amongst them who would be more dignified, and play the wise politicians, say that, having come to France by connivance of the Duke of Burgundy, and that prince having failed to join them with his forces, they have done well, wisely, and gallantly, considering the season of the year, and the impossibility of obtaining quarters, to take tribute of France, and return home in triumph.'

'And leave Louis,' said Oxford, 'at undisturbed freedom to attack Burgundy with all his forces?'

'Not so, friend Philipson,' said Duke Charles; 'know that there is a truce betwixt Burgundy and France for the space of seven years, and had not this been granted and signed, it is probable that we might have found some means of marring the treaty betwixt Edward and Louis, even at the expense of affording those voracious islanders beef and beer during the winter months.—Sir Chancellor, you may leave us, but be within reach of a hasty summons.'

When his minister left the pavilion, the Duke, who with his rude and imperious character united much kindness, if it could not be termed generosity of disposition, came up to the Lancastrian lord, who stood like one at whose feet a thunderbolt has just broken, and who is still appalled by the terrors of the shock.

'My poor Oxford,' he said, 'thou art stupefied by this news, which thou canst not doubt must have a fatal effect on the plan which thy brave bosom cherishes with such devoted fidelity. I would for thy sake I could have detained the English a little longer in France; but, had I attempted to do so, there were an end of my truce with Louis, and of course to my power to chastise these paltry Cantons, or send forth an expedition to England. As matters stand, give me but a week to punish these mountaineers, and you shall have a larger force than your modesty has requested of me for your enterprise; and, in the meanwhile, I will take care that Blackburn and his cousin-archers have no assistance of shipping from Flanders. Tush, man, never fear it—thou wilt be in England long ere they; and, once more, rely on my assistance—always, thou knowest, the cession of Provence being executed, as in reason. Our cousin Margaret's diamonds we must keep for a time; and perhaps they may pass as a pledge, with some of our own, for the godly purpose of setting at freedom the imprisoned angels of our Flemish usurers, who will not lend even to their sovereign, unless on good current security. To such straits has the disobedient avarice of our Estates for the moment reduced us.'

'Alas, my lord,' said the dejected nobleman, 'I were ungrateful to doubt the sincerity of your good intentions. But who can presume on the events of war, especially when time presses for instant decision? You are pleased to trust me. Let your Highness extend your confidence thus far: I will take my horse and ride after the Landamman, if he hath already set forth. I have little doubt to make such an accommodation with him that you may be secure on all your south-eastern frontiers. You may then with security work your will in Lorraine and Provence.'

'Do not speak of it,' said the Duke sharply; 'thou forget'st thyself and me, when thou supposest that a prince, who has pledged his word to his people, can recall it like a merchant chaffering for his paltry wares. Go to—we will assist you, but we will be ourselves judge of the time and manner. Yet, having both kind will to our distressed cousin of Anjou, and being your good friend, we will not linger in the matter. Our host have orders to break up this evening and direct their march against Neufchatel, where these proud Swiss shall have a taste of the fire and sword which they have provoked.'

Oxford sighed deeply, but made no further remonstrance; in which he acted wisely, since it was likely to have exasperated the fiery temper of the sovereign to whom it was addressed, while it was certain that it would not in the slightest degree alter his resolution.

He took farewell of the Duke, and returned to Colvin, whom he found immersed in the business of his department, and preparing for the removal of the artillery, an operation which the clumsiness of the ordnance, and the execrable state of the roads, rendered at that time a much more troublesome operation than at present, though it is even still one of the most laborious movements attending the march of an army. The master of the ordnance welcomed Oxford with much glee, and congratulated himself on the distinguished honour of enjoying his company during the campaign, and acquainted him that, by the especial command of the Duke, he had made fitting preparations for his accommodation, suitable to the disguised character which he meant to maintain, but in every other respect as convenient as a camp could admit of.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A mirthful man he was—the snows of age
Fell, but they did not chill him. Gaiety,
Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain
With such wild visions as the setting sun
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues.
OLD PLAY.

LEAVING the Earl of Oxford in attendance on the stubborn Duke of Burgundy during an

expedition, which the one represented as a brief excursion more resembling a hunting party than a campaign, and which the other considered in a much graver and more perilous light, we return to Arthur de Vere, or the younger Philipson, as he continued to be called, who was conducted by his guide with fidelity and success, but certainly very slowly, upon his journey into Provence.

The State of Lorraine, overrun by the Duke of Burgundy's army, and infested at the same time by different scattered bands, who took the field, or held out the castles, as they alleged, for the interest of Count Ferrand de Vaudemont, rendered journeying so dangerous, that it was often necessary to leave the main road, and to take circuitous tracks, in order to avoid such unfriendly encounters as travellers might otherwise have met with.

Arthur, taught by sad experience to distrust strange guides, found himself, nevertheless, in this eventful and perilous journey, disposed to rest considerable confidence in his present conductor, Thiebault, a Provençal by birth, intimately acquainted with the roads which they took, and, as far as he could judge, disposed to discharge his office with fidelity. Prudence alike, and the habits which he had acquired in travelling, as well as the character of a merchant which he still sustained, induced him to waive the *morgue*, or haughty superiority of a knight and noble towards an inferior personage, especially as he rightly conjectured that free intercourse with this man, whose acquirements seemed of a superior cast, was likely to render him a judge of his opinions and disposition towards him. In return for his condescension, he obtained a good deal of information concerning the province which he was approaching.

As they drew near the boundaries of Provence, the communications of Thiebault became more fluent and interesting. He could not only tell the name and history of each romantic castle which they passed, in their devious and doubtful route, but had at his command the chivalrous history of the noble knights and barons to whom they now pertained, or had belonged in earlier days, and could recount their exploits against the Saracens, by repelling their attacks upon Christendom, or their efforts to recover the Holy Sepulchre from pagan hands. In the course of such narrations, Thiebault was led to speak of the Troubadours, a race of native poets of Provençal origin, differing widely from the minstrels of Normandy and the adjacent provinces of France, with whose tales of chivalry, as well as the numerous translations of their works into Norman-French and English, Arthur, like most of the noble youth of his country, was intimately acquainted and deeply imbued. Thiebault boasted that his grandsire, of humble birth, indeed, but of distinguished talent, was one of this gifted race, whose compositions produced so great an effect on the temper and manners of their age and country. It was, however, to be regretted that, inculcating as the prime duty of life a fantastic spirit of gallantry, which sometimes crossed the Platonic bound prescribed to it, the poetry of the Troubadours was too frequently used to soften and seduce the heart, and corrupt the principles.*

Arthur's attention was called to this peculiarity by Thiebault singing, which he could do with good skill, the history of a Troubadour, named William Cabestaing, who loved, *par amours*, a noble and beautiful lady, Margaret, the wife of a baron called Raymond de Roussillon. The jealous husband obtained proof of his dishonour, and, having put Cabestaing to death by assassination, he took his heart from his bosom, and, causing it to be dressed like that of an animal, ordered it to be served up to his lady; and when she had eaten of the horrible mess, told her of what her banquet was composed. The lady replied that, since she had been made to partake of food so precious, no coarser morsel should ever after cross her lips. She persisted in her resolution, and thus starved herself to death. The Troubadour who celebrated this tragic history had displayed in his composition a good deal of poetic art. Glossing over the error of the lovers as the fault of their destiny, dwelling on their tragical fate with considerable pathos, and finally, execrating the blind fury of the husband with the full fervour of poetical indignation, he recorded, with vindictive pleasure, how every bold knight and true lover in the south of France assembled to besiege the baron's castle, stormed it by main force, left not one stone upon another, and put the tyrant himself to an ignominious death. Arthur was interested in the melancholy tale, which even beguiled him of a few tears; but, as he thought further on its purport, he dried his eyes, and said with some sternness—'Thiebault, sing me no more such lays. I have heard my father say that the readiest mode to corrupt a Christian man is to bestow upon vice the pity and the praise which are due only to virtue. Your Baron of Roussillon is a monster of cruelty; but your unfortunate lovers were not the less guilty. It is by giving fair names to foul actions, that those who would start at real vice are led to practise its lessons, under the disguise of virtue.'

'I would you knew, seignor,' answered Thiebault, 'that this Lay of Cabestaing and the Lady Margaret of Roussillon is reckoned a masterpiece of the Joyous Science. Fie, sir, you are too young to be so strict a censor of morals. What will you do when your head is grey, if you are thus severe when it is scarcely brown?'

'A head which listens to folly in youth will hardly be honourable in old age,' answered Arthur.

Thiebault had no mind to carry the dispute further.

'It is not for me to contend with your worship. I only think, with every true son of chivalry and song, that a knight without a mistress is like a sky without a star.'

'Do I not know that?' answered Arthur; 'but yet better remain in darkness than be guided by such false lights as shower down vice and pestilence.'

'Nay, it may be your seignorie is right,' answered the guide. 'It is certain that even in Provence here we have lost much of our keen

* Note D. Provençal Troubadours.

judgment on matters of love,—its difficulties, its intricacies, and its errors,—since the Troubadours are no longer regarded as usual, and since the high and noble Parliament of Love * has ceased to hold its sittings.

'But in these latter days,' continued the Provençal, 'kings, dukes, and sovereigns, instead of being the foremost and most faithful vassals of the Court of Cupid, are themselves the slaves of selfishness and love of gain. Instead of winning hearts by breaking lances in the lists, they are breaking the hearts of their impoverished vassals by the most cruel exactions—instead of attempting to deserve the smile and favours of their lady-loves, they are meditating how to steal castles, towns, and provinces from their neighbours. But long life to the good and venerable King René! While he has an acre of land left, his residence will be the resort of valiant knights, whose only aim is praise in arms, of true lovers who are persecuted by fortune, and of high-toned harpers who know how to celebrate faith and valour.'

Arthur, interested in learning something more precise than common fame had taught him on the subject of this prince, easily induced the talkative Provençal to enlarge upon the virtues of his old sovereign's character, as just, joyous, and debonair, a friend to the most noble exercises of the chase and the tilt-yard, and still more so to the Joyous Science of Poetry and Music; who gave away more revenue than he received, in largesses to knights-errant and itinerant musicians, with whom his petty court was crowded, as one of the very few in which the ancient hospitality was still maintained.

Such was the picture which Thiebault drew of the last minstrel-monarch; and though the eulogium was exaggerated, perhaps the facts were not overcharged.

Born of royal parentage, and with high pretensions, René had at no period of his life been able to match his fortunes to his claims. Of the kingdoms to which he asserted right, nothing remained in his possession but the county of Provence itself, a fair and fertile principality, but diminished by the many claims which France had acquired upon portions of it by advances of money to supply the personal expenses of its master, and by other portions, which Burgundy, to whom René had been a prisoner, held in pledge for his ransom. In his youth he engaged in more than one military enterprise, in the hope of attaining some part of the territory of which he was styled sovereign. His courage is not impeached, but fortune did not smile on his military adventures; and he seems at last to have become sensible that the power of admiring and celebrating warlike merit is very different from possessing that quality. In fact, René was a prince of very moderate parts, endowed with a love of the fine arts, which he carried to extremity, and a degree of good humour, which never permitted him to repine at fortune, but rendered its possessor happy, when a prince of keener feelings would have died of despair. This insouciant, light-tempered, gay, and thoughtless disposition, conducted René, free from all the passions which embitter life, and often shorten it, to a hale and mirthful old age. Even domestic losses, which often affect those who are proof against mere reverses of fortune, made no deep impression on the feelings of this cheerful old monarch. Most of his children had died young; René took it not to heart. His daughter Margaret's marriage with the powerful Henry of England was considered a connection much above the fortunes of the King of the Troubadours. But in the issue, instead of René deriving any splendour from the match, he was involved in the misfortunes of his daughter, and repeatedly obliged to impoverish himself to supply her ransom. Perhaps in his private soul the old king did not think these losses so mortifying, as the necessity of receiving Margaret into his court and family. On fire when reflecting on the losses she had sustained, mourning over friends slain and kingdoms lost, the proudest and most passionate of princesses was ill suited to dwell with the gayest and best-humoured of sovereigns, whose pursuits she contemned, and whose lightness of temper, for finding comfort in such trifles, she could not forgive. The discomfort attached to her presence and vindictive recollections embarrassed the good-humoured old monarch, though it was unable to drive him beyond his equanimity.

Another distress pressed him more sorely.—Yolande, a daughter of his first wife, Isabella, had succeeded to his claims upon the Duchy of Lorraine, and transmitted them to her son, Ferrand, Count of Vaudemont, a young man of courage and spirit, engaged at this time in the apparently desperate undertaking of making his title good against the Duke of Burgundy, who, with little right but great power, was seizing upon and overrunning this rich duchy, which he laid claim to as a male fief. And to conclude, while the aged king on one side beheld his dethroned daughter in hopeless despair, and on the other his disinherited grandson in vain attempting to recover part of their rights, he had the additional misfortune to know that his nephew, Louis of France, and his cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, were secretly contending which should succeed him in that portion of Provence which he still continued to possess; and that it was only jealousy of each other which prevented his being despoiled of this last remnant of his territory. Yet amid all this distress, René feasted and received guests, danced, sang, composed poetry, used the pencil or brush with no small skill, devised and conducted festivals and processions, and, studying to promote as far as possible the immediate mirth and good-humour of his subjects, if he could not materially enlarge their more permanent prosperity, was never mentioned by them excepting as *Le bon Roi René*, a distinction conferred on him down to the present day, and due to him certainly by the qualities of his heart, if not by those of his head.

Whilst Arthur was receiving from his guide a full account of the peculiarities of King René, they entered the territories of that merry monarch. It was late in the autumn, and about the period when the south-eastern counties of

* Note E. Parliament of Love.

France rather show to least advantage. The foliage of the olive-tree is then decayed and withered, and as it predominates in the landscape, and resembles the scorched complexion of the soil itself, an ashen and arid hue is given to the whole. Still, however, there were scenes in the hilly and pastoral parts of the country, where the quantity of evergreens relieved the eye even in this dead season.

The appearance of the country, in general, had much in it that was peculiar.

The travellers perceived at every turn some marks of the king's singular character. Provence, as the part of Gaul which first received Roman civilisation, and as having been still longer the residence of the Grecian colony who founded Marseilles, is more full of the splendid relics of ancient architecture than any other country in Europe, Italy and Greece excepted. The good taste of the King René had dictated some attempts to clear out and restore these memorials of antiquity. Was there a triumphal arch, or an ancient temple—huts and hovels were cleared away from its vicinity, and means were used at least to retard the approach of ruin. Was there a marble fountain, which superstition had dedicated to some sequestered naiad—it was surrounded by olives, almond and orange trees—its cistern was repaired, and taught once more to retain its crystal treasures. The huge amphitheatres and gigantic colonnades experienced the same anxious care, attesting that the noblest specimens of the fine arts found one admirer and preserver in King René, even during the course of those which are termed the dark and barbarous ages.

A change of manners could also be observed in passing from Burgundy and Lorraine, where society relished of German bluntness, into the pastoral country of Provence, where the influence of a fine climate and melodious language, joined to the pursuits of the romantic old monarch, with the universal taste for music and poetry, had introduced a civilisation of manners, which approached to affectation. The shepherd literally marched abroad in the morning, piping his flocks forth to the pasture with some love sonnet, the composition of an amorous Troubadour; and his 'fleecy care' seemed actually to be under the influence of his music, instead of being ungraciously insensible to its melody, as is the case in colder climates. Arthur observed, too, that the Provençal sheep, instead of being driven before the shepherd, regularly followed him, and did not disperse to feed until the swain, by turning his face round to them, remaining stationary, and, executing variations on the air which he was playing, seemed to remind them that it was proper to do so. While in motion, his huge dog, of a species which is trained to face the wolf, and who is respected by the sheep as their guardian, and not feared as their tyrant, followed his master with his ears pricked, like the chief critic and prime judge of the performance, at some tones of which he seldom failed to intimate disapprobation, while the flock, like the generality of an audience, followed in unanimous though silent applause. At the hour of noon, the shepherd had sometimes acquired an augmentation to his audience, as some comely matron or blooming maiden, with whom he had rendezvoused by such a fountain as we have described, and who listened to the husband's or lover's chalumeau, or mingled her voice with his in the duets, of which the songs of the Troubadours have left so many examples. In the cool of the evening, the dance on the village green, or the concert before the hamlet door; the little repast of fruits, cheese, and bread, which the traveller was readily invited to share, gave new charms to the illusion, and seemed in earnest to point out Provence as the Arcadia * of France.

But the greatest singularity was, in the eyes of Arthur, the total absence of armed men and soldiers in this peaceful country. In England, no man stirred without his long-bow, sword, and buckler. In France, the hind wore armour even when he was betwixt the stilts of his plough. In Germany, you could not look along a mile of highway, but the eye was encountered by clouds of dust, out of which were seen, by fits, waving feathers and flashing armour. Even in Switzerland, the peasant, if he had a journey to make, though but of a mile or two, cared not to travel without his halberd and two-handed sword. But in Provence all seemed quiet and peaceful, as if the music of the land had lulled to sleep all its wrathful passions. Now and then a mounted cavalier might pass them, the harp at whose saddle-bow, or carried by one of his attendants, attested the character of a Troubadour, which was affected by men of all ranks; and then only a short sword on his left thigh, borne for show rather than use, was a necessary and appropriate part of his equipment.

'Peace,' said Arthur, as he looked around him, 'is an inestimable jewel; but it will be soon snatched from those who are not prepared with heart and hand to defend it.'

The sight of the ancient and interesting town of Aix, where King René held his court, dispelled reflections of a general character, and recalled to the young Englishman the peculiar mission on which he was engaged.

He then required to know from the Provençal, Thiebault, whether his instructions were to leave him, now that he had successfully attained the end of his journey.

'My instructions,' answered Thiebault, 'are to remain in Aix while there is any chance of your seignorie's continuing there, to be of such use to you as you may require, either as a guide or an attendant, and to keep these men in readiness to wait upon you when you have occasion for messengers or guards. With your approbation, I will see them disposed of in fitting quarters, and receive my further instructions from your seignorie wherever you please to appoint me. I propose this separation, because I understand it is your present pleasure to be private.'

'I must go to court,' answered Arthur, 'without any delay. Wait for me in half-an-hour by that fountain in the street, which projects into the air such a magnificent pillar of water, surrounded, I would almost swear, by a vapour like steam, serving as a shroud to the jet which it envelops.'

'The jet is so surrounded,' answered the Provençal, 'because it is supplied by a hot spring

* [The typical region of happiness and prosperity.]

rising from the bowels of the earth, and the touch of frost on this autumn morning makes the vapour more distinguishable than usual.—But if it is good King René whom you seek, you will find him at this time walking in his chimney. Do not be afraid of approaching him, for there never was a monarch so easy of access, especially to good-looking strangers like your seignorie.'

'But his ushers,' said Arthur, 'will not admit me into his hall.'

'His hall!' repeated Thiebault — 'Whose hall?'

'Why, King René's, I apprehend. If he is walking in a chimney, it can only be in that of his hall, and a stately one it must be to give him room for such exercise.'

'You mistake my meaning,' said the guide, laughing.—'What we call King René's chimney is the narrow parapet yonder; it extends between these two towers, has an exposure to the south, and is sheltered in every other direction. Yonder it is his pleasure to walk and enjoy the beams of the sun, on such cool mornings as the present. It nurses, he says, his poetical vein. If you approach his promenade, he will readily speak to you, unless, indeed, he is in the very act of a poetical composition.'

Arthur could not forbear smiling at the thoughts of a king, eighty years of age, broken down with misfortunes and beset with dangers, who yet amused himself with walking in an open parapet, and composing poetry in presence of all such of his loving subjects as chose to look on.

'If you will walk a few steps this way,' said Thiebault, 'you may see the good King, and judge whether or not you will accost him at present. I will dispose of the people, and await your orders at the fountain in the Corso.'

Arthur saw no objection to the proposal of his guide, and was not unwilling to have an opportunity of seeing something of the good King René, before he was introduced to his presence.

CHAPTER XXX.

Ay, this is he who wears the wreath of bays
Wove by Apollo and the Sisters Nine,
Which Jove's dread lightning scathes not. He hath doft
The cumbrous helm of steel, and flung aside
The yet more galling diadem of gold;
While, with a leafy circlet round his brows,
He reigns the King of Lovers and of Poets.

A CAUTIOUS approach to the chimney, that is. the favourite walk of the king, who is described by Shakespeare as bearing

——— the style of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicilies, and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman,

gave Arthur the perfect survey of his Majesty in person. He saw an old man, with locks and beard which, in amplitude and whiteness, nearly rivalled those of the envoy from Schwytz, but with a fresh and ruddy colour in his cheek, and an eye of great vivacity. His dress was showy to a degree almost inconsistent with his years; and his step, not only firm, but full of alertness and vivacity, while occupied in traversing the short and sheltered walk, which he had chosen rather for comfort than for privacy, showed juvenile vigour still animating an aged frame. The old king carried his tablets and a pencil in his hand, seeming totally abstracted in his own thoughts, and indifferent to being observed by several persons from the public street beneath his elevated promenade.

Of these, some, from their dress and manner, seemed themselves Troubadours; for they held in their hands rebecks, rotes, small portable harps, and other indications of their profession. Such appeared to be stationary, as if engaged in observing and recording their remarks on the meditations of their prince. Other passengers, bent on their own more serious affairs, looked up to the king as to some one whom they were accustomed to see daily, but never passed without doffing their bonnets, and expressing, by a suitable obeisance, a respect and affection towards his person, which appeared to make up in cordiality of feeling what it wanted in deep and solemn deference.

René, in the meanwhile, was apparently unconscious both of the gaze of such as stood still, or the greeting of those who passed on, his mind seeming altogether engrossed with the apparent labour of some arduous task in poetry or music. He walked fast or slow as best suited the progress of composition. At times he stopped to mark hastily down on his tablets something which seemed to occur to him as deserving of preservation; at other times he dashed out what he had written, and flung down the pencil as if in a sort of despair. On these occasions, the Sibylline leaf was carefully picked up by a beautiful page, his only attendant, who reverently observed the first suitable opportunity of restoring it again to his royal hand. The same youth bore a viol, on which, at a signal from his master, he occasionally struck a few musical notes, to which the old king listened, now with a soothed and satisfied air, now with a discontented and anxious brow. At times his enthusiasm rose so high, that he even hopped and skipped with an activity which his years did not promise; at other times his motions were extremely slow, and occasionally he stood still, like one wrapped in the deepest and most anxious meditation. When he chanced to look on the group which seemed to watch his motions, and who ventured even to salute him with a murmur of applause, it was only to distinguish them with a friendly and good-humoured nod; a salutation with which, likewise, he failed not to reply to the greeting of the occasional passengers, when his earnest attention to his task, whatever it might be, permitted him to observe them.

At length the royal eye lighted upon Arthur, whose attitude of silent observation and the distinction of his figure pointed him out as a stranger. René beckoned to his page, who, receiving his master's commands in a whisper, descended from the royal chimney to the broader platform beneath, which was open to general resort. The youth, addressing Arthur with much courtesy, informed him the king desired to speak with him. The young Englishman had no alternative but that of approaching, though pondering much in his own mind how he ought to comport

himself towards such a singular specimen of royalty.

When he drew near, King René addressed him in a tone of courtesy not unmingled with dignity, and Arthur's awe in his immediate presence was greater than he himself could have anticipated from his previous conception of the royal character.

'You are, from your appearance, fair sir,' said King René, 'a stranger in this country. By what name must we call you, and to what business are we to ascribe the happiness of seeing you at our court?'

Arthur remained a moment silent, and the good old man, imputing it to awe and timidity, proceeded in an encouraging tone.

'Modesty in youth is ever commendable; you are doubtless an acolyte in the Noble and Joyous Science of Minstrelsy and Music, drawn hither by the willing welcome which we afford to the professors of those arts, in which—praise be to Our Lady and the saints!—we have ourself been deemed a proficient.'

'I do not aspire to the honours of a Troubadour,' answered Arthur.

'I believe you,' answered the king, 'for your speech smacks of the northern, or Norman-French, such as is spoken in England and other unrefined nations. But you are a minstrel, perhaps, from these ultramontane parts? Be assured we despise not their efforts; for we have listened, not without pleasure and instruction, to many of their bold and wild romaunts, which, though rude in device and language, and therefore far inferior to the regulated poetry of our Troubadours, have yet something in their powerful and rough measure which occasionally rouses the heart like the sound of a trumpet.'

'I have felt the truth of your Grace's observation, when I have heard the songs of my country,' said Arthur; 'but I have neither skill nor audacity to imitate what I admire—My latest residence has been in Italy.'

'You are perhaps then a proficient in painting?' said René; 'an art which applies itself to the eye as poetry and music do to the ear, and is scarce less in esteem with us. If you are skilful in the art, you have come to a monarch who loves it, and the fair country in which it is practised.'

'In simple truth, sire, I am an Englishman, and my hand has been too much welked and hardened by practice of the bow, the lance, and the sword, to touch the harp, or even the pencil.'

'An Englishman!' said René, obviously relaxing in the warmth of his welcome; 'and what brings you here? England and I have long had little friendship together.'

'It is even on that account that I am here,' said Arthur. 'I come to pay my homage to your Grace's daughter, the Princess Margaret of Anjou, whom I and many true Englishmen regard still as our Queen, though traitors have usurped her title.'

'Alas, good youth,' said René, 'I must grieve for you, while I respect your loyalty and faith. Had my daughter Margaret been of my mind, she had long since abandoned pretensions which have drowned in seas of blood the noblest and bravest of her adherents.'

The king seemed about to say more, but checked himself.

'Go to my palace, he said; 'inquire for the seneschal, Hugh de Saint Cyr; he will give thee the means of seeing Margaret, that is, if it be her will to see thee. If not, good English youth, return to my palace, and thou shalt have hospitable entertainment; for a king who loves minstrelsy, music, and painting, is ever most sensible to the claims of honour, virtue, and loyalty; and I read in thy looks thou art possessed of these qualities, and willingly believe thou may'st, in more quiet times, aspire to share the honours of the Joyous Science. But if thou hast a heart to be touched by the sense of beauty and fair proportion, it will leap within thee at the first sight of my palace, the stately grace of which may be compared to the faultless form of some high-bred dame, or the artful, yet seemingly simple modulations of such a tune as we have been now composing.'

The king seemed disposed to take his instrument, and indulge the youth with a rehearsal of the strain he had just arranged; but Arthur at that moment experienced the painful internal feeling of that peculiar species of shame, which well-constructed minds feel when they see others express a great assumption of importance, with a confidence that they are exciting admiration, when in fact they are only exposing themselves to ridicule. Arthur, in short, took leave, 'in very shame,' of the King of Naples, both the Sicilies, and Jerusalem, in a manner somewhat more abrupt than ceremony demanded. The king looked after him, with some wonder at this want of breeding, which, however, he imputed to his visitor's insular education, and then again began to twangle his viol.

'The old fool!' said Arthur; 'his daughter is dethroned, his dominions crumbling to pieces, his family on the eve of becoming extinct, his grandson driven from one lurking-place to another, and expelled from his mother's inheritance,—and he can find amusement in these fopperies! I thought him, with his long white beard, like Nicholas Bonstetten; but the old Swiss is a Solomon compared with him.'

As these and other reflections, highly disparaging to King René, passed through Arthur's mind, he reached the place of rendezvous, and found Thiebault beneath the steaming fountain, forced from one of those hot springs which had been the delight of the Romans from an early period. Thiebault, having assured his master that his retinue, horse and man, were so disposed as to be ready on an instant's call, readily undertook to guide him to King René's palace, which, from its singularity, and indeed its beauty of architecture, deserved the eulogium which the old monarch had bestowed upon it. The front consisted of three towers of Roman architecture, two of them being placed on the angles of the palace, and the third, which served the purpose of a mausoleum, forming a part of the group, though somewhat detached from the other buildings. This last was a structure of beautiful proportions. The lower part of the edifice was square, serving as a sort of pedestal to the upper part, which was circular, and surrounded by columns of massive granite. The other two

towers at the angles of the palace were round, and also ornamented with pillars, and with a double row of windows. In front of, and connected with, these Roman remains, to which a date has been assigned as early as the fifth or sixth century, arose the ancient palace of the Counts of Provence, built a century or two later, but where a rich Gothic or Moorish front contrasted, and yet harmonized, with the more regular and massive architecture of the lords of the world. It is not more than thirty or forty years since this very curious remnant of antique art was destroyed to make room for new public buildings, which have never yet been erected.

Arthur really experienced some sensation of the kind which the old king had prophesied, and stood looking with wonder at the ever-open gate of the palace, into which men of all kinds seemed to enter freely. After looking around for a few minutes, the young Englishman ascended the steps of a noble portico, and asked of a porter, as old and as lazy as a great man's domestic ought to be, for the seneschal named to him by the king. The corpulent janitor, with great politeness, put the stranger under the charge of a page, who ushered him to a chamber, in which he found another aged functionary of higher rank, with a comely face, a clear composed eye, and a brow which, having never been knit into gravity, intimated that the seneschal of Aix was a proficient in the philosophy of his royal master. He recognised Arthur the moment he addressed him.

'You speak northern French, fair sir; you have lighter hair and a fairer complexion than the natives of this country—You ask after Queen Margaret—By all these marks I read you English—Her Grace of England is at this moment paying a vow at the Monastery of Mont Saint Victoire, and if your name be Arthur Philipson, I have commission to forward you to her presence immediately, that is, as soon as you have tasted of the royal provision.'

The young man would have remonstrated, but the seneschal left him no leisure.

'Meat and mass,' he said, 'never hindered work—it is perilous to youth to journey too far on an empty stomach—he himself would take a mouthful with the Queen's guest, and pledge him to boot in a flask of old Hermitage.'*

The board was covered with an alacrity which showed that hospitality was familiarly exercised in King René's dominions. Pasties, dishes of game, the gallant boar's head, and other delicacies, were placed on the table, and the seneschal played the merry host, frequently apologizing (unnecessarily) for showing an indifferent example, as it was his duty to carve before King René, and the good king was never pleased unless he saw him feed lustily as well as carve featly.

'But for you, Sir Guëst, eat freely, since you may not see food again until sunset; for the good Queen takes her misfortunes so to heart that sighs are her food, and her tears a bottle of drink, as the Psalmist hath it. But I bethink me you will need steeds for yourself and your equipage to reach Mont Saint Victoire, which is seven miles from Aix.'

Arthur intimated that he had a guide and horses in attendance, and begged permission to take his adieu. The worthy seneschal, his fair round belly graced with a gold chain, accompanied him to the gate with a step which a gentle fit of the gout had rendered uncertain, but which, he assured Arthur, would vanish before three days' use of the hot springs. Thiebault appeared before the gate, not with the tired steeds from which they had dismounted an hour since, but with fresh palfreys from the stable of the king.

'They are yours from the moment you have put foot in stirrup,' said the seneschal; 'the good King René never received back as his property a horse which he had lent to a guest; and that is perhaps one reason why his Highness and we of his household must walk often a-foot.'

Here the seneschal exchanged greetings with his young visitor, who rode forth to seek Queen Margaret's place of temporary retirement at the celebrated Monastery of Saint Victoire. He demanded of his guide in which direction it lay, who pointed, with an air of triumph, to a mountain three thousand feet and upwards in height, which arose at five or six miles' distance from the town, and which its bold and rocky summit rendered the most distinguished object of the landscape. Thiebault spoke of it with unusual glee and energy, so much so as to lead Arthur to conceive that his trusty squire had not neglected to avail himself of the lavish hospitality of *Le bon Roi René*. Thiebault, however, continued to expatiate on the fame of the mountain and monastery. They derived their name, he said, from a great victory which was gained by a Roman general, named Caio Mario, against two large armies of Saracens with ultramontane names (the Teutones probably and Cimbri), in gratitude to Heaven for which victory Caio Mario vowed to build a monastery on the mountain for the service of the Virgin Mary, in honour of whom he had been baptized. With all the importance of a local connoisseur, Thiebault proceeded to prove his general assertion by specific facts.

'Yonder,' he said, 'was the camp of the Saracens, from which, when the battle was apparently decided, their wives and women rushed, with horrible screams, dishevelled hair, and the gestures of furies, and for a time prevailed in stopping the flight of the men.' He pointed out, too, the river, for access to which, cut off by the superior generalship of the Romans, the barbarians, whom he called Saracens, hazarded the action, and whose streams they empurpled with their blood. In short, he mentioned many circumstances which showed how accurately tradition will preserve the particulars of ancient events, even whilst forgetting, misstating, and confounding dates and persons.

Perceiving that Arthur lent him a not unwilling ear,—for it may be supposed that the education of a youth bred up in the heat of civil wars was not well qualified to criticise his account of the wars of a distant period,—the Provençal, when he had exhausted this topic, drew up close to his master's side, and asked, in a suppressed

* [Wine grown in the valley of the Rhone, in a vineyard situated eleven miles north of Valence.]

tone, whether he knew, or was desirous of being made acquainted with, the cause of Margaret's having left Aix, to establish herself in the Monastery of Saint Victoire.

'For the accomplishment of a vow,' answered Arthur; 'all the world knows it.'

'All Aix knows the contrary,' said Thiebault; 'and I can tell you the truth, so I were sure it would not offend your seignorie.'

'The truth can offend no reasonable man, so it be expressed in the terms of which Queen Margaret must be spoken in the presence of an Englishman.'

Thus replied Arthur, willing to receive what information he could gather, and desirous, at the same time, to check the petulance of his attendant.

'I have nothing,' replied his follower, 'to state in disparagement of the gracious Queen, whose only misfortune is, that, like her royal father, she has more titles than towns. Besides, I know well that you Englishmen, though you speak wildly of your sovereigns yourselves, will not permit others to fail in respect to them.'

'Say on, then,' answered Arthur.

'Your seignorie must know, then,' said Thiebault, 'that the good King René has been much disturbed by the deep melancholy which afflicted Queen Margaret, and has bent himself with all his power to change it into a gayer humour. He made entertainments in public and in private; he assembled minstrels and Troubadours, whose music and poetry might have drawn smiles from one on his deathbed. The whole country resounded with mirth and glee, and the gracious Queen could not stir abroad in the most private manner, but, before she had gone a hundred paces, she lighted on an ambush, consisting of some pretty pageant, or festivous mummery, composed often by the good King himself, which interrupted her solitude, in purpose of relieving her heavy thoughts with some pleasant pastime. But the Queen's deep melancholy rejected all these modes of dispelling it, and at length she confined herself to her own apartments, and absolutely refused to see even her royal father, because he generally brought into her presence those whose productions he thought likely to soothe her sorrow. Indeed, she seemed to hear the harpers with loathing, and, excepting one wandering Englishman, who sang a rude and melancholy ballad, which threw her into a flood of tears, and to whom she gave a chain of price, she never seemed to look at or be conscious of the presence of any one. And at length, as I have had the honour to tell your seignorie, she refused to see even her royal father unless he came alone; and that he found no heart to do.'

'I wonder not at it,' said the young man; 'by the White Swan, I am rather surprised his mummery drove her not to frenzy.'

'Something like it indeed took place,' said Thiebault; 'and I will tell your seignorie how it chanced. You must know that good King René, unwilling to abandon his daughter to the foul fiend of melancholy, bethought him of making a grand effort. You must know further, that the King, powerful in all the craft of Troubadours and Jongleurs, is held in peculiar esteem for conducting mysteries, and other of those gamesome and delightful sports and processions, with which our Holy Church permits her graver ceremonies to be relieved and diversified, to the cheering of the hearts of all true children of religion. It is admitted that no one has ever been able to approach his Excellence in the arrangement of the Fête-Dieu;* and the tune to which the devils cudgel King Herod, to the great edification of all Christian spectators, is of our good King's royal composition. He hath danced at Tarascon in the ballet of Saint Martha and the Dragon, and was accounted in his own person the only actor competent to present the Tarrasque.† His Highness introduced also a new ritual into the consecration of the Boy Bishop, and composed an entire set of grotesque music for the Festival of Asses.‡ In short, his Grace's strength lies in those pleasing and becoming festivities which strew the path of edification with flowers, and send men dancing and singing on their way to heaven.

'Now the good King René, feeling his own genius for such recreative compositions, resolved to exert it to the utmost, in the hope that he might thereby relieve the melancholy in which his daughter was plunged, and which infected all that approached her. It chanced, some short time since, that the Queen was absent for certain days, I know not where or on what business, but it gave the good King time to make his preparations. So, when his daughter returned, he with much importunity prevailed on her to make part of a religious procession to Saint Sauveur, the principal church in Aix. The Queen, innocent of what was intended, decked herself with solemnity, to witness and partake of what she expected would prove a work of grave piety. But no sooner had she appeared on the esplanade in front of the palace, than more than a hundred masks, dressed up like Turks, Jews, Saracens, Moors, and I know not whom besides, crowded around to offer her their homage, in the character of the Queen of Sheba; and a grotesque piece of music called them to arrange themselves for a ludicrous ballet, in which they addressed the Queen in the most entertaining manner, and with the most extravagant gestures. The Queen, stunned with the noise, and affronted with the petulance of this unexpected onset, would have gone back into the palace; but the doors had been shut by the King's order so soon as she set forth, and her retreat in that direction was cut off. Finding herself excluded from the palace, the Queen advanced to the front of the façade, and endeavoured by signs and words to appease the hubbub, but the maskers, who had their instructions, only answered with songs, music, and shouts.'

* [A celebrated festival held at Aix, in Provence, lasting five days. The ceremonial was arranged by King René in 1462, and consisted of processions, spectacles, games, and so forth.]

† [According to tradition, Martha, sister of Mary Magdalene, came to Tarascon at the time when its inhabitants were terrorized by a dragon. Martha exorcised the monster, and drove it into the Rhone. The festival of the Tarasque (the name given to the dragon) used formerly to be celebrated amid great rejoicings. It was in 1469 that King René assumed the part accorded to him in the text.]

‡ [Popular mediæval holiday spectacles.]

'I would,' said Arthur, 'there had been a score of English yeomen in presence, with their quarter-staves, to teach the bawling villains respect for one that has worn the crown of England!'

'All the noise that was made before was silence and soft music,' continued Thiebault, 'till that when the good King himself appeared, grotesquely dressed in the character of King Solomon'——

'To whom, of all princes, he has the least resemblance,' said Arthur——

'With such capers and gesticulations of welcome to the Queen of Sheba, as, I am assured by those who saw it, would have brought a dead man alive again, or killed a living man with laughing. Among other properties, he had in his hand a truncheon, somewhat formed like a fool's bauble'——

'A most fit sceptre for such a sovereign,' said Arthur——

'Which was headed,' continued Thiebault, 'by a model of the Jewish Temple, finely gilded and curiously cut in pasteboard. He managed this with the utmost grace, and delighted every spectator by his gaiety and activity, excepting the Queen, who, the more he skipped and capered, seemed to be the more incensed, until, on his approaching her to conduct her to the procession, she seemed roused to a sort of frenzy, struck the truncheon out of his hand, and, breaking through the crowd, who felt as if a tigress had leapt amongst them from a showman's cart, rushed into the royal court-yard. Ere the order of the scenic representation, which her violence had interrupted, could be restored, the Queen again issued forth, mounted, and attended by two or three English cavaliers of her Majesty's suite. She forced her way through the crowd, without regarding either their safety or her own, flew like a hailstorm along the streets, and never drew bridle till she was as far up this same Mont Saint Victoire as the road would permit. She was then received into the convent, and has since remained there; and a vow of penance is the pretext to cover over the quarrel betwixt her and her father.'

'How long may it be,' said Arthur, 'since these things chanced?'

'It is but three days since Queen Margaret left Aix in the manner I have told you.—But we are come as far up the mountain as men usually ride. See, yonder is the monastery rising betwixt two huge rocks, which form the very top of Mont Saint Victoire. There is no more open ground than is afforded by the cleft, into which the Convent of Saint Mary of Victory is, as it were, niched; and the access is guarded by the most dangerous precipices. To ascend the mountain, you must keep that narrow path which, winding and turning among the cliffs, leads at length to the summit of the hill, and the gate of the monastery.'

'And what becomes of you and the horses?' said Arthur.

'We will rest,' said Thiebault, 'in the hospital maintained by the good fathers at the bottom of the mountain, for the accommodation of those who attend on pilgrims;—for I promise you the shrine is visited by many who come from afar, and are attended both by man and horse.—Care not for me,—I shall be first under cover; but there muster yonder in the west some threatening clouds, from which your seignorie may suffer inconvenience, unless you reach the convent in time. I will give you an hour to do the feat, and will say you are as active as a chamois hunter, if you reach it within the time.'

Arthur looked around him, and did indeed remark a mustering of clouds in the distant west, which threatened soon to change the character of the day, which had hitherto been brilliantly clear, and so serene that the falling of a leaf might have been heard. He therefore turned him to the steep and rocky path which ascended the mountain, sometimes by scaling almost precipitous rocks, and sometimes by reaching their tops by a more circuitous process. It winded through thickets of wild boxwood and other low aromatic shrubs, which afforded some pasture for the mountain goats, but were a bitter annoyance to the traveller who had to press through them. Such obstacles were so frequent, that the full hour allowed by Thiebault had elapsed before he stood on the summit of Mont Saint Victoire, and in front of the singular convent of the same name.

We have already said that the crest of the mountain, consisting entirely of one bare and solid rock, was divided by a cleft or opening into two heads or peaks, between which the convent was built, occupying all the space between them. The front of the building was of the most ancient and sombre cast of the old Gothic, or rather, as it has been termed, the Saxon; and in that respect corresponded with the savage exterior of the naked cliffs, of which the structure seemed to make a part, and by which it was entirely surrounded, excepting a small open space of more level ground, where, at the expense of much toil, and by carrying earth up the hill, from different spots where they could collect it in small quantities, the good fathers had been able to arrange the accommodations of a garden.

A bell summoned a lay-brother, the porter of this singularly situated monastery, to whom Arthur announced himself as an English merchant, Philipson by name, who came to pay his duty to Queen Margaret. The porter, with much respect, showed the stranger into the convent, and ushered him into a parlour, which, looking towards Aix, commanded an extensive and splendid prospect over the southern and western parts of Provence. This was the direction in which Arthur had approached the mountain from Aix; but the circuitous path by which he had ascended had completely carried him round the hill. The western side of the monastery, to which the parlour looked, commanded the noble view we have mentioned; and a species of balcony, which, connecting the two twin crags, at this place not above four or five yards asunder, ran along the front of the building, and appeared to be constructed for the purpose of enjoying it. But, on stepping from one of the windows of the parlour upon this battlemented bartizan, Arthur became aware that the wall on which the parapet rested stretched along the edge of a precipice, which sank sheer down

five hundred feet at least from the foundations of the convent. Surprised and startled at finding himself on so giddy a verge, Arthur turned his eyes from the gulf beneath him to admire the distant landscape, partly illumined, with ominous lustre, by the now westerly sun. The setting beams showed in dark red splendour a vast variety of hill and dale, champaign and cultivated ground, with towns, churches, and castles, some of which rose from among trees, while others seemed founded on rocky eminences; others again lurked by the side of streams and lakes, to which the heat and drought of the climate naturally attracted them.

The rest of the landscape presented similar objects when the weather was serene, but they were now rendered indistinct, or altogether obliterated, by the sullen shade of the approaching clouds, which gradually spread over great part of the horizon, and threatened altogether to eclipse the sun, though the lord of the horizon still struggled to maintain his influence, and, like a dying hero, seemed most glorious even in the moment of defeat. Wild sounds, like groans and howls, formed by the wind in the numerous caverns of the rocky mountain, added to the terrors of the scene, and seemed to foretell the fury of some distant storm, though the air in general was even unnaturally calm and breathless. In gazing on this extraordinary scene, Arthur did justice to the monks who had chosen this wild and grotesque situation, from which they could witness Nature in her wildest and grandest demonstrations, and compare the nothingness of humanity with her awful convulsions.

So much was Arthur awed by the scene before him, that he had almost forgotten, while gazing from the bartizan, the important business which had brought him to this place, when it was suddenly recalled by finding himself in the presence of Margaret of Anjou, who, not seeing him in the parlour of reception, had stepped upon the balcony, that she might meet with him the sooner.

The queen's dress was black, without any ornament except a gold coronal of an inch in breadth, restraining her long black tresses, of which advancing years and misfortunes had partly altered the hue. There was placed within the circlet a black plume, with a red rose, the last of the season, which the good father who kept the garden had presented to her that morning as the badge of her husband's house. Care, fatigue, and sorrow seemed to dwell on her brow and her features. To another messenger she would in all probability have administered a sharp rebuke, for not being alert in his duty to receive her as she entered; but Arthur's age and appearance corresponded with that of her loved and lost son. He was the son of a lady whom Margaret had loved with almost sisterly affection, and the presence of Arthur continued to excite in the dethroned queen the same feelings of maternal tenderness which had been awakened on their first meeting in the Cathedral of Strassburg. She raised him as he kneeled at her feet, spoke to him with much kindness, and encouraged him to detail at full length his father's message, and such other news as his brief residence at Dijon had made him acquainted with.

She demanded which way Duke Charles had moved with his army.

'As I was given to understand by the master of his artillery,' said Arthur, 'towards the Lake of Neufchatel, on which side he proposes his first attack on the Swiss.'

'The headstrong fool!' said Queen Margaret, —'he resembles the poor lunatic, who went to the summit of the mountain, that he might meet the rain half-way.—Does thy father, then,' continued Margaret, 'advise me to give up the last remains of the extensive territories, once the dominions of our royal House, and for some thousand crowns, and the paltry aid of a few hundred lances, to relinquish what is left of our patrimony to our proud and selfish kinsman of Burgundy, who extends his claim to our all, and affords so little help, or even promise of help, in return?'

'I should have ill discharged my father's commission,' said Arthur, 'if I had left your Highness to think that he recommends so great a sacrifice. He feels most deeply the Duke of Burgundy's grasping desire of dominion. Nevertheless, he thinks that Provence must, on King René's death, or sooner, fall either to the share of Duke Charles, or to Louis of France, whatever opposition your Highness may make to such a destination; and it may be that my father, as a knight and a soldier, hopes much from obtaining the means to make another attempt on Britain. But the decision must rest with your Highness.'

'Young man,' said the queen, 'the contemplation of a question so doubtful almost deprives me of reason!'

As she spoke, she sank down, as one who needs rest, on a stone seat placed on the very verge of the balcony, regardless of the storm, which now began to rise with dreadful gusts of wind, the course of which being intermitted and altered by the crags round which they howled, it seemed as if in very deed Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus,* unchaining the winds from every quarter of heaven, were contending for mastery around the Convent of Our Lady of Victory. Amid this tumult, and amid billows of mist which concealed the bottom of the precipice, and masses of clouds which racked fearfully over their heads, the roar of the descending waters rather resembled the fall of cataracts than the rushing of torrents of rain. The seat on which Margaret had placed herself was in a considerable degree sheltered from the storm, but its eddies, varying in every direction, often tossed aloft her dishevelled hair; and we cannot describe the appearance of her noble and beautiful, yet ghastly and wasted features, agitated strongly by anxious hesitation and conflicting thoughts, unless to those of our readers who have had the advantage of having seen our inimitable Siddons† in such a character as this. Arthur, confounded by anxiety and terror, could only beseech her Majesty to retire before the fury of the approaching storm into the interior of the convent.

'No,' she replied with firmness; 'roofs and

*[In ancient Greek mythology, the North Wind, the East Wind, and the West-North-West Wind.]

†[Mrs. Siddons the tragedian—died 1831.]

walls have ears, and monks, though they have forsworn the world, are not the less curious to know what passes beyond their cells. It is in this place you must hear what I have to say ; as a soldier you should scorn a blast of wind or a shower of rain ; and to me, who have often held counsel amidst the sound of trumpets and clash of arms, prompt for instant fight, the war of elements is an unnoticed trifle. I tell thee, young Arthur Vere, as I would to your father —as I would to my son—if indeed Heaven had left such a blessing to a wretch forlorn '——

She paused, and then proceeded.

'I tell thee, as I would have told my beloved Edward, that Margaret, whose resolutions were once firm and immoveable as these rocks among which we are placed, is now doubtful and variable as the clouds which are drifting around us. I told your father, in the joy of meeting once more a subject of such inappreciable loyalty, of the sacrifices I would make to assure the assistance of Charles of Burgundy to so gallant an undertaking as that proposed to him by the faithful Oxford. But since I saw him I have had cause of deep reflection. I met my aged father only to offend, and, I say it with shame, to insult the old man in presence of his people. Our tempers are as opposed as the sunshine, which a short space since gilded a serene and beautiful landscape, differs from the tempests which are now wasting it. I spurned with open scorn and contempt what he, in his mistaken affection, had devised for means of consolation, and, disgusted with the idle follies which he had devised for curing the melancholy of a dethroned queen, a widowed spouse—and, alas ! a childless mother—I retired hither from the noisy and idle mirth, which was the bitterest aggravation of my sorrows. Such and so gentle is René's temper, that even my unfilial conduct will not diminish my influence over him ; and if your father had announced that the Duke of Burgundy, like a knight and a sovereign, had cordially and nobly entered into the plan of the faithful Oxford, I could have found it in my heart to obtain the cession of territory his cold and ambitious policy requires, in order to insure the assistance, which he now postpones to afford till he has gratified his own haughty humour by settling needless quarrels with his unoffending neighbours. Since I have been here, and calmness and solitude have given me time to reflect, I have thought on the offences I have given the old man, and on the wrongs I was about to do him. My father, let me do him justice, is also the father of his people. They have dwelt under their vines and fig-trees, in ignoble ease, perhaps, but free from oppression and exaction, and their happiness has been that of their good King. Must I change all this ?—Must I aid in turning over these contented people to a fierce, headlong, arbitrary prince ?—May I not break even the easy and thoughtless heart of my poor old father, should I succeed in urging him to do so ?—These are questions which I shudder even to ask myself. On the other hand, to disappoint the toils, the venturous hopes of your father, to forego the only opportunity which may ever again offer itself, of revenge on the bloody traitors of York, and restoration of the House of Lancaster !—Arthur, the scene around us is not so convulsed by the fearful tempest and the driving clouds, as my mind is by doubt and uncertainty.'

'Alas !' replied Arthur, 'I am too young and inexperienced to be your Majesty's adviser in a case so arduous. I would my father had been in presence himself.'

'I know what he would have said,' replied the queen ; 'but, knowing all, I despair of aid from human counsellors—I have sought others, but they also are deaf to my entreaties. Yes, Arthur, Margaret's misfortunes have rendered her superstitious. Know that beneath these rocks, and under the foundation of this convent, there runs a cavern, entering by a secret and defended passage a little to the westward of the summit, and running through the mountain, having an opening to the south, from which, as from this bartizan, you can view the landscape so lately seen from this balcony, or the strife of winds and confusion of clouds which we now behold. In the middle of this cavernous thoroughfare is a natural pit, or perforation, of great but unknown depth. A stone dropped into it is heard to dash from side to side, until the noise of its descent, thundering from cliff to cliff, dies away in distant and faint tinkling, less loud than that of a sheep's bell at a mile's distance. The common people, in their jargon, call this fearful gulf Lou Garagoule ; and the traditions of the monastery annex wild and fearful recollections to a place in itself sufficiently terrible. Oracles, it is said, spoke from thence in pagan days by subterranean voices, arising from the abyss ; and from these the Roman general is said to have heard, in strange and uncouth rhymes, promises of the victory which gives name to this mountain. These oracles, it is averred, may be yet consulted, after performance of strange rites, in which heathen ceremonies are mixed with Christian acts of devotion. The Abbots of Mont Saint Victoire have denounced the consultation of Lou Garagoule, and the spirits who reside there, to be criminal. But, as the sin may be expiated by presents to the Church, by masses, and penances, the door is sometimes opened by the complaisant fathers to those whose daring curiosity leads them, at all risks, and by whatever means, to search into futurity. Arthur, I have made the experiment, and am even now returned from the gloomy cavern, in which, according to the traditional ritual, I have spent six hours by the margin of the gulf, a place so dismal, that after its horrors even this tempestuous scene is refreshing.'

The queen stopped, and Arthur, the more struck with the wild tale, that it reminded him of his place of imprisonment at La Ferette, asked anxiously if her inquiries had obtained any answer.

'None whatever,' replied the unhappy princess. 'The demons of Garagoule, if there be such, are deaf to the suit of an unfortunate wretch like me, to whom neither friends nor fiends will afford counsel or assistance. It is my father's circumstances which prevent my instant and strong resolution. Were my own claims on this piping and paltry nation of Troubadours alone interested, I could, for the chance of once

more setting my foot in merry England, as easily and willingly resign them and their paltry coronet, as I commit to the storm this idle emblem of the royal rank which I have lost.'

As Margaret spoke, she tore from her hair the sable feather and rose which the tempest had detached from the circlet in which they were placed, and tossed them from the battlement with a gesture of wild energy. They were instantly whirled off in a bickering eddy of the agitated clouds, which swept the feather far distant into empty space, through which the eye could not pursue it. But while that of Arthur involuntarily strove to follow its course, a contrary gust of wind caught the red rose, and drove it back against his breast, so that it was easy for him to catch hold of and retain it.

'Joy, joy, and good fortune, royal mistress!' he said, returning to her the emblematic flower; 'the tempest brings back the badge of Lancaster to its proper owner.'

'I accept the omen,' said Margaret; 'but it concerns yourself, noble youth, and not me. The feather which is borne away to waste and desolation is Margaret's emblem. My eyes will never see the restoration of the line of Lancaster. But you will live to behold it, and to aid to achieve it, and to dye our red rose deeper yet in the blood of tyrants and traitors. My thoughts are so strangely poised, that a feather or a flower may turn the scale. But my head is still giddy, and my heart sick.—To-morrow you shall see another Margaret, and till then adieu.'

It was time to retire, for the tempest began to be mingled with fiercer showers of rain. When they re-entered the parlour, the queen clapped her hands, and two female attendants entered.

'Let the Father Abbot know,' she said, 'that it is our desire that this young gentleman receive for this night such hospitality as befits an esteemed friend of ours.—Till to-morrow, young sir, farewell.'

With a countenance which betrayed not the late emotion of her mind, and with a stately courtesy that would have become her when she graced the halls of Windsor, she extended her hand, which the youth saluted respectfully. After her leaving the parlour, the abbot entered, and in his attention to Arthur's entertainment and accommodation for the evening showed his anxiety to meet and obey Queen Margaret's wishes.

CHAPTER XXXI.

——— Want you a man
Experienced in the world and its affairs?
Here he is for your purpose. He's a monk.
He hath forsworn the world and all its work,
The rather that he knows it passing well,
Special the worst of it, for he's a monk.

OLD PLAY.

WHILE the dawn of the morning was yet grey, Arthur was awakened by a loud ringing at the gate of the monastery, and presently afterwards the porter entered the cell which had been allotted to him for his lodgings, to tell him, that if his name was Arthur Philipson, a brother of their order had brought him despatches from his father. The youth started up, hastily attired himself, and was introduced, in the parlour, to a Carmelite monk, being of the same order with the community of Saint Victoire.

'I have ridden many a mile, young man, to present you with this letter,' said the monk, 'having undertaken to your father that it should be delivered without delay. I came to Aix last night during the storm, and, learning at the palace that you had ridden hither, I mounted as soon as the tempest abated, and here I am.'

'I am beholden to you, father,' said the youth, 'and if I could repay your pains with a small donative to your convent'——

'By no means,' answered the good father; 'I took my personal trouble out of friendship to your father, and mine own errand led me this way. The expenses of my long journey have been amply provided for. But open your packet, I can answer your questions at leisure.'

The young man accordingly stepped into an embrasure of the window, and read as follows:—

'SON ARTHUR,—Touching the state of the country, in so far as concerns the safety of travelling, know that the same is precarious. The Duke hath taken the towns of Brie and Granson, and put to death five hundred men, whom he made prisoners in garrison there. But the Confederates are approaching with a large force, and God will judge for the right. Howsoever the game may go, these are sharp wars, in which little quarter is spoken of on either side, and therefore there is no safety for men of our profession, till something decisive shall happen. In the meantime, you may assure the widowed lady that our correspondent continues well disposed to purchase the property which she has in hand; but will scarce be able to pay the price till his present pressing affairs shall be settled, which I hope will be in time to permit us to embark the funds in the profitable adventure I told our friend of. I have employed a friar, travelling to Provence, to carry this letter, which I trust will come safe. The bearer may be trusted.

'Your affectionate father,

'JOHN PHILIPSON.'

Arthur easily comprehended the latter part of the epistle, and rejoiced he had received it at so critical a moment. He questioned the Carmelite on the amount of the Duke's army, which the monk stated to amount to sixty thousand men, while he said the Confederates, though making every exertion, had not yet been able to assemble the third part of that number. The young Ferrand de Vaudemont was with their army, and had received, it was thought, some secret assistance from France; but as he was little known in arms, and had few followers, the empty title of General which he bore added little to the strength of the Confederates. Upon the whole, he reported that every chance appeared to be in favour of Charles, and Arthur, who

looked upon his success as presenting the only chance in favour of his father's enterprise, was not a little pleased to find it insured, as far as depended on a great superiority of force. He had no leisure to make further inquiries, for the queen at that moment entered the apartment, and the Carmelite, learning her quality, withdrew from her presence in deep reverence.

The paleness of her complexion still bespoke the fatigues of the day preceding; but, as she graciously bestowed on Arthur the greetings of the morning, her voice was firm, her eye clear, and her countenance steady. 'I meet you,' she said, 'not as I left you, but determined in my purpose. I am satisfied that if René does not voluntarily yield up his throne of Provence by some step like that which we propose, he will be hurled from it by violence, in which, it may be, his life will not be spared. We will, therefore, to work with all speed—the worst is, that I cannot leave this convent till I have made the necessary penances for having visited the Garagoule, without performing which I were no Christian woman. When you return to Aix, inquire at the palace for my secretary, with whom this line will give you credence. I have, even before this door of hope opened to me, endeavoured to form an estimate of King René's situation, and collected the documents for that purpose. Tell him to send me, duly sealed, and under fitting charge, the small cabinet hooped with silver. Hours of penance for past errors may be employed to prevent others; and from the contents of that cabinet I shall learn whether I am, in this weighty matter, sacrificing my father's interests to my own half-desperate hopes. But of this I have little or no doubt. I can cause the deeds of resignation and transference to be drawn up here under my own direction, and arrange the execution of them when I return to Aix, which shall be the first moment after my penance is concluded.'

'And this letter, gracious madam,' said Arthur, 'will inform you what events are approaching, and of what importance it may be to take time by the forelock. Place me but in possession of these momentous deeds, and I will travel night and day till I reach the Duke's camp. I shall find him most likely in the moment of victory, and with his heart too much open to refuse a boon to the royal kinswoman who is surrendering to him all. We will—we must—in such an hour, obtain princely succours; and we shall soon see if the licentious Edward of York, the savage Richard, the treacherous and perjured Clarence, are hereafter to be lords of merry England, or whether they must give place to a more rightful sovereign and better man. But O! royal madam, all depends on haste.'

'True; yet a few days may—nay, must—cast the die between Charles and his opponents; and, ere making so great a surrender, it were as well to be assured that he whom we would propitiate is in capacity to assist us. All the events of a tragic and varied life have led me to see there is no such thing as an inconsiderable enemy. I will make haste, however, trusting in the interim we may have good news from the banks of the lake at Neufchatel.'

'But who shall be employed to draw these most important deeds?' said the young man.

Margaret mused ere she replied—'The Father Guardian is complaisant, and I think faithful; but I would not willingly repose confidence in one of the Provençal monks. Stay, let me think—your father says the Carmelite who brought the letter may be trusted—he shall do the turn. He is a stranger, and will be silent for a piece of money. Farewell, Arthur de Vere.—You will be treated with all hospitality by my father. If thou dost receive further tidings, thou wilt let me know them; or should I have instructions to send, thou wilt hear from me.—So, benedicite.'

Arthur proceeded to wind down the mountain at a much quicker pace than he had ascended on the day before. The weather was now gloriously serene, and the beauties of vegetation, in a country where it never totally slumbers, were at once delicious and refreshing. His thoughts wandered from the crags of Mont Saint Victoire to the cliff of the Canton of Unterwalden, and fancy recalled the moments when his walks through such scenery were not solitary, but when there was a form by his side, whose simple beauty was engraved on his memory. Such thoughts were of a preoccupying nature; and I grieve to say that they entirely drowned the recollection of the mysterious caution given him by his father, intimating that Arthur might not be able to comprehend such letters as he should receive from him, till they were warmed before a fire.

The first thing which reminded him of this singular caution was the seeing a chafing dish of charcoal in the kitchen of the hostelry at the bottom of the mountain, where he found Thiebault and his horses. This was the first fire which he had seen since receiving his father's letter, and it reminded him not unnaturally of what the earl had recommended. Great was his surprise to see that, after exposing the paper to the fire as if to dry it, a word emerged in an important passage of the letter, and the concluding words now read—'The bearer may *not* be trusted.' Well-nigh choked with shame and vexation, Arthur could think of no other remedy than instantly to return to the convent, and acquaint the queen with this discovery, which he hoped still to convey to her in time to prevent any risk being incurred by the Carmelite's treachery.

Incensed at himself, and eager to redeem his fault, he bent his manly breast against the steep hill, which was probably never scaled in so short a time as by the young heir of De Vere; for within forty minutes from his commencing the ascent he stood breathless and panting in the presence of Queen Margaret, who was alike surprised at his appearance and his exhausted condition.

'Trust not the Carmelite!' he exclaimed—'You are betrayed, noble Queen, and it is by my negligence. Here is my dagger—Bid me strike it into my heart!'

Margaret demanded and obtained a more special explanation, and when it was given, she said, 'It is an unhappy chance; but your father's instructions ought to have been more

distinct. I have told yonder Carmelite the purpose of the contracts, and engaged with him to draw them. He has but now left me to serve at the choir. There is no withdrawing the confidence I have unhappily placed; but I can easily prevail with the Father Guardian to prevent the monk from leaving the convent till we are indifferent to his secrecy. It is our best chance to secure it, and we will take care that what inconvenience he sustains by his detention shall be well recompensed. Meanwhile, rest thou, good Arthur, and undo the throat of thy mantle. Poor youth, thou art well-nigh exhausted with thy haste.'

Arthur obeyed, and sat down on a seat in the parlour; for the speed which he had exerted rendered him almost incapable of standing.

'If I could but see,' he said, 'the false monk, I would find a way to charm him to secrecy!'

'Better leave him to me,' said the queen; 'and, in a word, I forbid you to meddle with him. The coif can treat better with the cowl than the casque can do. Say no more of him. I joy to see you wear around your neck the holy relic I bestowed on you;—but what Moorish charmlet is that you wear beside it? Alas! I need not ask. Your heightened colour, almost as deep as when you entered a quarter of an hour hence, confesses a true-love token. Alas! poor boy, hast thou not only such a share of thy country's woes to bear, but also thine own load of affliction, not the less poignant now that future time will show thee how fantastic it is! Margaret of Anjou could once have aided wherever thy affections were placed; but now she can only contribute to the misery of her friends, not to their happiness. But this lady of the charm, Arthur, is she fair—is she wise and virtuous—is she of noble birth—and does she love?'—She perused his countenance with the glance of an eagle, and continued, 'To all thou wouldst answer Yes, if shamefacedness permitted thee. Love her, then, in turn, my gallant boy, for love is the parent of brave actions. Go, my noble youth—high-born and loyal, valorous and virtuous, enamoured and youthful, to what mayest thou not rise? The chivalry of ancient Europe only lives in a bosom like thine. Go, and let the praises of a queen fire thy bosom with the love of honour and achievement. In three days we meet at Aix.'

Arthur, highly gratified with the queen's condescension, once more left her presence.

Returning down the mountain with a speed very different from that which he had used in the ascent, he again found his Provençal squire, who had remained in much surprise at witnessing the confusion in which his master had left the inn, almost immediately after he had entered it, without any apparent haste or agitation. Arthur explained his hasty return by alleging he had forgot his purse at the convent. 'Nay, in that case,' said Thiebault, 'considering what you left and where you left it, I do not wonder at your speed; though Our Lady save me, as I never saw living creature, save a goat with a wolf at his heels, make his way over crag and briers with half such rapidity as you did.'

They reached Aix after about an hour's riding, and Arthur lost no time in waiting upon the good King René, who gave him a kind reception, both in respect of the letter from the Duke of Burgundy, and in consideration of his being an Englishman, the avowed subject of the unfortunate Margaret. The placable monarch soon forgave his young guest the want of complaisance with which he had eschewed to listen to his compositions; and Arthur speedily found that to apologize for his want of breeding in that particular was likely to lead to a great deal more rehearsing than he could find patience to tolerate. He could only avoid the old king's extreme desire to recite his own poems, and perform his own music, by engaging him in speaking of his daughter Margaret. Arthur had been sometimes induced to doubt the influence which the queen boasted herself to possess over her aged father; but, on being acquainted with him personally, he became convinced that her powerful understanding and violent passions inspired the feeble-minded and passive king with a mixture of pride, affection, and fear, which united to give her the most ample authority over him.

Although she had parted with him but a day or two since, and in a manner so ungracious on her side, René was as much overjoyed at hearing of the probability of her speedy return, as the fondest father could have been at the prospect of being reunited to the most dutiful child, whom he had not seen for years. The old king was impatient as a boy for the day of her arrival, and, still strangely unenlightened on the difference of her taste from his own, he was with difficulty induced to lay aside a project of meeting her in the character of old Palemon,*—

> The prince of shepherds, and their pride,

at the head of an Arcadian procession of nymphs and swains, to inspire whose choral dances and songs, every pipe and tambourine in the country was to be placed in requisition. Even the old seneschal, however, intimated his disapprobation of this species of *joyeuse entrée;* so that René suffered himself at length to be persuaded that the queen was too much occupied by the religious impressions to which she had been of late exposed, to receive any agreeable sensation from sights or sounds of levity. The king gave way to reasons which he could not sympathize with; and thus Margaret escaped the shock of welcome, which would perhaps have driven her in her impatience back to the mountain of Saint Victoire, and the sable cavern of Lou Garagoule.

During the time of her absence, the days of the court of Provence were employed in sports and rejoicings of every description: tilting at the barrier with blunted spears, riding at the ring, parties for hare-hunting and falconry, frequented by the youth of both sexes, in the company of whom the king delighted, while the evenings were consumed in dancing and music.

Arthur could not but be sensible that not long since all this would have made him perfectly happy; but the last months of his existence had developed his understanding and passions. He

* [In Thomson's *Seasons*, Autumn.]

was now initiated in the actual business of human life, and looked on its amusements with an air of something like contempt; so that among the young and gay noblesse, who composed this merry court, he acquired the title of the youthful philosopher, which was not bestowed upon him, it may be supposed, as inferring anything of peculiar compliment.

On the fourth day news were received, by an express messenger, that Queen Margaret would enter Aix before the hour of noon, to resume her residence in her father's palace. The good King René seemed, as it drew nigh, to fear the interview with his daughter as much as he had previously desired it, and contrived to make all around him partake of his fidgety anxiety. He tormented his steward and cooks to recollect what dishes they had ever observed her to taste of with approbation—he pressed the musicians to remember the tunes which she approved, and when one of them boldly replied he had never known her Majesty endure any strain with patience, the old monarch threatened to turn him out of his service for slandering the taste of his daughter. The banquet was ordered to be served at half-past eleven, as if accelerating it would have had the least effect upon hurrying the arrival of the expected guests; and the old king, with his napkin over his arm, traversed the hall from window to window, wearying every one with questions, whether they saw anything of the Queen of England. Exactly as the bells tolled noon, the queen, with a very small retinue, chiefly English, and in mourning habits like herself, rode into the town of Aix. King René, at the head of his court, failed not to descend from the front of his stately palace, and move along the street to meet his daughter. Lofty, proud, and jealous of incurring ridicule, Margaret was not pleased with this public greeting in the market-place. But she was desirous at present to make amends for her late petulance, and therefore she descended from her palfrey; and although something shocked at seeing René equipped with a napkin, she humbled herself to bend the knee to him, asking at once his blessing and forgiveness.

'Thou hast—thou hast my blessing, my suffering dove,' said the simple king to the proudest and most impatient princess that ever wept for a lost crown.—'And for thy pardon, how canst thou ask it, who never didst me an offence since God made me father to so gracious a child?—Rise, I say, rise—nay, it is for me to ask thy pardon—True, I said in my ignorance, and thought within myself, that my heart had indited a goodly thing—but it vexed thee. It is therefore for me to crave pardon.'—And down sank good King René upon both knees; and the people, who are usually captivated with anything resembling the trick of the scene, applauded with much noise, and some smothered laughter, a situation in which the royal daughter and her parent seemed about to rehearse the scene of the Roman Charity.

Margaret, sensitively alive to shame, and fully aware that her present position was sufficiently ludicrous in its publicity at least, signed sharply to Arthur, whom she saw in the king's suite, to come to her; and, using his arm to rise, she muttered to him aside, and in English,—'To what saint shall I vow myself, that I may preserve patience when I so much need it?'

'For pity's sake, royal madam, recall your firmness of mind and composure,' whispered her esquire, who felt at the moment more embarrassed than honoured by his distinguished office, for he could feel that the queen actually trembled with vexation and impatience.

They at length resumed their route to the palace, the father and daughter arm in arm, a posture most agreeable to Margaret, who could bring herself to endure her father's effusions of tenderness, and the general tone of his conversation, so that he was not overheard by others. In the same manner, she bore with laudable patience the teasing attentions which he addressed to her at table, noticed some of his particular courtiers, inquired after others, led the way to his favourite subjects of conversation on poetry, painting, and music, till the good king was as much delighted with the unwonted civilities of his daughter, as ever was lover with the favourable confessions of his mistress, when, after years of warm courtship, the ice of her bosom is at length thawed. It cost the haughty Margaret an effort to bend herself to play this part—her pride rebuked her for stooping to flatter her father's foibles, in order to bring him over to the resignation of his dominions—yet, having undertaken to do so, and so much having been already hazarded upon this sole remaining chance of success in an attack upon England, she saw, or was willing to see, no alternative.

Betwixt the banquet, and the ball by which it was to be followed, the queen sought an opportunity of speaking to Arthur.

'Bad news, my sage counsellor,' she said. 'The Carmelite never returned to the convent after the service was over. Having learned that you had come back in great haste, he had, I suppose, concluded he might stand in suspicion. so he left the Convent of Mont Saint Victoire.'

'We must hasten the measures which your Majesty has resolved to adopt,' answered Arthur.

'I will speak with my father to-morrow. Meanwhile, you must enjoy the pleasures of the evening, for to you they may be pleasures.—Young Lady of Boisgelin, I give you this cavalier to be your partner for the evening.'

The black-eyed and pretty Provençale curtseyed with due decorum, and glanced at the handsome young Englishman with an eye of approbation; but whether afraid of his character as a philosopher, or his doubtful rank, added the saving clause,—'If my mother approves.'

'Your mother, damsel, will scarce, I think, disapprove of any partner whom you receive from the hands of Margaret of Anjou. Happy privilege of youth,' she added, with a sigh, as the youthful couple went off to take their place in the *bransle*,* 'which can snatch a flower even on the roughest road.'

Arthur acquitted himself so well during the evening, that perhaps the young countess was only sorry that so gay and handsome a gallant

* Bransle, in English, brawl—a species of dance.

limited his compliments and attentions within the cold bounds of that courtesy enjoined by the rules of ceremony.

CHAPTER XXXII.

> For I have given here my full consent
> To undeck the pompous body of a king,
> Make glory base, and sovereignty a slave,
> Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.
> RICHARD II.

THE next day opened a grave scene. King René had not forgotten to arrange the pleasures of the day, when, to his horror and discomfiture, Margaret demanded an interview upon serious business. If there was a proposition in the world which René from his soul detested, it was any that related to the very name of business.

'What was it that his child wanted?' he said. 'Was it money? He would give her whatever ready sums he had, though he owned his exchequer was somewhat bare; yet he had received his income for the season. It was ten thousand crowns. How much should she desire to be paid to her?—the half—three parts—or the whole? All was at her command.'

'Alas! my dear father,' said Margaret, 'it is not my affairs, but your own, on which I desire to speak with you.'

'If the affairs are mine,' said René, 'I am surely master to put them off to another day—to some rainy dull day, fit for no better purpose. See, my love, the hawking party are all on their steeds and ready—the horses are neighing and pawing—the gallants and maidens mounted, and ready with hawk on fist—the spaniels struggling in the leash. It were a sin, with wind and weather to friend, to lose so lovely a morning.'

'Let them ride their way,' said Queen Margaret, 'and find their sport; for the matter I have to speak concerning involves honour and rank, life and means of living.'

'Nay, but I have to hear and judge between Calezon and John of Acqua Mortis, the two most celebrated Troubadours.'

'Postpone their cause till to-morrow,' said Margaret, 'and dedicate an hour or two to more important affairs.'

'If you are peremptory,' replied King René, 'you are aware, my child, I cannot say you nay.'

And with reluctance he gave orders for the hawkers to go on and follow their sport, as he could not attend them that day.

The old king then suffered himself, like an unwilling greyhound withheld from the chase, to be led into a separate apartment. To insure privacy, Margaret stationed her secretary Mordaunt, with Arthur, in an antechamber, giving them orders to prevent all intrusion.

'Nay, for myself, Margaret,' said the good-natured old man, 'since it must be, I consent to be put *au secret;* but why keep old Mordaunt from taking a walk in this beautiful morning; and why prevent young Arthur from going forth with the rest? I promise you, though they term him a philosopher, yet he showed as light a pair of heels last night with the young Countess de Boisgelin, as any gallant in Provence.'

'They are come from a country,' said Margaret, 'in which men are trained from infancy to prefer their duty to their pleasure.'

The poor king, led into the council-closet, saw, with internal shuddering, the fatal cabinet of ebony, bound with silver, which had never been opened but to overwhelm him with weariness, and dolefully calculated how many yawns he must strangle ere he sustained the consideration of its contents. They proved, however, when laid before him, of a kind that excited even his interest, though painfully.

His daughter presented him with a short and clear view of the debts which were secured on his dominions, and for which they were mortgaged in various pieces and parcels. She then showed him, by another schedule, the large claims of which payment was instantly demanded, to discharge which no funds could be found or assigned. The king defended himself like others in his forlorn situation. To every claim of six, seven, or eight thousand ducats, he replied by the assertion, that he had ten thousand crowns in his chancery, and showed some reluctance to be convinced, till repeatedly urged upon him, that the same sum could not be adequate to the discharge of thirty times the amount.

'Then,' said the king, somewhat impatiently, 'why not pay off those who are most pressing, and let the others wait till receipts come round?'

'It is a practice which has been too often resorted to,' replied the queen, 'and it is but a part of honesty to pay creditors who have advanced their all in your Grace's service.'

'But are we not,' said René, 'King of both the Sicilies, Naples, Arragon, and Jerusalem? And why is the monarch of such fair kingdoms to be pushed to the wall, like a bankrupt yeoman, for a few bags of paltry crowns?'

'You are indeed monarch of these kingdoms,' said Margaret; 'but is it necessary to remind your Majesty that it is but as I am Queen of England, in which I have not an acre of land, and cannot command a penny of revenue? You have no dominions which are a source of revenue, save those which you see in this scroll, with an exact list of the income they afford. It is totally inadequate, you see, to maintain your state and to pay the large engagements incurred to former creditors.'

'It is cruel to press me to the wall thus,' said the poor king. 'What can I do? If I am poor, I cannot help it. I am sure I would pay the debts you talk of, if I knew the way.'

'Royal father, I will show it you.—Resign your useless and unavailing dignity, which, with the pretensions attending it, serves but to make your miseries ridiculous. Resign your rights as a sovereign, and the income which cannot be stretched out to the empty excesses of a beggarly court, will enable you to enjoy, in ease and opulence, all the pleasures you most delight in, as a private baron.'

'Margaret, you speak folly,' answered René, somewhat sternly. 'A king and his people are bound by ties which neither can sever without

guilt. My subjects are my flock, I am their shepherd. They are assigned to my governance by Heaven, and I dare not renounce the charge of protecting them.'

'Were you in condition to do so,' answered the queen, 'Margaret would bid you fight to the death. But don your harness, long disused —mount your war-steed—cry, René for Provence! and see if a hundred men will gather round your standard. Your fortresses are in the hands of strangers; army you have none; your vassals may have good-will, but they lack all military skill and soldier-like discipline. You stand but the mere skeleton of monarchy, which France or Burgundy may prostrate on the earth, whichever first puts forth his arm to throw it down.'

The tears trickled fast down the old king's cheeks, when this unflattering prospect was set before him, and he could not forbear owning his total want of power to defend himself and his dominions, and admitting that he had often thought of the necessity of compounding for his resignation with one of his powerful neighbours.

'It was thy interest, Margaret, harsh and severe as you are, which prevented my entering, before now, into measures most painful to my feelings, but perhaps best calculated for my advantage. But I had hoped it would hold on for my day; and thou, my child, with the talents Heaven has given thee, wouldst, I thought, have found remedy for distresses which I cannot escape, otherwise than by shunning the thoughts of them.'

'If it is in earnest you speak of my interest,' said Margaret, 'know that your resigning Provence will satisfy the nearest, and almost the only wish that my bosom can form; but, so judge me Heaven, as it is on your account, gracious sire, as well as mine, that I advise your compliance.'

'Say no more on't, child; give me the parchment of resignation, and I will sign it: I see thou hast it ready drawn; let us sign it, and then we will overtake the hawkers. We must suffer woe, but there is little need to sit down and weep for it.'

'Do you not ask,' said Margaret, surprised at his apathy, 'to whom you cede your dominions?'

'What boots it,' answered the king, 'since they must be no more my own? It must be either to Charles of Burgundy, or my nephew Louis—both powerful and politic princes. God send my poor people may have no cause to wish their old man back again, whose only pleasure was to see them happy and mirthful.'

'It is to Burgundy you resign Provence,' said Margaret.

'I would have preferred him,' answered René; 'he is fierce, but not malignant. One word more—are my subjects' privileges and immunities fully secured?'

'Amply,' replied the queen; 'and your own wants of all kinds honourably provided for. I would not leave the stipulations in your favour in blank, though I might perhaps have trusted Charles of Burgundy, where money alone is concerned.'

'I ask not for myself—with my viol and my pencil, René the Troubadour will be as happy as ever was René the King.'

So saying, with practical philosophy he whistled the burden of his last composed ariette, and signed away the rest of his royal possessions without pulling off his glove, or even reading the instrument.

'What is this?' he said, looking at another and separate parchment of much briefer contents. 'Must my kinsman Charles have both the Sicilies, Catalonia, Naples, and Jerusalem, as well as the poor remainder of Provence? Methinks, in decency, some greater extent of parchment should have been allowed to so ample a cession.'

'That deed,' said Margaret, 'only disowns and relinquishes all countenance of Ferrand de Vaudemont's rash attempt on Lorraine, and renounces all quarrel on that account against Charles of Burgundy.'

For once Margaret miscalculated the tractability of her father's temper. René positively started, coloured, and stammered with passion, as he interrupted her,—'*Only* disown—*only* relinquish—*only* renounce the cause of my grandchild, the son of my dear Yolande—his rightful claims on his mother's inheritance!—Margaret, I am ashamed for thee. Thy pride is an excuse for thy evil temper; but what is pride worth which can stoop to commit an act of dishonourable meanness? To desert, nay, disown, my own flesh and blood, because the youth is a bold knight under shield, and disposed to battle for his right—I were worthy that harp and horn rung out shame on me, should I listen to thee.'

Margaret was overcome in some measure by the old man's unexpected opposition. She endeavoured, however, to show that there was no occasion, in point of honour, why René should engage in the cause of a wild adventurer, whose right, be it good be it bad, was only upheld by some petty and underhand supplies of money from France, and the countenance of a few of the restless banditti who inhabit the borders of all nations. But ere René could answer, voices, raised to an unusual pitch, were heard in the antechamber, the door of which was flung open by an armed knight, covered with dust, who exhibited all the marks of a long journey.

'Here I am,' he said, 'father of my mother—behold your grandson—Ferrand de Vaudemont; the son of your lost Yolande kneels at your feet, and implores a blessing on him and his enterprise.'

'Thou hast it,' replied René, 'and may it prosper with thee, gallant youth, image of thy sainted mother—my blessings, my prayers, my hopes, go with you!'

'And you, fair aunt of England,' said the young knight, addressing Margaret, 'you who are yourself dispossessed by traitors, will you not own the cause of a kinsman who is struggling for his inheritance?'

'I wish all good to your person, fair nephew,' answered the Queen of England, 'although your features are strange to me. But to advise this old man to adopt your cause, when it is desperate in the eyes of all wise men, were impious madness.'

'Is my cause then so desperate?' said Ferrand; 'forgive me if I was not aware of it. And does

my aunt Margaret say this, whose strength of mind supported Lancaster so long, after the spirits of her warriors had been quelled by defeat? What—forgive me, for my cause must be pleaded—what would you have said had my mother Yolande been capable to advise her father to disown your own Edward, had God permitted him to reach Provence in safety?'

'Edward,' said Margaret, weeping as she spoke, 'was incapable of desiring his friends to espouse a quarrel that was irremediable. His, too, was a cause for which mighty princes and peers laid lance in rest.'

'Yet Heaven blessed it not'—said Vaudemont.

'Thine,' continued Margaret, 'is but embraced by the robber nobles of Germany, the upstart burghers of the Rhine cities, the paltry and clownish Confederates of the Cantons.'

'But Heaven *has blessed it,*' replied Vaudemont. 'Know, proud woman, that I come to interrupt your treacherous intrigues; no petty adventurer, subsisting and maintaining warfare by sleight rather than force, but a conqueror from a bloody field of battle, in which Heaven has tamed the pride of the tyrant of Burgundy.'

'It is false!' said the queen, starting; 'I believe it not.'

'It is true,' said De Vaudemont, 'as true as heaven is above us.—It is four days since I left the field of Granson, heaped with Burgundy's mercenaries—his wealth, his jewels, his plate, his magnificent decorations, the prize of the poor Swiss, who scarce can tell their value. Know you this, Queen Margaret?' continued the young soldier, showing the well-known jewel which decorated the Duke's order of the Golden Fleece; 'think you not the lion was closely hunted when he left such trophies as these behind him?'

Margaret looked, with dazzled eyes and bewildered thoughts, upon a token which confirmed the Duke's defeat, and the extinction of her last hopes. Her father, on the contrary, was struck with the heroism of the young warrior, a quality which, except as it existed in his daughter Margaret, had, he feared, taken leave of his family. Admiring in his heart the youth who exposed himself to danger for the meed of praise, almost as much as he did the poets by whom the warrior's fame is rendered immortal, he hugged his grandson to his bosom, bidding him 'gird on his sword in strength,' and assuring him, if money could advance his affairs, he, King René, could command ten thousand crowns, any part, or the whole of which was at Ferrand's command; thus giving proof of what had been said of him, that his head was incapable of containing two ideas at the same time.

We return to Arthur, who, with the Queen of England's secretary Mordaunt, had been not a little surprised by the entrance of the Count de Vaudemont, calling himself Duke of Lorraine, into the anteroom in which they kept a kind of guard, followed by a tall strong Swiss, with a huge halberd over his shoulder. The prince naming himself, Arthur did not think it becoming to oppose his entrance to the presence of his grandfather and aunt, especially as it was obvious that his opposition must have created an affray. In the huge staring halberdier, who had sense enough to remain in the anteroom, Arthur was not a little surprised to recognise Sigismund Biederman, who, after staring wildly at him for a moment, like a dog which suddenly recognises a favourite, rushed up to the young Englishman with a wild cry of gladness, and in hurried accents told him how happy he was to meet with him, and that he had matters of importance to tell him. It was at no time easy for Sigismund to arrange his ideas, and now they were altogether confused by the triumphant joy which he expressed for the recent victory of his countrymen over the Duke of Burgundy; and it was with wonder that Arthur heard his confused and rude, but faithful tale.

'Look you, King Arthur, the Duke had come up with his huge army as far as Granson, which is near the outlet of the great lake of Neufchatel. There were five or six hundred Confederates in the place, and they held it till provisions failed, and then you know they were forced to give it over. But though hunger is hard to bear, they had better have borne it a day or two longer, for the butcher Charles hung them all up by the neck, upon trees round the place,—and there was no swallowing for them, you know, after such usage as that. Meanwhile all was busy on our hills, and every man that had a sword or lance accoutred himself with it. We met at Neufchatel, and some Germans joined us with the noble Duke of Lorraine. Ah, King Arthur, there is a leader!—we all think him second but to Rudolph of Donnerhugel—you saw him even now—it was he that went into that room—and you saw him before—it is he that was the Blue Knight of Bâle; but we called him Laurenz then, for Rudolph said his presence among us must not be known to our father, and I did not know myself at that time who he really was. Well, when we came to Neufchatel we were a goodly company; we were fifteen thousand stout Confederates, and of others, Germans and Lorraine men, I will warrant you five thousand more. We heard that the Burgundian was sixty thousand in the field; but we heard at the same time that Charles had hung up our brethren like dogs, and the man was not among us—among the Confederates, I mean—who would stay to count heads, when the question was to avenge them. I would you could have heard the roar of fifteen thousand Swiss demanding to be led against the butcher of their brethren! My father himself, who, you know, is usually so eager for peace, now gave the first voice for battle; so, in the grey of the morning, we descended the lake towards Granson, with tears in our eyes and weapons in our hands, determined to have death or vengeance. We came to a sort of strait, between Vauxmoreux and the lake; there were horse on the level ground between the mountain and the lake; and a large body of infantry on the side of the hill. The Duke of Lorraine and his followers engaged the horse, while we climbed the hill to dispossess the infantry. It was with us the affair of a moment. Every man of us was at home among the crags, and Charles's men were stuck among them as thou wert, Arthur, when thou didst

first come to Geierstein. But there were no kind maidens to lend them their hands to help them down. No, no—There were pikes, clubs, and halberds, many a one, to dash and thrust them from places where they could hardly keep their feet had there been no one to disturb them. So the horsemen, pushed by the Lorrainers, and seeing us upon their flanks, fled as fast as their horses could carry them. Then we drew together again on a fair field, which is *buon campagna*, as the Italian says, where the hills retire from the lake. But lo you, we had scarce arrayed our ranks, when we heard such a din and clash of instruments, such a trample of their great horses, such a shouting and crying of men, as if all the soldiers and all the minstrels in France and Germany were striving which should make the loudest noise. Then there was a huge cloud of dust approaching us, and we began to see we must do or die, for this was Charles and his whole army come to support his vanguard. A blast from the mountain dispersed the dust, for they had halted to prepare for battle. O, good Arthur! you would have given ten years of life but to have seen the sight. There were thousands of horse, all in complete array, glancing against the sun, and hundreds of knights with crowns of gold and silver on their helmets, and thick masses of spears on foot, and cannon, as they call them. I did not know what things they were, which they drew on heavily with bullocks, and placed before their army, but I knew more of them before the morning was over. Well, we were ordered to draw up in a hollow square, as we are taught at exercise, and before we pushed forwards, we were commanded, as is the godly rule and guise of our warfare, to kneel down and pray to God, Our Lady, and the blessed saints; and we afterwards learned that Charles, in his arrogance, thought we asked for mercy. Ha! ha! ha! a proper jest. If my father once knelt to him, it was for the sake of Christian blood and godly peace; but on the field of battle Arnold Biederman would not have knelt to him and his whole chivalry, though he had stood alone with his sons on that field. Well, but Charles, supposing we asked grace, was determined to show us that we had asked it at a graceless face, for he cried, "Fire my cannon on the coward slaves; it is all the mercy they have to expect from me!"—Bang—bang—bang—off went the things I told you of, like thunder and lightning, and some mischief they did, but the less that we were kneeling; and the saints doubtless gave the huge balls a hoist over the heads of those who were asking grace from them, but from no mortal creatures. So we had the signal to rise and rush on, and I promise you there were no sluggards. Every man felt ten men's strength. My halberd is no child's toy—if you have forgotten it, there it is—and yet it trembled in my grasp as if it had been a willow-wand to drive cows with. On we went, when suddenly the cannon were silent, and the earth shook with another and continued growl and battering, like thunder under ground. It was the men-at-arms rushing to charge us. But our leaders knew their trade, and had seen such a sight before—It was, Halt, halt—kneel down in the front — stoop in the second rank — close shoulder to shoulder like brethren, lean all spears forward, and receive them like an iron wall! On they rushed, and there was a rending of lances that would have served the Unterwalden old women with splinters of firewood for a twelvemonth. Down went armed horse—down went accoutred knight—down went banner and bannerman—down went peaked boot and crowned helmet, and of those who fell not a man escaped with life. So they drew off in confusion, and were getting in order to charge again, when the noble Duke Ferrand and his horsemen dashed at them in their own way, and we moved onward to support him. Thus on we pressed, and the foot hardly waited for us, seeing their cavalry so handled. Then if you had seen the dust and heard the blows! the noise of a hundred thousand thrashers, the flight of the chaff which they drive about, would be but a type of it. On my word, I almost thought it shame to dash about my halberd, the rout was so helplessly piteous. Hundreds were slain unresisting, and the whole army was in complete flight.'

'My father—my father!' exclaimed Arthur; 'in such a rout, what can have become of him?'

'He escaped safely,' said the Swiss; 'fled with Charles.'

'It must have been a bloody field ere he fled,' replied the Englishman.

'Nay,' answered Sigismund, 'he took no part in the fight, but merely remained by Charles; and prisoners said it was well for us, for that he is a man of great counsel and action in the wars. And as to flying, a man in such a matter must go back if he cannot press forward, and there is no shame in it, especially if you be not engaged in your own person.'

As he spoke thus, their conversation was interrupted by Mordaunt, with 'Hush, hush—the King and Queen come forth.'

'What am I to do?' said Sigismund, in some alarm. 'I care not for the Duke of Lorraine; but what am I to do when kings and queens enter?'

'Do nothing but rise, unbonnet yourself, and be silent.'

Sigismund did as he was directed.

King René came forth arm in arm with his grandson; and Margaret followed, with deep disappointment and vexation on her brow. She signed to Arthur as she passed, and said to him—'Make thyself master of the truth of this most unexpected news, and bring the particulars to me. Mordaunt will introduce thee.'

She then cast a look on the young Swiss, and replied courteously to his awkward salutation. The royal party then left the room, René bent on carrying his grandson to the sporting party, which had been interrupted, and Margaret to seek the solitude of her private apartment, and await the confirmation of what she regarded as evil tidings.

They had no sooner passed, than Sigismund observed,—'And so that is a King and Queen!—Peste! the King looks somewhat like old Jacomo, the violer, that used to scrape on the fiddle to us when he came to Geierstein in his rounds. But the Queen is a stately creature. The chief cow of the herd, who carries the

bouquets and garlands, and leads the rest to the chalet, has not a statelier pace. And how deftly you approached her and spoke to her! I could not have done it with so much grace—but it is like that you have served apprentice to the court trade?'

'Leave that for the present, good Sigismund,' answered Arthur, 'and tell me more of this battle.'

'By Saint Mary, but I must have some victuals and drink first,' said Sigismund, 'if your credit in this fine place reaches so far.'

'Doubt it not, Sigismund,' said Arthur; and, by the intervention of Mordaunt, he easily procured, in a more retired apartment, a collation and wine, to which the young Biederman did great honour, smacking his lips with much gusto after the delicious wines, to which, in spite of his father's ascetic precepts, his palate was beginning to be considerably formed and habituated. When he found himself alone with a flask of *côté roti* and a biscuit, and his friend Arthur, he was easily led to continue his tale of conquest.

'Well—where was I?—O, where we broke their infantry—well—they never rallied, and fell into greater confusion at every step—and we might have slaughtered one-half of them, had we not stopped to examine Charles's camp. Mercy on us, Arthur, what a sight was there! Every pavilion was full of rich clothes, splendid armour, and great dishes and flagons, which some men said were of silver; but I knew there was not so much silver in the world, and was sure they must be of pewter, rarely burnished. Here there were hosts of laced lacqueys, and grooms, and pages, and as many attendants as there were soldiers in the army; and thousands, for what I knew, of pretty maidens. By the same token, both menials and maidens placed themselves at the disposal of the victors; but I promise you that my father was right severe on any who would abuse the rights of war. But some of our young men did not mind him, till he taught them obedience with the staff of his halberd. Well, Arthur, there was fine plundering, for the Germans and French that were with us rifled everything, and some of our men followed the example—it is very catching—So I got into Charles's own pavilion, where Rudolph and some of his people were trying to keep out every one, that he might have the spoiling of it himself, I think; but neither he nor any Bernese of them all dared lay truncheon over my pate; so I entered, and saw them putting piles of pewter trenchers, so clean as to look like silver, into chests and trunks. I pressed through them into the inner place, and there was Charles's pallet-bed—I will do him justice, it was the only hard one in his camp—and there were fine sparkling stones and pebbles lying about among gauntlets, boots, vambraces, and such-like gear—So I thought of your father and you, and looked for something, when, what should I see but my old friend here' (here he drew Queen Margaret's necklace from his bosom), 'which I knew, because, you remember, I recovered it from the Scharfgerichter at Breisach.—"Oho! you pretty sparklers," said I, "you shall be Burgundian no longer, but go back to my honest English friends," and therefore'——

'It is of immense value,' said Arthur, 'and belongs not to my father or to me, but to the Queen you saw but now.'

'And she will become it rarely,' answered Sigismund. 'Were she but a score or a score and a half years younger, she were a gallant wife for a Swiss landholder. I would warrant her to keep his household in high order.'

'She will reward thee liberally for recovering her property,' said Arthur, scarce suppressing a smile at the idea of the proud Margaret becoming the housewife of a Swiss shepherd.

'How—reward!' said the Swiss. 'Bethink thee, I am Sigismund Biederman, the son of the Landamman of Unterwalden—I am not a base lanzknecht, to be paid for courtesy with piastres. Let her grant me a kind word of thanks, or the matter of a kiss, and I am well contented.'

'A kiss of her hand, perhaps,' said Arthur, again smiling at his friend's simplicity.

'Umph, the hand! Well, it may do for a queen of some fifty years and odd, but would be poor homage to a Queen of May.'

Arthur here brought back the youth to the subject of his battle, and learned that the slaughter of the Duke's forces in the flight had been in no degree equal to the importance of the action.

'Many rode off on horseback,' said Sigismund; 'and our German *reiters* flew on the spoil when they should have followed the chase. And besides, to speak truth, Charles's camp delayed our very selves in the pursuit; but had we gone half a mile farther, and seen our friends hanging on trees, not a Confederate would have stopped from the chase while he had limbs to carry him in pursuit.'

'And what has become of the Duke?'

'Charles has retreated into Burgundy, like a boar who has felt the touch of the spear, and is more enraged than hurt; but is, they say, sad and sulky. Others report that he has collected all his scattered army, and immense forces besides, and has screwed his subjects to give him money, so that we may expect another brush. But all Switzerland will join us after such a victory.'

'And my father is with him?' said Arthur.

'Truly he is, and has in a right godly manner tried to set afoot a treaty of peace with my own father. But it will scarce succeed. Charles is as mad as ever; and our people are right proud of our victory, and so they well may. Nevertheless, my father for ever preaches that such victories, and such heaps of wealth, will change our ancient manners, and that the ploughman will leave his labour to turn soldier. He says much about it; but why money, choice meat and wine, and fine clothing, should do so much harm, I cannot bring my poor brains to see—And many better heads than mine are as much puzzled—Here's to you, friend Arthur—This is choice liquor!'

'And what brings you and your general, Prince Ferrand, post to Nancy?' said the young Englishman.

'Faith, you are yourself the cause of our journey.'

'I the cause?' said Arthur.—'Why, how could that be?'

'Why, it is said you and Queen Margaret are urging this old fiddling King René to yield up his territories to Charles, and to disown Ferrand in his claim upon Lorraine. And the Duke of Lorraine sent a man that you know well—that is, you do not know *him*, but you know some of his family, and he knows more of you than you wot—to put a spoke in your wheel, and prevent your getting for Charles the county of Provence, or preventing Ferrand being troubled or traversed in his natural rights over Lorraine.'

'On my word, Sigismund, I cannot comprehend you,' said Arthur.

'Well,' replied the Swiss, 'my lot is a hard one. All our house say that I can comprehend nothing, and I shall be next told that nobody can comprehend me. Well, in plain language, I mean my uncle, Count Albert, as he calls himself, of Geierstein—my father's brother.'

'Anne of Geierstein's father!' echoed Arthur.

'Ay, truly; I thought we should find some mark to make you know him by.'

'But I never saw him.'

Ay, but you have, though—An able man he is, and knows more of every man's business than the man does himself. O, it was not for nothing that he married the daughter of a Salamander.'

'Pshaw, Sigismund, how can you believe that nonsense?' answered Arthur.

'Rudolph told me you were as much bewildered as I was that night at Graffs-lust,' answered the Swiss.

'If I were so, I was the greater ass for my pains,' answered Arthur.

'Well, but this uncle of mine has got some of the old conjuring books from the library at Arnheim, and they say he can pass from place to place with more than mortal speed; and that he is helped in his designs by mightier counsellors than mere men. Always, however, though so ably and highly endowed, his gifts, whether coming from a lawful or unlawful quarter, bring him no abiding advantage. He is eternally plunged into strife and danger.'

'I know few particulars of his life,' said Arthur, disguising as much as he could his anxiety to hear more of him; 'but I have heard that he left Switzerland to join the Emperor.'

'True,' answered the young Swiss, 'and married the young Baroness of Arnheim—but afterwards he incurred my namesake's imperial displeasure, and not less that of the Duke of Austria. They say you cannot live in Rome and strive with the Pope; so my uncle thought it best to cross the Rhine, and betake himself to Charles's court, who willingly received noblemen from all countries, so that they had good sounding names, with the title of Count, Marquis, Baron, or such-like, to march in front of them. So my uncle was most kindly received; but within this year or two all this friendship has been broken up. Uncle Albert obtained a great lead in some mysterious societies of which Charles disapproved, and set so hard at my poor uncle, that he was fain to take orders and shave his hair, rather than lose his head. But though he cut off his hair, his brain remains as busy as ever; and although the Duke suffered him to be at large, yet he found him so often in his way, that all men believed he waited but an excuse for seizing upon him and putting him to death. But my uncle persists that he fears not Charles; and that, Duke as he is, Charles has more occasion to be afraid of him.—And so you saw how boldly he played his part at La Ferette.'

'By Saint George of Windsor!' exclaimed Arthur, 'the Black Priest of Saint Paul's!'

'O ho! you understand me now? Well, he took it upon him that Charles would not dare to punish him for his share in De Hagenbach's death; and no more did he, although uncle Albert sat and voted in the Estates of Burgundy, and stirred them up all he could to refuse giving Charles the money he asked of them. But when the Swiss war broke out, uncle Albert became assured his being a clergyman would be no longer his protection, and that the Duke intended to have him accused of corresponding with his brother and countrymen; and so he appeared suddenly in Ferrand's camp at Neufchatel, and sent a message to Charles that he renounced his allegiance, and bade him defiance.'

'A singular story of an active and versatile man,' said the young Englishman.

'O, you may seek the world for a man like uncle Albert. Then he knows everything; and he told Duke Ferrand what you were about here, and offered to go and bring more certain information—ay, though he left the Swiss camp but five or six days before the battle, and the distance between Arles and Neufchatel be four hundred miles complete, yet he met him on his return, when Duke Ferrand, with me to show him the way, was hastening hitherward, having set off from the very field of battle.'

'Met him!' said Arthur—'met whom?—met the Black Priest of Saint Paul's?'

'Ay, I mean so,' replied Sigismund; 'but he was habited as a Carmelite monk.'

'A Carmelite!' said Arthur, a sudden light flashing on him; 'and I was so blind as to recommend his services to the Queen! I remember well that he kept his face much concealed in his cowl—and I, foolish beast, to fall so grossly into the snare!—And yet perhaps it is as well the transaction was interrupted, since I fear, if carried successfully through, all must have been disconcerted by this astounding defeat.'

Their conversation had thus far proceeded, when Mordaunt, appearing, summoned Arthur to his royal mistress's apartment. In that gay palace, a gloomy room, whose windows looked upon some part of the ruins of the Roman edifice, but excluded every other object save broken walls and tottering columns, was the retreat which Margaret had chosen for her own. She received Arthur with a kindness, more touching that it was the inmate of so proud and fiery a disposition,—of a heart assailed with many woes, and feeling them severely.

'Alas, poor Arthur!' she said, 'thy life begins where thy father's threatens to end, in useless labour to save a sinking vessel. The rushing leak pours in its waters faster than human force can lighten or discharge. All—

all goes wrong, when our unhappy cause becomes connected with it — Strength becomes weakness, wisdom folly, and valour cowardice. The Duke of Burgundy, hitherto victorious in all his bold undertakings, has but to entertain the momentary thought of yielding succour to Lancaster, and behold his sword is broken by a peasant's flail; and his disciplined army, held to be the finest in the world, flies like chaff before the wind; while their spoils are divided by renegade German hirelings and barbarous Alpine shepherds! — What more hast thou learned of this strange tale?'

'Little, madam, but what you have heard. The worst additions are, that the battle was shamefully cowardlike, and completely lost, with every advantage to have won it—The best, that the Burgundian army has been rather dispersed than destroyed, and that the Duke himself has escaped, and is rallying his forces in Upper Burgundy.'

'To sustain a new defeat, or engage in a protracted and doubtful contest, fatal to his reputation as defeat itself. Where is thy father?'

'With the Duke, madam, as I have been informed,' replied Arthur.

'Hie to him, and say I charge him to look after his own safety, and care no further for my interests. This last blow has sunk me—I am without an ally, without a friend, without treasure'——

'Not so, madam,' replied Arthur. 'One piece of good fortune has brought back to your Grace this inestimable relic of your fortunes.'— And, producing the precious necklace, he gave the history of its recovery.

'I rejoice at the chance which has restored these diamonds,' said the queen, 'that in point of gratitude, at least, I may not be utterly bankrupt. Carry them to your father—tell him my schemes are over—and my heart, which so long clung to hope, is broken at last.—Tell him the trinkets are his own, and to his own use let him apply them. They will but poorly repay the noble Earldom of Oxford, lost in the cause of her who sends them.'

'Royal madam,' said the youth, 'be assured my father would sooner live by service as a *schwarzreiter*, than become a burden on your misfortunes.'

'He never yet disobeyed command of mine,' said Margaret; 'and this is the last I will lay upon him. If he is too rich or too proud to benefit by his Queen's behest, he will find enough of poor Lancastrians who have fewer means or fewer scruples.'

'There is yet a circumstance I have to communicate,' said Arthur, and recounted the history of Albert of Geierstein, and the disguise of a Carmelite monk.

'Are you such a fool,' answered the queen, 'as to suppose this man has any supernatural powers to aid him in his ambitious projects and his hasty journeys?'

'No, madam—but it is whispered that the Count Albert of Geierstein, or this Black Priest of Saint Paul's, is a chief amongst the secret societies of Germany, which even princes dread whilst they hate them; for the man that can command a hundred daggers must be feared even by those who rule thousands of swords.'

'Can this person,' said the queen, 'being now a churchman, retain authority amongst those who deal in life and death? It is contrary to the canons.'

'It would seem so, royal madam; but everything in these dark institutions differs from what is practised in the light of day. Prelates are often heads of a Vehmique bench, and the Archbishop of Cologne exercises the dreadful office of their chief as Duke of Westphalia, the principal region in which these societies flourish.* Such privileges attach to the secret influence of the chiefs of this dark association, as may well seem supernatural to those who are unapprised of circumstances of which men shun to speak in plain terms.'

'Let him be wizard or assassin,' said the queen, 'I thank him for having contributed to interrupt my plan of the old man's cession of Provence, which, as events stand, would have stripped René of his dominions without furthering our plan of invading England.—Once more, be stirring with the dawn, and bend thy way back to thy father, and charge him to care for himself, and think no more of me. Bretagne, where the heir of Lancaster resides, will be the safest place of refuge for its bravest followers. Along the Rhine, the Invisible Tribunal, it would seem, haunts both shores, and to be innocent of ill is no security; even here the proposed treaty with Burgundy may take air, and the Provençaux carry daggers as well as crooks and pipes. But I hear the horses fast returning from the hawking party, and the silly old man, forgetting all the eventful proceedings of the day, whistling as he ascends the steps. Well, we will soon part, and my removal will be, I think, a relief to him. Prepare for banquet and ball, for noise and nonsense—above all, to bid adieu to Aix with morning dawn.'

Thus dismissed from the queen's presence, Arthur's first care was to summon Thiebault to have all things in readiness for his departure; his next, to prepare himself for the pleasures of the evening, not, perhaps, so heavily affected by the failure of his negotiation as to be incapable of consolation in such a scene; for the truth was, that his mind secretly revolted at the thoughts of the simple old king being despoiled of his dominions to further an invasion of England, in which, whatever interest he might have in his daughter's rights, there was little chance of success.

If such feelings were censurable, they had their punishment. Although few knew how completely the arrival of the Duke of Lorraine, and the intelligence he brought with him, had disconcerted the plans of Queen Margaret, it was well known there had been little love be-

* The Archbishop of Cologne was recognised as head of all the Free Tribunals (*i.e.* the Vehmic benches) in Westphalia, by a writ of privilege granted in 1335 by the Emperor Charles IV. Winceslaus confirmed this Act by a privilege dated 1382, in which the Archbishop is termed Grand Master of the Vehme, or Grand Inquisitor. And this prelate and other priests were encouraged to exercise such office by Pope Boniface III., whose ecclesiastical discipline permitted them in such cases to assume the right of judging in matters of life and death.

twixt the queen and his mother Yolande; and the young prince found himself at the head of a numerous party in the court of his grandfather, who disliked his aunt's haughty manners, and were wearied by the unceasing melancholy of her looks and conversation, and her undisguised contempt of the frivolities which passed around her. Ferrand, besides, was young, handsome, a victor just arrived from a field of battle, fought gloriously, and gained against all chances to the contrary. That he was a general favourite, and excluded Arthur Philipson, as an adherent of the unpopular queen, from the notice her influence had on a former evening procured him, was only a natural consequence of their relative condition. But what somewhat hurt Arthur's feelings was to see his friend Sigismund the Simple, as his brethren called him, shining with the reflected glory of the Duke Ferrand of Lorraine, who introduced to all the ladies present the gallant young Swiss as Count Sigismund of Geierstein. His care had procured for his follower a dress rather more suitable for such a scene than the country attire of the count, otherwise Sigismund Biederman.

For a certain time, whatever of novelty is introduced into society is pleasing, though it has nothing else to recommend it. The Swiss were little known personally out of their own country, but they were much talked of; it was a recommendation to be of that country. Sigismund's manners were blunt; a mixture of awkwardness and rudeness, which were termed frankness during the moment of his favour. He spoke bad French and worse Italian — it gave *naïveté* to all he said. His limbs were too bulky to be elegant; his dancing, for Count Sigismund failed not to dance, was the bounding and gambolling of a young elephant; yet they were preferred to the handsome proportions and courtly movements of the youthful Englishman, even by the black-eyed countess, in whose good graces Arthur had made some progress on the preceding evening. Arthur, thus thrown into the shade, felt as Mr. Pepys afterwards did when he tore his camlet cloak—the damage was not great, but it troubled him.

Nevertheless, the passing evening brought him some revenge. There are some works of art, the defects of which are not seen till they are injudiciously placed in too strong a light. And such was the case with Sigismund the Simple. The quick-witted, though fantastic Provençaux soon found out the heaviness of his intellect and the extent of his good-nature, and amused themselves at his expense, by ironical compliments and well-veiled raillery. It is probable they would have been less delicate on the subject, had not the Swiss brought into the dancing-room along with him his eternal halberd, the size and weight and thickness of which boded little good to any one whom the owner might detect in the act of making merry at his expense. But Sigismund did no further mischief that night, except that, in achieving a superb *entrechat*, he alighted with his whole weight on the miniature foot of his pretty partner, which he well-nigh crushed to pieces.

Arthur had hitherto avoided looking towards Queen Margaret during the course of the evening, lest he should disturb her thoughts from the channel in which they were rolling, by seeming to lay a claim on her protection. But there was something so whimsical in the awkward physiognomy of the maladroit Swiss, that he could not help glancing an eye to the alcove where the queen's chair of state was placed, to see if she observed him. The very first view was such as to rivet his attention. Margaret's head was reclined on the chair, her eyes scarcely open, her features drawn up and pinched, her hands closed with effort. The English lady of honour who stood behind her—old, deaf, and dim-sighted —had not discovered anything in her mistress's position more than the abstracted and indifferent attitude with which the queen was wont to be present in body and absent in mind during the festivities of the Provençal court. But when Arthur, greatly alarmed, came behind the seat to press her attention to her mistress, she exclaimed, after a minute's investigation, 'Mother of Heaven, the Queen is dead!' And it was so. It seemed that the last fibre of life in that fiery and ambitious mind had, as she herself prophesied, given way at the same time with the last thread of political hope.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Toll, toll the bell!
Greatness is o'er,
The heart has broke,
To ache no more;
An unsubstantial pageant all—
Drop o'er the scene the funeral-pall.

OLD POEM.

THE commotion and shrieks of fear and amazement, which were excited among the ladies of the court by an event so singular and shocking, had begun to abate, and the sighs, more serious, though less intrusive, of the few English attendants of the deceased queen began to be heard, together with the groans of old King René, whose emotions were as acute as they were short-lived. The leeches had held a busy but unavailing consultation, and the body that was once a queen's was delivered to the Priest of Saint Sauveur, that beautiful church in which the spoils of pagan temples have contributed to fill up the magnificence of the Christian edifice. The stately pile was duly lighted up, and the funeral provided with such splendour as Aix could supply. The queen's papers being examined, it was found that Margaret, by disposing of jewels and living at small expense, had realized the means of making a decent provision for life for her very few English attendants. Her diamond necklace, described in her last will as in the hands of an English merchant named John Philipson, or his son, or the price thereof, if by them sold or pledged, she left to the said John Philipson and his son Arthur Philipson, with a view to the prosecution of the design which they had been destined to advance, or, if that should prove impossible, to their own use and profit. The charge of her funeral rites was wholly entrusted to Arthur, called Philipson, with a request that they should be conducted entirely

after the forms observed in England. This trust was expressed in an addition to her will, signed the very day on which she died.

Arthur lost no time in despatching Thiebault express to his father, with a letter, explaining, in such terms as he knew would be understood, the tenor of all that had happened since he came to Aix, and, above all, the death of Queen Margaret.

Finally, he requested directions for his motions, since the necessary delay occupied by the obsequies of a person of such eminent rank must detain him at Aix till he should receive them.

The old king sustained the shock of his daughter's death so easily, that on the second day after the event he was engaged in arranging a pompous procession for the funeral, and composing an elegy, to be sung to a tune also of his own composing, in honour of the deceased queen, who was likened to the goddesses of heathen mythology, and to Judith, Deborah, and all the other holy women, not to mention the saints of the Christian dispensation. It cannot be concealed that, when the first burst of grief was over, King René could not help feeling that Margaret's death cut a political knot which he might have otherwise found it difficult to untie, and permitted him to take open part with his grandson, so far, indeed, as to afford him a considerable share of the contents of the Provençal treasury, which amounted to no larger sum than ten thousand crowns. Ferrand having received the blessing of his grandfather in a form which his affairs rendered most important to him, returned to the resolutes whom he commanded; and with him, after a most loving farewell to Arthur, went the stout but simple-minded young Swiss, Sigismund Biederman.

The little court of Aix were left to their mourning. King René, for whom ceremonial and show, whether of a joyful or melancholy character, was always matter of importance, would willingly have bestowed in solemnizing the obsequies of his daughter Margaret what remained of his revenue, but was prevented from doing so, partly by remonstrances from his ministers, partly by the obstacles opposed by the young Englishman, who, acting upon the presumed will of the dead, interfered to prevent any such fantastic exhibitions being produced at the obsequies of the queen as had disgusted her during her life.

The funeral, therefore, after many days had been spent in public prayers and acts of devotion, was solemnized with the mournful magnificence due to the birth of the deceased, and with which the Church of Rome so well knows how to affect at once the eye, ear, and feelings.

Amid the various nobles who assisted on the solemn occasion, there was one who arrived just as the tolling of the great bells of Saint Sauveur had announced that the procession was already on its way to the cathedral. The stranger hastily exchanged his travelling dress for a suit of deep mourning, which was made after the fashion proper to England. So attired, he repaired to the cathedral, where the noble mien of the cavalier imposed such respect on the attendants, that he was permitted to approach close to the bier; and it was across the coffin of the queen for whom he had acted and suffered so much, that the gallant Earl of Oxford exchanged a melancholy glance with his son. The assistants, especially the English servants of Margaret, gazed on them both with respect and wonder, and the elder cavalier, in particular, seemed to them no unapt representative of the faithful subjects of England, paying their last duty at the tomb of her who had so long swayed the sceptre, if not faultlessly, yet always with a bold and resolved hand.

The last sound of the solemn dirge had died away, and almost all the funeral attendants had retired, when the father and son still lingered in mournful silence beside the remains of their sovereign. The clergy at length approached, and intimated they were about to conclude the last duties, by removing the body, which had been lately occupied and animated by so haughty and restless a spirit, to the dust, darkness, and silence of the vault, where the long-descended Counts of Provence awaited dissolution. Six priests raised the bier on their shoulders, others bore huge waxen torches before and behind the body, as they carried it down a private staircase which yawned in the floor to admit their descent. The last notes of the requiem, in which the churchmen joined, had died away along the high and fretted arches of the cathedral, the last flash of light which arose from the mouth of the vault had glimmered and disappeared, when the Earl of Oxford, taking his son by the arm, led him in silence forth into a small cloistered court behind the building, where they found themselves alone. They were silent for a few minutes, for both, and particularly the father, were deeply affected. At length the earl spoke.

'And this, then, is her end,' said he. 'Here, royal lady, all that we have planned and pledged life upon falls to pieces with thy dissolution! The heart of resolution, the head of policy, is gone; and what avails it that the limbs of the enterprise still have motion and life? Alas, Margaret of Anjou! may Heaven reward thy virtues, and absolve thee from the consequence of thine errors! Both belonged to thy station, and if thou didst hoist too high a sail in prosperity, never lived there princess who defied more proudly the storms of adversity, or bore up against them with such dauntless nobility of determination. With this event the drama has closed, and our parts, my son, are ended.'

'We bear arms, then, against the infidels, my lord?' said Arthur, with a sigh, that was, however, hardly audible.

'Not,' answered the earl, 'until I learn that Henry of Richmond, the undoubted heir of the House of Lancaster, has no occasion for my services. In these jewels, of which you wrote me, so strangely lost and recovered, I may be able to supply him with resources more needful than either your services or mine. But I return no more to the camp of the Duke of Burgundy; for in him there is no help.'

'Can it be possible that the power of so great a sovereign has been overthrown in one fatal battle?' said Arthur.

'By no means,' replied his father. 'The loss at Granson was very great; but to the strength

of Burgundy it is but a scratch on the shoulders of a giant. It is the spirit of Charles himself, his wisdom at least, and his foresight, which have given way under the mortification of a defeat by such as he accounted inconsiderable enemies, and expected to have trampled down with a few squadrons of his men-at-arms. Then his temper is become froward, peevish, and arbitrary, devoted to those who flatter, and, as there is too much reason to believe, betray him, and suspicious of those counsellors who give him wholesome advice. Even I have had my share of distrust. Thou knowest I refused to bear arms against our late hosts the Swiss; and he saw in that no reason for rejecting my attendance on his march. But since the defeat of Granson, I have observed a strong and sudden change, owing, perhaps, in some degree to the insinuations of Campo-Basso, and not a little to the injured pride of the Duke, who was unwilling that an indifferent person in my situation, and thinking as I do, should witness the disgrace of his arms. He spoke in my hearing of lukewarm friends, cold-blooded neutrals, of those who, not being with him, must be against him. I tell thee, Arthur de Vere, the Duke has said that which touched my honour so nearly, that nothing but the commands of Queen Margaret, and the interests of the House of Lancaster, could have made me remain in his camp. That is over. My royal mistress has no more occasion for my poor services; the Duke can spare no aid to our cause; and if he could, we can no longer dispose of the only bribe which might have induced him to afford us succours. The power of seconding his views on Provence is buried with Margaret of Anjou.'

'What, then, is your purpose?' demanded his son.

'I propose,' said Oxford, 'to wait at the court of King René until I can hear from the Earl of Richmond, as we must still call him. I am aware that banished men are rarely welcome at the court of a foreign prince; but I have been the faithful follower of his daughter Margaret. I only propose to reside in disguise, and desire neither notice nor maintenance; so methinks King René will not refuse to permit me to breathe the air of his dominions, until I learn in what direction fortune or duty shall call me.'

'Be assured he will not,' answered Arthur. 'René is incapable of a base or ignoble thought; and if he could despise trifles as he detests dishonour, he might be ranked high in the list of monarchs.'

This resolution being adopted, the son presented his father at King René's court, whom he privately made acquainted that he was a man of quality and a distinguished Lancastrian. The good king would in his heart have preferred a guest of lighter accomplishments and gayer temper to Oxford, a statesman and a soldier of melancholy and grave habits. The earl was conscious of this, and seldom troubled his benevolent and light-hearted host with his presence. He had, however, an opportunity of rendering the old king a favour of peculiar value. This was in conducting an important treaty betwixt René and Louis XI. of France, his nephew. Upon that crafty monarch René finally settled his principality, for the necessity of extricating his affairs by such a measure was now apparent even to himself, every thought of favouring Charles of Burgundy in the arrangement having died with Queen Margaret. The policy and wisdom of the English earl, who was entrusted with almost the sole charge of this secret and delicate measure, were of the utmost advantage to good King René, who was freed from personal and pecuniary vexations, and enabled to go piping and tabouring to his grave. Louis did not fail to propitiate the plenipotentiary, by throwing out distant hopes of aid to the efforts of the Lancastrian party in England. A faint and insecure negotiation was entered into upon the subject; and these affairs, which rendered two journeys to Paris necessary on the part of Oxford and his son, in the spring and summer of the year 1476, occupied them until that year was half spent.

In the meanwhile, the wars of the Duke of Burgundy with the Swiss Cantons and Count Ferrand of Lorraine continued to rage. Before midsummer 1476, Charles had assembled a new army of at least sixty thousand men, supported by one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, for the purpose of invading Switzerland, where the warlike mountaineers easily levied a host of thirty thousand Switzers, now accounted almost invincible, and called upon their confederates, the Free Cities on the Rhine, to support them with a powerful body of cavalry. The first efforts of Charles were successful. He overran the Pays de Vaud, and recovered most of the places which he had lost after the defeat at Granson. But instead of attempting to secure a well-defended frontier, or, what would have been still more politic, to achieve a peace upon equitable terms with his redoubtable neighbours, this most obstinate of princes resumed the purpose of penetrating into the recesses of the Alpine mountains, and chastising the mountaineers even within their own strongholds, though experience might have taught him the danger, nay, desperation, of the attempt. Thus the news received by Oxford and his son, when they returned to Aix in midsummer, was, that Duke Charles had advanced to Morat (or Murten), situated upon a lake of the same name, at the very entrance of Switzerland. Here report said that Adrian de Bubenburg, a veteran knight of Berne, commanded, and maintained the most obstinate defence, in expectation of the relief which his countrymen were hastily assembling.

'Alas, my old brother-in-arms!' said the earl to his son, on hearing these tidings, 'this town besieged, these assaults repelled, this vicinity of an enemy's country, this profound lake, these inaccessible cliffs, threaten a second part of the tragedy of Granson, more calamitous perhaps than even the former.'

On the last week of June, the capital of Provence was agitated by one of those unauthorized, yet generally received rumours, which transmit great events with incredible swiftness, as an apple flung from hand to hand by a number of people will pass a given space infinitely faster than if borne by the most rapid series of expresses. The report announced a

second defeat of the Burgundians, in terms so exaggerated as induced the Earl of Oxford to consider the greater part, if not the whole, as a fabrication.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

And is the hostile troop arrived,
And have they won the day?
It must have been a bloody field
Ere Darwent fled away!
THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

SLEEP did not close the eyes of the Earl of Oxford or his son; for although the success or defeat of the Duke of Burgundy could not now be of importance to their own private or political affairs, yet the father did not cease to interest himself in the fate of his former companion-in-arms; and the son, with the fire of youth, always eager after novelty,* expected to find something to advance or thwart his own progress in every remarkable event which agitated the world.

Arthur had risen from his bed, and was in the act of attiring himself, when the tread of a horse arrested his attention. He had no sooner looked out of the window, than, exclaiming, 'News, my father, news from the army!' he rushed into the street, where a cavalier, who appeared to have ridden very hard, was inquiring for the two Philipsons, father and son. He had no difficulty in recognising Colvin, the master of the Burgundian ordnance. His ghastly look bespoke distress of mind; his disordered array and broken armour, which seemed rusted with rain, or stained with blood, gave the intelligence of some affray in which he had probably been worsted; and so exhausted was his gallant steed, that it was with difficulty the animal could stand upright. The condition of the rider was not much better. When he alighted from his horse to greet Arthur, he reeled so much that he would have fallen without instant support. His horny eye had lost the power of speculation; his limbs possessed imperfectly that of motion, and it was with a half-suffocated voice that he muttered, 'Only fatigue—want of rest and of food.'

Arthur assisted him into the house, and refreshments were procured; but he refused all except a bowl of wine, after tasting which he set it down, and, looking at the Earl of Oxford with an eye of the deepest affliction, he ejaculated, 'The Duke of Burgundy!'

'Slain?' replied the earl; 'I trust not!'

'It might have been better if he were,' said the Englishman; 'but dishonour has come before death.'

'Defeated, then?' said Oxford.

'So completely and fearfully defeated,' answered the soldier, 'that all that I have seen of loss before was slight in comparison.'

'But how, or where?' said the Earl of Oxford; 'you were superior in numbers, as we were informed.'

'Two to one at least,' answered Colvin; 'and when I speak of our encounter at this moment, I could rend my flesh with my teeth for being here to tell such a tale of shame. We had sat down for about a week before that paltry town of Murten, or Morat, or whatever it is called. The governor, one of those stubborn mountain bears of Berne, bade us defiance. He would not even condescend to shut his gates, but, when we summoned the town, returned for answer, we might enter if we pleased—we should be suitably received. I would have tried to bring him to reason by a salvo or two of artillery, but the Duke was too much irritated to listen to good counsel. Stimulated by that black traitor Campo-Basso, he deemed it better to run forward with his whole force upon a place, which, though I could soon have battered it about their German ears, was yet too strong to be carried by swords, lances, and hagbuts. We were beaten off with great loss, and much discouragement to the soldiers. We then commenced more regularly, and my batteries would have brought these mad Switzers to their senses. Walls and ramparts went down before the lusty cannoniers of Burgundy; we were well secured also by entrenchments against those whom we heard of as approaching to raise the siege. But, on the evening of the twentieth of this month, we learned that they were close at hand, and Charles, consulting only his own bold spirit, advanced to meet them, relinquishing the advantage of our batteries and strong position. By his orders, though against my own judgment, I accompanied him with twenty good pieces and the flower of my people. We broke up on the next morning, and had not advanced far before we saw the lances and thick array of halberds and two-handed swords which crested the mountain. Heaven, too, added its terrors. A thunderstorm, with all the fury of those tempestuous climates, descended on both armies, but did most annoyance to ours, as our troops, especially the Italians, were more sensible to the torrents of rain which poured down, and the rivulets, which swelled into torrents, inundated and disordered our position. The Duke for once saw it necessary to alter his purpose of instant battle. He rode up to me, and directed me to defend with the cannon the retreat which he was about to commence, adding, that he himself would in person sustain me with the men-at-arms. The order was given to retreat. But the movement gave new spirit to an enemy already sufficiently audacious. The ranks of the Swiss instantly prostrated themselves in prayer—a practice in the field of battle which I have ridiculed—but I will do so no more. When, after five minutes, they sprung again on their feet, and began to advance rapidly, sounding their horns and crying their war-cries with all their usual ferocity, behold, my lord, the clouds of heaven opened, shedding on the Confederates the blessed light of the returning sun, while our ranks were still in the gloom of the tempest. My men were discouraged. The host behind them was retreating; the sudden light thrown on the advancing Switzers showed along the mountains a profusion of banners, a glancing of arms, giving to the enemy the appearance of double the numbers that had

* Cupidus novarum rerum.

hitherto been visible to us. I exhorted my followers to stand fast, but in doing so I thought a thought and spoke a word which was a grievous sin. "Stand fast, my brave cannoniers," I said; "we will presently let them hear louder thunders, and show them more fatal lightnings, than their prayers have put down!" My men shouted. But it was an impious thought, a blasphemous speech, and evil came after it. We levelled our guns on the advancing masses as fairly as cannon were ever pointed; I can vouch it, for I laid the Grand Duchess of Burgundy myself. Ah, poor Duchess! what rude hands manage thee now! The volley was fired, and, ere the smoke spread from the muzzles, I could see many a man and many a banner go down. It was natural to think such a discharge should have checked the attack, and, whilst the smoke hid the enemy from us, I made every effort again to load our cannon, and anxiously endeavoured to look through the mist to discover the state of our opponents. But ere our smoke was cleared away, or the cannon again loaded, they came headlong down on us, horse and foot, old men and boys, men-at-arms and varlets, charging up to the muzzle of the guns, and over them, with total disregard to their lives. My brave fellows were cut down, pierced through and overrun, while they were again loading their pieces, nor do I believe that a single cannon was fired a second time.'

'And the Duke,' said the Earl of Oxford, 'did he not support you?'

'Most loyally and bravely,' answered Colvin, 'with his own bodyguard of Walloons and Burgundians. But a thousand Italian mercenaries went off, and never showed face again. The pass, too, was cumbered with the artillery, and in itself narrow, bordering on mountains and cliffs, a deep lake close beside. In short, it was a place totally unfit for horsemen to act in. In spite of the Duke's utmost exertions, and those of the gallant Flemings who fought around him, all were borne back in complete disorder. I was on foot, fighting as I could, without hopes of my life, or indeed thoughts of saving it, when I saw the guns taken and my faithful cannoniers slain. But I saw Duke Charles hard pressed, and took my horse from my page that held him—Thou, too, art lost, my poor orphan boy!—I could only aid Monseigneur de la Croye and others to extricate the Duke. Our retreat became a total rout, and when we reached our rear-guard, which we had left strongly encamped, the banners of the Switzers were waving on our batteries, for a large division had made a circuit, through mountain-passes known only to themselves, and attacked our camp, vigorously seconded by that accursed Adrian de Bubenburg, who sallied from the beleaguered town, so that our entrenchments were stormed on both sides at once. I have more to say, but, having ridden day and night to bring you these evil tidings, my tongue clings to the roof of my mouth, and I feel that I can speak no more. The rest is all flight and massacre, disgraceful to every soldier that shared in it. For my part, I confess my contumelious self-confidence and insolence to man, as well as blasphemy to Heaven. If I live, it is but to hide my disgraced head in a cowl, and expiate the numerous sins of a licentious life.'

With difficulty the broken-minded soldier was prevailed upon to take some nourishment and repose, together with an opiate, which was prescribed by the physician of King René, who recommended it as necessary to preserve even the reason of his patient, exhausted by the events of the battle, and subsequent fatigue.

The Earl of Oxford, dismissing other assistance, watched alternately with his son at Colvin's bedside. Notwithstanding the draught that had been administered, his repose was far from sound. Sudden starts, the perspiration which sprung from his brow, the distortions of his countenance, and the manner in which he clenched his fists and flung about his limbs, showed that in his dreams he was again encountering the terrors of a desperate and forlorn combat. This lasted for several hours; but about noon fatigue and medicine prevailed over nervous excitation, and the defeated commander fell into a deep and untroubled repose till evening. About sunset he awakened, and, after learning with whom and where he was, he partook of refreshments, and, without any apparent consciousness of having told them before, detailed once more all the particulars of the battle of Murten.

'It were little wide of truth,' he said, 'to calculate that one-half of the Duke's army fell by the sword, or were driven into the lake. Those who escaped are great part of them scattered, never again to unite. Such a desperate and irretrievable rout was never witnessed. We fled like deer, sheep, or any other timid animals, which only remain in company because they are afraid to separate, but never think of order or of defence.'

'And the Duke?' said the Earl of Oxford.

'We hurried him with us,' said the soldier, 'rather from instinct than loyalty, as men flying from a conflagration snatch up what they have of value without knowing what they are doing. Knight and knave, officer and soldier, fled in the same panic, and each blast of the horn of Uri in our rear added new wings to our flight.'

'And the Duke?' repeated Oxford.

'At first he resisted our efforts, and strove to turn back on the foe; but when the flight became general, he galloped along with us, without a word spoken or a command issued. At first we thought his silence and passiveness, so unusual in a temper so fiery, were fortunate for securing his personal safety. But when we rode the whole day without being able to obtain a word of reply to all our questions; when he sternly refused refreshments of every kind, though he had tasted no food all that disastrous day; when every variation of his moody and uncertain temper was sunk into silent and sullen despair,—we took counsel what was to be done, and it was by the general voice that I was despatched to entreat that you, for whose counsels alone Charles has been known to have had some occasional deference, would come instantly to his place of retreat, and exert all your influence to awaken him from this lethargy, which may otherwise terminate his existence.'

'And what remedy can I interpose?' said Oxford. 'You know how he neglected my advice, when following it might have served my interest as well as his own. You are aware that my life was not safe among the miscreants that surrounded the Duke, and exercised influence over him.'

'Most true,' answered Colvin; 'but I also know he is your ancient companion-in-arms, and it would ill become me to teach the noble Earl of Oxford what the laws of chivalry require. For your lordship's safety, every honest man in the army will give willing security.'

'It is for that I care least,' said Oxford indifferently; 'and if indeed my presence can be of service to the Duke, if I could believe that he desired it'——

'He does—he does, my lord!' said the faithful soldier, with tears in his eyes. 'We heard him name your name, as if the words escaped him in a painful dream.'

'I will go to him, such being the case,' said Oxford. 'I will go instantly. Where did he purpose to establish his headquarters?'

'He had fixed nothing for himself on that or other matters; but Monsieur de Contay named La Rivière, near Salins, in Upper Burgundy, as the place of his retreat.'

'Thither, then, will we, my son, with all haste of preparation. Thou, Colvin, hadst better remain here, and see some holy man, to be assoilzied for thy hasty speech on the battlefield of Morat. There was offence in it without doubt, but it will be ill atoned for by quitting a generous master when he hath most need of your good service; and it is but an act of cowardice to retreat into the cloister till we have no longer active duties to perform in this world.'

'It is true,' said Colvin, 'that should I leave the Duke now, perhaps not a man would stay behind that could stell a cannon properly. The sight of your lordship cannot but operate favourably on my noble master, since it has waked the old soldier in myself. If your lordship can delay your journey till to-morrow, I will have my spiritual affairs settled, and my bodily health sufficiently restored to be your guide to La Rivière; and for the cloister, I will think of it when I have regained the good name which I have lost at Murten. But I will have masses said, and these right powerful, for the souls of my poor cannoniers.'

The proposal of Colvin was adopted, and Oxford, with his son, attended by Thiebault, spent the day in preparation, excepting the time necessary to take formal leave of King René, who seemed to part with them with regret. In company with the ordnance officer of the discomfited Duke, they traversed those parts of Provence, Dauphiné, and Franche-Compté, which lie between Aix and the place to which the Duke of Burgundy had retreated; but the distance and inconvenience of so long a route consumed more than a fortnight on the road, and the month of July 1476 was commenced when the travellers arrived in Upper Burgundy, and at the Castle of La Rivière, about twenty miles to the south of the town of Salins. The castle, which was but of small size, was surrounded by very many tents, which were pitched in a crowded, disordered, and unsoldierlike manner, very unlike the discipline usually observed in the camp of Charles the Bold. That the Duke was present there, however, was attested by his broad banner, which, rich with all its quarterings, streamed from the battlements of the castle. The guard turned out to receive the strangers, but in a manner so disorderly, that the earl looked to Colvin for explanation. The master of the ordnance shrugged up his shoulders, and was silent.

Colvin having sent in notice of his arrival and that of the English earl, Monsieur de Contay caused them presently to be admitted, and expressed much joy at their arrival.

'A few of us,' he said, 'true servants of the Duke, are holding council here, at which your assistance, my noble Lord of Oxford, will be of the utmost importance. Messieurs de la Croye, De Craon, Rubempré, and others, nobles of Burgundy, are now assembled to superintend the defence of the country at this exigence.'

They all expressed delight to see the Earl of Oxford, and had only abstained from thrusting their attentions on him the last time he was in the Duke's camp, as they understood it was his wish to observe incognito.

'His Grace,' said De Craon, 'has asked after you twice, and on both times by your assumed name of Philipson.'

'I wonder not at that, my Lord of Craon,' replied the English nobleman; 'the origin of the name took its rise in former days, when I was here during my first exile. It was then said, that we poor Lancastrian nobles must assume other names than our own, and the good Duke Philip said, as I was brother-in-arms to his son Charles, I must be called after himself, by the name of Philipson. In memory of the good sovereign, I took that name when the day of need actually arrived, and I see that the Duke thinks of our early intimacy by his distinguishing me so. How fares his Grace?'

The Burgundians looked at each other, and there was a pause.

'Even like a man stunned, brave Oxford,' at length De Contay replied. 'Sieur d'Argentin,* you can best inform the noble Earl of the condition of our sovereign.'

'He is like a man distracted,' said the future historian of that busy period. 'After the battle of Granson, he was never, to my thinking, of the same sound judgment as before. But then, he was capricious, unreasonable, peremptory, and inconsistent, and resented every counsel that was offered, as if it had been meant in insult; was jealous of the least trespass in point of ceremonial, as if his subjects were holding him in contempt. Now there is a total change, as if this second blow had stunned him, and suppressed the violent passions which the first called into action. He is silent as a Carthusian,† solitary as a hermit, expresses interest in nothing, least of all in the guidance of his army. He was, you know, anxious about his dress, so

* [Philip des Comines, Sieur d'Argentin, author of *Historical Memoirs*. See notes to Quentin Durward, pp. 181, 183.]

† [The monks of the Carthusian order lived in almost unbroken silence.]

much so that there was some affectation even in the rudenesses which he practised in that matter. But, woe's me, you will see a change now; he will not suffer his hair or nails to be trimmed or arranged. He is totally heedless of respect or disrespect towards him, takes little or no nourishment, uses strong wines, which, however, do not seem to affect his understanding; he will hear nothing of war or state affairs, as little of hunting or of sport. Suppose an anchorite brought from a cell to govern a kingdom, you see in him, except in point of devotion, a picture of the fiery, active Charles of Burgundy.'

'You speak of a mind deeply wounded, Sieur d'Argentin,' replied the Englishman. 'Think you it fit I should present myself before the Duke?'

'I will inquire,' said Contay; and, leaving the apartment, returned presently, and made a sign to the earl to follow him.

In a cabinet, or closet, the unfortunate Charles reclined in a large arm-chair, his legs carelessly stretched on a footstool, but so changed that the Earl of Oxford could have believed what he saw to be the ghost of the once fiery Duke. Indeed, the shaggy length of hair, which, streaming from his head, mingled with his beard; the hollowness of the caverns, at the bottom of which rolled his wild eyes; the falling in of the breast, and the advance of the shoulders, gave the ghastly appearance of one who has suffered the final agony which takes from mortality the signs of life and energy. His very costume (a cloak flung loosely over him) increased his resemblance to a shrouded phantom. De Contay named the Earl of Oxford; but the Duke gazed on him with a lustreless eye, and gave him no answer.

'Speak to him, brave Oxford,' said the Burgundian in a whisper; 'he is even worse than usual, but perhaps he may know your voice.'

Never, when the Duke of Burgundy was in the most palmy state of his fortunes, did the noble Englishman kneel to kiss his hand with such sincere reverence. He respected in him, not only the afflicted friend, but the humbled sovereign, upon whose tower of trust the lightning had so recently broken. It was probably the falling of a tear upon his hand which seemed to awake the Duke's attention, for he looked towards the earl, and said, 'Oxford—Philipson—my old—my only friend, hast thou found me out in this retreat of shame and misery?'

'I am not your only friend, my lord,' said Oxford. 'Heaven has given you many affectionate friends among your natural and loyal subjects. But though a stranger, and saving the allegiance I owe to my lawful sovereign, I will yield to none of them in the respect and deference which I have paid to your Grace in prosperity, and now come to render to you in adversity.'

'Adversity, indeed!' said the Duke; 'irremediable, intolerable adversity! I was lately Charles of Burgundy, called the Bold; now am I twice beaten by a scum of German peasants; my standard taken, my men-at-arms put to flight, my camp twice plundered, and each time of value more than equal to the price of all Switzerland fairly lost; myself hunted like a caitiff goat or chamois. The utmost spite of hell could never accumulate more shame on the head of a sovereign!'

'On the contrary, my lord,' said Oxford, 'it is a trial of Heaven, which calls for patience and strength of mind. The bravest and best knight may lose the saddle; he is but a laggard who lies rolling on the sand of the lists after the accident has chanced.'

'Ha, laggard, say'st thou?' said the Duke, some part of his ancient spirit awakened by the broad taunt; 'Leave my presence, sir, and return to it no more, till you are summoned thither'——

'Which I trust will be no later than your Grace quits your dishabille, and disposes yourself to see your vassals and friends with such ceremony as befits you and them,' said the earl composedly.

'How mean you by that, Sir Earl? You are unmannerly.'

'If I be, my lord, I am taught my ill-breeding by circumstances. I can mourn over fallen dignity; but I cannot honour him who dishonours himself by bending, like a regardless boy, beneath the scourge of evil fortune.'

'And who am I that you should term me such?' said Charles, starting up in all his natural pride and ferocity; 'or who are you but a miserable exile, that you should break in upon my privacy with such disrespectful upbraiding?'

'For me,' replied Oxford, 'I am, as you say, an unrespected exile; nor am I ashamed of my condition, since unshaken loyalty to my king and his successors has brought me to it. But in you, can I recognise the Duke of Burgundy in a sullen hermit, whose guards are a disorderly soldiery, dreadful only to their friends; whose councils are in confusion for want of their sovereign, and who himself lurks, like a lamed wolf in its den, in an obscure castle, waiting but a blast of the Switzer's horn to fling open its gates, which there are none to defend; who wears not a knightly sword to protect his person, and cannot even die like a stag at bay, but must be worried like a hunted fox?'

'Death and hell, slanderous traitor!' thundered the Duke, glancing a look at his side, and perceiving himself without a weapon,—'It is well for thee I have no sword, or thou shouldst never boast of thine insolence going unpunished. Contay, step forth like a good knight, and confute the calumniator. Say, are not my soldiers arrayed, disciplined, and in order?'

'My lord,' said Contay, trembling (brave as he was in battle) at the frantic rage which Charles exhibited, 'there are a numerous soldiery yet under your command, but they are in evil order, and in worse discipline, I think, than they were wont.'

'I see it—I see it,' said the Duke; 'idle and evil counsellors are ye all. Hearken, Sir of Contay, what have you and the rest of you been doing, holding as you do large lands and high fiefs of us, that I cannot stretch my limbs on a sick-bed, when my heart is half broken, but my troops must fall into such scandalous disorder as exposes me to the scorn and reproach of each beggarly foreigner?'

'My lord,' replied Contay more firmly, 'we have done what we could. But your Grace has accustomed your mercenary generals and leaders

of Free Companies to take their orders only from your own mouth, or hand. They clamour also for pay, and the treasurer refuses to issue it without your Grace's order, as he alleges it might cost him his head; and they will not be guided and restrained, either by us or those who compose your council.'

The Duke laughed sternly, but was evidently somewhat pleased with the reply.

'Ha, ha!' he said, 'it is only Burgundy who can ride his own wild horses, and rule his own wild soldiery. Hark thee, Contay—To-morrow I ride forth to review the troops; for what disorder has passed allowance shall be made. Pay also shall be issued; but woe to those who shall have offended too deeply! Let my grooms of the chamber know to provide me fitting dress and arms. I have got a lesson' (glancing a dark look at Oxford), 'and I will not again be insulted without the means of wreaking my vengeance. Begone, both of you. And, Contay, send the treasurer hither with his accounts, and woe to his soul if I find aught to complain of! Begone, I say, and send him hither.'

They left the apartment with suitable obeisance. As they retired, the Duke said abruptly, 'Lord of Oxford, a word with you. Where did you study medicine? In your own famed university, I suppose. Thy physic hath wrought a wonder. Yet, Doctor Philipson, it might have cost thee thy life.'

'I have ever thought my life cheap,' said Oxford, 'when the object was to help my friend.'

'Thou art indeed a friend,' said Charles, 'and a fearless one. But go—I have been sore troubled, and thou hast tasked my temper closely. To-morrow we will speak further; meantime, I forgive thee, and I honour thee.'

The Earl of Oxford retired to the council-hall, where the Burgundian nobility, aware of what had passed, crowded around him with thanks, compliments, and congratulations. A general bustle now ensued; orders were hurried off in every direction. Those officers who had duties to perform which had been neglected, hastened to conceal or to atone for their negligence. There was a general tumult in the camp, but it was a tumult of joy; for soldiers are always most pleased when they are best in order for performing their military service; and licence or inactivity, however acceptable at times, are not, when continued, so agreeable to their nature as strict discipline and a prospect of employment.

The treasurer, who was, luckily for him, a man of sense and method, having been two hours in private with the Duke, returned with looks of wonder, and professed that never in Charles's most prosperous days had he showed himself more acute in the department of finance, of which he had but that morning seemed totally incapable; and the merit was universally attributed to the visit of Lord Oxford, whose timely reprimand had, like the shot of a cannon dispersing foul mists, awakened the Duke from his black and bilious melancholy.

On the following day Charles reviewed his troops with his usual attention, directed new levies, made various dispositions of his forces, and corrected the faults of their discipline by severe orders, which were enforced by some deserved punishments (of which the Italian mercenaries of Campo-Basso had a large share), and rendered palatable by the payment of arrears, which was calculated to attach them to the standard under which they served.

The Duke also, after consulting with his council, agreed to convoke meetings of the States in his different territories, redress certain popular grievances, and grant some boons which he had hitherto denied; and thus began to open a new account of popularity with his subjects, in place of that which his rashness had exhausted.

CHAPTER XXXV.

——Here's a weapon now,
Shall shake a conquering general in his tent,
A monarch on his throne, or reach a prelate,
However holy be his offices,
E'en while he serves the altar.
OLD PLAY.

FROM this time all was activity in the Duke of Burgundy's court and army. Money was collected, soldiers were levied, and certain news of the Confederates' motions only were wanting to bring on the campaign. But although Charles was, to all outward appearance, as active as ever, yet those who were more immediately about his person were of opinion that he did not display the soundness of mind or the energy of judgment which had been admired in him before these calamities. He was still liable to fits of moody melancholy, similar to those which descended upon Saul, and was vehemently furious when aroused out of them. Indeed, the Earl of Oxford himself seemed to have lost the power which he had exercised over him at first. Nay, though in general Charles was both grateful and affectionate towards him, he evidently felt humbled by the recollection of his having witnessed his impotent and disastrous condition, and was so much afraid of Lord Oxford being supposed to lead his counsels, that he often repelled his advice, merely, as it seemed, to show his own independence of mind.

In these froward humours the Duke was much encouraged by Campo-Basso. That wily traitor now saw his master's affairs tottering to their fall, and he resolved to lend his lever to the work, so as to entitle him to a share of the spoil. He regarded Oxford as one of the most able friends and counsellors who adhered to the Duke; he thought he saw in his looks that he fathomed his own treacherous purpose, and therefore he hated and feared him. Besides, in order perhaps to colour over, even to his own eyes, the abominable perfidy he meditated, he affected to be exceedingly enraged against the Duke for the late punishment of marauders belonging to his Italian bands. He believed that chastisement to have been inflicted by the advice of Oxford; and he suspected that the measure was pressed with the hope of discovering that the Italians had not pillaged for their own emolument only, but for that of their commander. Believing that Oxford was thus hostile to him, Campo-Basso would have speedily found means to take him out of his path, had not the earl himself found

it prudent to observe some precautions; and the lords of Flanders and Burgundy, who loved him for the very reasons for which the Italian abhorred him, watched over his safety with a vigilance of which he himself was ignorant, but which certainly was the means of preserving his life.

It was not to be supposed that Ferrand of Lorraine should have left his victory so long unimproved; but the Swiss Confederates, who were the strength of his forces, insisted that the first operations should take place in Savoy and the Pays de Vaud, where the Burgundians had many garrisons, which, though they received no relief, yet were not easily or speedily reduced. Besides, the Switzers being, like most of the national soldiers of the time, a kind of militia, most of them returned home to get in their harvest, and to deposit their spoil in safety. Ferrand therefore, though bent on pursuing his success with all the ardour of youthful chivalry, was prevented from making any movement in advance until the month of December 1476. In the meantime the Duke of Burgundy's forces, to be least burdensome to the country, were cantoned in distant places of his dominions, where every exertion was made to perfect the discipline of the new levies. The Duke, if left to himself, would have precipitated the struggle by again assembling his forces, and pushing forward into the Helvetian territories; but, though he inwardly foamed at the recollection of Granson and Murten, the memory of these disasters was too recent to permit such a plan of the campaign. Meantime, weeks glided past, and the month of December was far advanced, when one morning, as the Duke was sitting in council, Campo-Basso suddenly entered, with a degree of extravagant rapture in his countenance, singularly different from the cold, regulated, and subtle smile which was usually his utmost advance towards laughter. '*Guantes*,'* he said, '*Guantes*, for luck's sake, if it please your Grace.'

'And what of good fortune comes nigh us?' said the Duke. 'Methought she had forgot the way to our gates.'

'She has returned to them, please your Highness, with her cornucopia full of choicest gifts, ready to pour her fruit, her flowers, her treasures, on the head of the sovereign of Europe most worthy to receive them.'

'The meaning of all this?' said Duke Charles; 'riddles are for children.'

'The harebrained young madman Ferrand, who calls himself of Lorraine, has broken down from the mountains, at the head of a desultory army of scapegraces like himself; and what think you,—ha! ha! ha!—they are overrunning Lorraine, and have taken Nancy—ha! ha! ha!'

'By my good faith, Sir Count,' said Contay, astonished at the gay humour with which the Italian treated a matter so serious, 'I have seldom heard a fool laugh more gaily at a more scurvy jest, than you, a wise man, laugh at the loss of the principal town of the province we are fighting for.'

'I laugh,' said Campo-Basso, 'among the spears, as my war-horse does—ha! ha!—among the trumpets. I laugh also over the destruction of the enemy, and the dividing of the spoil, as eagles scream their joy over the division of their prey; I laugh'——

'You laugh,' said the Lord of Contay, waxing impatient, 'when you have all the mirth to yourself, as you laughed after our losses at Granson and Murten.'

'Peace, sir!' said the Duke. 'The Count of Campo-Basso has viewed the case as I do. This young knight-errant ventures from the protection of his mountains; and Heaven deal with me as I keep my oath, when I swear that the next fair field on which we meet shall see one of us dead! It is now the last week of the old year, and before Twelfth Day* we will see whether he or I shall find the bean in the cake.† To arms, my lords; let our camp instantly break up, and our troops move forward towards Lorraine. Send off the Italian and Albanian‡ light cavalry and the Stradiots§ to scour the country in the van.—Oxford, thou wilt bear arms in this journey, wilt thou not?'

'Surely,' said the earl. 'I am eating your Highness's bread; and when enemies invade, it stands with my honour to fight for your Grace as if I was your born subject. With your Grace's permission, I will despatch a pursuivant, who shall carry letters to my late kind host, the Landamman of Unterwalden, acquainting him with my purpose.'

The Duke having given a ready assent, the pursuivant was dismissed accordingly, and returned in a few hours, so near had the armies approached to each other. He bore a letter from the Landamman, in a tone of courtesy and even kindness, regretting that any cause should have occurred for bearing arms against his late guest, for whom he expressed high personal regard. The same pursuivant also brought greetings from the family of the Biedermans to their friend Arthur, and a separate letter, addressed to the same person, of which the contents ran thus:—

'Rudolph Donnerhugel is desirous to give the young merchant, Arthur Philipson, the opportunity of finishing the bargain which remained unsettled between them in the castle-court of Geierstein. He is the more desirous of this, as he is aware that the said Arthur has done him wrong, in seducing the affections of a certain maiden of rank, to whom he, Philipson, is not, and cannot be, anything beyond an ordinary acquaintance. Rudolph Donnerhugel will send Arthur Philipson word when a fair and equal meeting can take place on neutral ground. In the meantime, he will be as often as possible in the first rank of the skirmishers.'

Young Arthur's heart leapt high as he read the defiance, the piqued tone of which showed the state of the writer's feelings, and argued

* *Guantes*, used by the Spanish as the French say *étrennes*, or the English handsell or luckpenny—phrases used by inferiors to their patrons as the bringers of good news.

* [The twelfth day after Christmas, *i.e.* Epiphany.]

† [It was a practice to put a bean in the Twelfth Night cake; the person to whose lot it fell to find the bean when the cake was cut up was called King of Twelfth Night.]

‡ [The Count of Campo-Basso's mercenaries were mostly Italians and Dalmatians or Albanians.]

§ [Light cavalry levied in Greece.]

sufficiently Rudolph's disappointment on the subject of Anne of Geierstein, and his suspicion that she had bestowed her affections on the youthful stranger. Arthur found means of despatching a reply to the challenge of the Swiss, assuring him of the pleasure with which he would attend his commands, either in front of the line or elsewhere, as Rudolph might desire.

Meantime the armies were closely approaching to each other, and the light troops sometimes met. The Stradiots from the Venetian territory, a sort of cavalry resembling that of the Turks, performed much of that service on the part of the Burgundian army, for which, indeed, if their fidelity could have been relied on, they were admirably well qualified. The Earl of Oxford observed that these men, who were under the command of Campo-Basso, always brought in intelligence that the enemy were in indifferent order and in full retreat. Besides, information was communicated through their means, that sundry individuals, against whom the Duke of Burgundy entertained peculiar personal dislike, and whom he specially desired to get into his hands, had taken refuge in Nancy. This greatly increased the Duke's ardour for retaking that place, which became perfectly ungovernable when he learned that Ferrand and his Swiss allies had drawn off to a neighbouring position called Saint Nicholas, on the news of his arrival. The greater part of the Burgundian counsellors, together with the Earl of Oxford, protested against his besieging a place of some strength, while an active enemy lay in the neighbourhood to relieve it. They remonstrated on the smallness of his army, on the severity of the weather, on the difficulty of obtaining provisions, and exhorted the Duke that, having made such a movement as had forced the enemy to retreat, he ought to suspend decisive operations till spring. Charles at first tried to dispute and repel these arguments; but when his counsellors reminded him that he was placing himself and his army in the same situation as at Granson and Murten, he became furious at the recollection, foamed at the mouth, and only answered by oaths and imprecations, that he would be master of Nancy before Twelfth Day.

Accordingly, the army of Burgundy sat down before Nancy, in a strong position, protected by the hollow of a watercourse, and covered with thirty pieces of cannon, which Colvin had under his charge.

Having indulged his obstinate temper in thus arranging the campaign, the Duke seemed to give a little more heed to the advice of his counsellors touching the safety of his person, and permitted the Earl of Oxford, with his son, and two or three officers of his household, men of approved trust, to sleep within his pavilion, in addition to the usual guard.

It wanted three days of Christmas when the Duke sat down before Nancy, and on that very evening a tumult happened which seemed to justify the alarm for his personal safety. It was midnight, and all in the ducal pavilion were at rest, when a cry of treason arose. The Earl of Oxford, drawing his sword, and snatching up a light which burned beside him, rushed into the Duke's apartment, and found him standing on the floor totally undressed, but with his sword in his hand, and striking around him so furiously, that the earl himself had difficulty in avoiding his blows. The rest of his officers rushed in, their weapons drawn, and their cloaks wrapped around their left arms. When the Duke was somewhat composed, and found himself surrounded by his friends, he informed them, with rage and agitation, that the officers of the Secret Tribunal had, in spite of the vigilant precautions taken, found means to gain entrance into his chamber, and charged him, under the highest penalty, to appear before the Holy Vehme upon Christmas night.

The bystanders heard this story with astonishment, and some of them were uncertain whether they ought to consider it as a reality or a dream of the Duke's irritable fancy. But the citation was found on the Duke's toilet, written, as was the form, upon parchment signeted with three crosses, and stuck to the table with a knife. A slip of wood had been also cut from the table. Oxford read the summons with attention. It named as usual a place where the Duke was cited to come unarmed and unattended, and from which it was said he would be guided to the seat of judgment.

Charles, after looking at the scroll for some time, gave vent to his thoughts.

'I know from what quiver this arrow comes,' he said. 'It is shot by that degenerate noble, apostate priest, and accomplice of sorcerers, Albert of Geierstein. We have heard that he is among the motley group of murderers and outlaws whom the old fiddler of Provence's grandson has raked together. But, by Saint George of Burgundy! neither monk's cowl, soldier's casque, nor conjuror's cap, shall save him after such an insult as this. I will degrade him from knighthood, hang him from the highest steeple in Nancy, and his daughter shall choose between the meanest herd-boy in my army and the convent of *filles repentées!*'

'Whatever are your purposes, my lord,' said Contay, 'it were surely best be silent, when, from this late apparition, we may conjecture that more than we wot of may be within hearing.'

The Duke seemed struck with this hint, and was silent, or at least only muttered oaths and threats betwixt his teeth, while the strictest search was made for the intruder on his repose. But it was in vain.

Charles continued his researches, incensed at a flight of audacity higher than ever had been ventured upon by these secret societies, who, whatever might be the dread inspired by them, had not as yet attempted to cope with sovereigns. A trusty party of Burgundians were sent on Christmas night to watch the spot (a meeting of four cross roads) named in the summons, and make prisoners of any whom they could lay hands upon; but no suspicious persons appeared at or near the place. The Duke not the less continued to impute the affront he had received to Albert of Geierstein. There was a price set upon his head; and Campo-Basso, always willing to please his master's mood, undertook that some of his Italians, sufficiently

experienced in such feats, should bring the obnoxious baron before him, alive or dead. Colvin, Contay, and others laughed in secret at the Italian's promises.

'Subtle as he is,' said Colvin, 'he will lure the wild vulture from the heavens before he gets Albert of Geierstein into his power.'

Arthur, to whom the words of the Duke had given subject for no small anxiety, on account of Anne of Geierstein, and of her father for her sake, breathed more lightly on hearing his menaces held so cheaply.

It was the second day after this alarm that Oxford felt a desire to reconnoitre the camp of Ferrand of Lorraine, having some doubts whether the strength and position of it were accurately reported. He obtained the Duke's consent for this purpose, who at the same time made him and his son a present of two noble steeds, of great power and speed, which he himself highly valued.

So soon as the Duke's pleasure was communicated to the Italian count, he expressed the utmost joy that he was to have the assistance of Oxford's age and experience upon an exploratory party, and selected a chosen band of a hundred Stradiots, whom he said he had sent sometimes to skirmish up to the very beards of the Switzers. The earl showed himself much satisfied with the active and intelligent manner in which these men performed their duty, and drove before them and dispersed some parties of Ferrand's cavalry. At the entrance of a little ascending valley, Campo-Basso communicated to the English noblemen, that if they could advance to the farther extremity they would have a full view of the enemy's position. Two or three Stradiots then spurred on to examine this defile, and, returning back, communicated with their leader in their own language, who, pronouncing the passage safe, invited the Earl of Oxford to accompany him. They proceeded through the valley without seeing an enemy, but on issuing upon a plain at the point intimated by Campo-Basso, Arthur, who was in the van of the Stradiots, and separated from his father, did indeed see the camp of Duke Ferrand within half-a-mile's distance; but a body of cavalry had that instant issued from it, and were riding hastily towards the gorge of the valley from which he had just emerged. He was about to wheel his horse and ride off, but, conscious of the great speed of the animal, he thought he might venture to stay for a moment's more accurate survey of the camp. The Stradiots who attended him did not wait his orders to retire, but went off, as was indeed their duty when attacked by a superior force.

Meantime, Arthur observed that the knight who seemed leader of the advancing squadron, mounted on a powerful horse that shook the earth beneath him, bore on his shield the Bear of Berne, and had otherwise the appearance of the massive frame of Rudolph Donnerhugel. He was satisfied of this when he beheld the cavalier halt his party and advance towards him alone, putting his lance in rest, and moving slowly, as if to give him time for preparation. To accept such a challenge in such a moment was dangerous, but to refuse it was disgraceful; and while Arthur's blood boiled at the idea of chastising an insolent rival, he was not a little pleased at heart that their meeting on horseback gave him an advantage over the Swiss, through his perfect acquaintance with the practice of the tournay, in which Rudolph might be supposed more ignorant.

They met, as was the phrase of the time, 'manful under shield.' The lance of the Swiss glanced from the helmet of the Englishman, against which it was addressed, while the spear of Arthur, directed right against the centre of his adversary's body, was so justly aimed, and so truly seconded by the full fury of the career, as to pierce, not only the shield which hung round the ill-fated warrior's neck, but a breastplate and a shirt of mail which he wore beneath it. Passing clear through the body, the steel point of the weapon was only stopped by the back-piece of the unfortunate cavalier, who fell headlong from his horse, as if struck by lightning, rolled twice or thrice over on the ground, tore the earth with his hands, and then lay prostrate a dead corpse.

There was a cry of rage and grief among those men-at-arms whose ranks Rudolph had that instant left, and many couched their lances to avenge him; but Ferrand of Lorraine, who was present in person, ordered them to make prisoner, but not to harm, the successful champion. This was accomplished, for Arthur had not time to turn his bridle for flight, and resistance would have been madness.

When brought before Ferrand, he raised his visor, and said, 'Is it well, my lord, to make captive an adventurous knight, for doing his devoir against a personal challenger?'

'Do not complain, Sir Arthur of Oxford,' said Ferrand, 'before you experience injury. You are free, Sir Knight. Your father and you were faithful to my royal aunt Margaret, and although she was my enemy, I do justice to your fidelity in her behalf; and from respect to her memory, disinherited as she was like myself, and to please my grandfather, who I think had some regard for you, I give you your freedom. But I must also care for your safety during your return to the camp of Burgundy. On this side of the hill we are loyal and true-hearted men; on the other they are traitors and murderers. You, Sir Count, will, I think, gladly see our captive placed in safety.'

The knight to whom Ferrand addressed himself, a tall, stately man, put himself in motion to attend on Arthur, while the former was expressing to the young Duke of Lorraine the sense he entertained of his chivalrous conduct. 'Farewell, Sir Arthur de Vere,' said Ferrand. 'You have slain a noble champion, and to me a most useful and faithful friend. But it was done nobly and openly, with equal arms and in the front of the line; and evil befall him who entertains feud first!' Arthur bowed to his saddlebow. Ferrand returned the salutation, and they parted.

Arthur and his new companion had ridden but a little way up the ascent when the stranger spoke thus:—

'We have been fellow-travellers before, young man, yet you remember me not.'

Arthur turned his eyes on the cavalier, and observing that the crest which adorned his helmet was fashioned like a vulture, strange suspicions began to cross his mind, which were confirmed when the knight, opening his helmet, showed him the dark and severe features of the Priest of Saint Paul's.

'Count Albert of Geierstein!' said Arthur.

'The same,' replied the count, 'though thou hast seen him in other garb and headgear. But tyranny drives all men to arms, and I have resumed, by the licence and command of my superiors, those which I had laid aside. A war against cruelty and oppression is holy as that waged in Palestine, in which priests bear armour.'

'My lord Count,' said Arthur eagerly, 'I cannot too soon entreat you to withdraw to Sir Ferrand of Lorraine's squadron. Here you are in peril, where no strength or courage can avail you. The Duke has placed a price on your head; and the country betwixt this and Nancy swarms with Stradiots and Italian light horsemen.'

'I laugh at them,' answered the count. 'I have not lived so long in a stormy world, amid intrigues of war and policy, to fall by the mean hand of such as they; besides, thou art with me, and I have seen but now that thou canst bear thee nobly.'

'In your defence, my lord,' said Arthur, who thought of his companion as the father of Anne of Geierstein, 'I should try to do my best.'

'What, youth!' replied Count Albert, with a stern sneer, that was peculiar to his countenance; 'wouldst thou aid the enemy of the lord under whose banner thou servest against his waged soldiers?'

Arthur was somewhat abashed at the turn given to his ready offer of assistance, for which he had expected at least thanks; but he instantly collected himself, and replied, 'My lord Count Albert, you have been pleased to put yourself in peril to protect me from partizans of your party; I am equally bound to defend you from those of our side.'

'I am happily answered,' said the count; 'yet I think there is a little blind partizan, of whom Troubadours and minstrels talk, to whose instigation I might, in case of need, owe the great zeal of my protector.'

He did not allow Arthur, who was a good deal embarrassed, time to reply, but proceeded: 'Hear me, young man. Thy lance has this day done an evil deed to Switzerland, to Berne, and Duke Ferrand, in slaying their bravest champion. But to me the death of Rudolph Donnerhugel is a welcome event. Know that he was, as his services grew more indispensable, become importunate in requiring Duke Ferrand's interest with me for my daughter's hand. And the Duke himself, the son of a princess, blushed not to ask me to bestow the last of my house—for my brother's family are degenerate mongrels—upon a presumptuous young man, whose uncle was a domestic in the house of my wife's father, though they boasted some relationship, I believe, through an illegitimate channel, which yonder Rudolph was wont to make the most of, as it favoured his suit.'

'Surely,' said Arthur, 'a match with one so unequal in birth, and far more in every other respect, was too monstrous to be mentioned?'

'While I lived,' replied Count Albert, 'never should such union have been formed, if the death both of bride and bridegroom by my dagger could have saved the honour of my house from violation. But when I—I whose days, whose very hours are numbered—shall be no more, what could prevent an undaunted suitor, fortified by Duke Ferrand's favour, by the general applause of his country, and perhaps by the unfortunate prepossession of my brother Arnold, from carrying his point against the resistance and scruples of a solitary maiden?'

'Rudolph is dead,' replied Arthur, 'and may Heaven assoilzie him from guilt! But were he alive, and urging his suit on Anne of Geierstein, he would find there was a combat to be fought'——

'Which has been already decided,' answered Count Albert. 'Now mark me, Arthur de Vere! My daughter has told me of the passages betwixt you and her. Your sentiments and conduct are worthy of the noble house you descend from, which I well know ranks with the most illustrious in Europe. You are indeed disinherited, but so is Anne of Geierstein, save such pittance as her uncle may impart to her of her paternal inheritance. If you share it together till better days (always supposing your noble father gives his consent, for my child shall enter no house against the will of its head), my daughter knows that she has my willing consent and my blessing. My brother shall also know my pleasure. He will approve my purpose; for, though dead to thoughts of honour and chivalry, he is alive to social feelings, loves his niece, and has friendship for thee and for thy father. What say'st thou, young man, to take a beggarly Countess to aid thee in the journey of life? I believe—nay, I prophesy (for I stand so much on the edge of the grave that methinks I command a view beyond it) that a lustre will one day, after I have long ended my doubtful and stormy life, beam on the coronets of De Vere and Geierstein.'

De Vere threw himself from his horse, clasped the hand of Count Albert, and was about to exhaust himself in thanks; but the count insisted on his silence.

'We are about to part,' he said. 'The time is short, the place is dangerous. You are to me, personally speaking, less than nothing. Had any one of the many schemes of ambition which I have pursued led me to success, the son of a banished Earl had not been the son-in-law I had chosen. Rise and remount your horse; thanks are unpleasing when they are not merited.'

Arthur arose, and, mounting his horse, threw his raptures into a more acceptable form, endeavouring to describe how his love for Anne, and efforts for her happiness, should express his gratitude to her father, and observing that the count listened with some pleasure to the picture he drew of their future life, he could not help exclaiming,—'And you, my lord—you who have been the author of all this happiness, will you not be the witness and partaker of it? Believe me, we will strive to soften the effect of the hard blows which fortune has dealt to you, and should a ray of better luck shine upon us, it

will be the more welcome that you can share it.'

'Forbear such folly,' said the Count Albert of Geierstein. 'I know my last scene is approaching. Hear and tremble. The Duke of Burgundy is sentenced to die, and the Secret and Invisible Judges, who doom in secret and avenge in secret, like the Deity, have given the cord and the dagger to my hand!'

'O, cast from you these vile symbols!' exclaimed Arthur, with enthusiasm; 'let them find butchers and common stabbers to do such an office, and not dishonour the noble Lord of Geierstein!'

'Peace, foolish boy!' answered the count. 'The oath by which I am sworn is higher than that clouded sky, more deeply fixed than those distant mountains. Nor think my act is that of an assassin, though for such I might plead the Duke's own example. I send not hirelings, like these base Stradiots, to hunt his life, without imperilling mine own. I give not his daughter—innocent of his offences—the choice betwixt a disgraceful marriage and a discreditable retreat from the world. No, Arthur de Vere, I seek Charles with the resolved mind of one who, to take the life of an adversary, exposes himself to certain death.'

'I pray you speak no further of it,' said Arthur, very anxiously. 'Consider I serve for the present the prince whom you threaten'——

'And art bound,' interrupted the count, 'to unfold to him what I tell you. I desire you should do so; and though he hath already neglected a summons of the Tribunal, I am glad to have this opportunity of sending him personal defiance. Say to Charles of Burgundy that he has wronged Albert of Geierstein. He who is injured in his honour loses all value for his life, and whoever does so has full command over that of another man. Bid him keep himself well from me, since if he see a second sun of the approaching year rise over the distant Alps, Albert of Geierstein is forsworn. And now begone, for I see a party approach under a Burgundian banner. They will insure your safety, but, should I remain longer, would endanger mine.'

So saying, the Count of Geierstein turned his horse and rode off.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Faint the din of battle bray'd
Distant down the heavy wind;
War and terror fled before,
Wounds and death were left behind.
MICKLE.

ARTHUR, left alone, and desirous perhaps to cover the retreat of Count Albert, rode towards the approaching body of Burgundian cavalry, who were arrayed under the Lord Contay's banner.

'Welcome, welcome,' said that nobleman, advancing hastily to the young knight. 'The Duke of Burgundy is a mile hence, with a body of horse to support the reconnoitring party. It is not half-an-hour since your father galloped up, and stated that you had been led into an ambuscade by the treachery of the Stradiots, and made prisoner. He has impeached Campo-Basso of treason, and challenged him to the combat. They have both been sent to the camp, under charge of the Grand-Marshal, to prevent their fighting on the spot, though I think our Italian showed little desire to come to blows. The Duke holds their gages, and they are to fight upon Twelfth Day.'

'I doubt that day will never dawn for some who look for it,' said Arthur; 'but if it do, I will myself claim the combat, by my father's permission.'

He then turned with Contay, and met a still larger body of cavalry, under the Duke's broad banner. He was instantly brought before Charles. The Duke heard, with some apparent anxiety, Arthur's support of his father's accusations against the Italian, in whose favour he was so deeply prejudiced. When assured that the Stradiots had been across the hill, and communicated with their leader just before he encouraged Arthur to advance, as it proved, into the midst of an ambush, the Duke shook his head, lowered his shaggy brows, and muttered to himself,—'Ill will to Oxford, perhaps; these Italians are vindictive.'—Then, raising his head, he commanded Arthur to proceed.

He heard with a species of ecstasy the death of Rudolph Donnerhugel, and, taking a ponderous gold chain from his own neck, flung it over Arthur's.

'Why, thou hast forestalled all our honours, young Arthur; this was the biggest bear of them all; the rest are but suckling whelps to him! I think I have found a youthful David to match their huge thick-headed Goliath. But the idiot, to think his peasant hand could manage a lance! Well, my brave boy, what more? How camest thou off? By some wily device or agile stratagem, I warrant.'

'Pardon me, my lord,' answered Arthur. 'I was protected by their chief, Ferrand, who considered my encounter with Rudolph Donnerhugel as a personal duel; and, desirous to use fair war, as he said, dismissed me honourably, with my horse and arms.'

'Umph!' said Charles, his bad humour returning; 'your prince adventurer must play the generous. Umph—well, it belongs to his part, but shall not be a line for me to square my conduct by. Proceed with your story, Sir Arthur de Vere.'

As Arthur proceeded to tell how and under what circumstances Count Albert of Geierstein named himself to him, the Duke fixed on him an eager look, and trembled with impatience as he fiercely interrupted him with the question,—'And you—you struck him with your poniard under the fifth rib, did you not?'

'I did not, my lord Duke; we were pledged in mutual assurance to each other.'

'Yet you knew him to be my mortal enemy?' said the Duke. 'Go, young man, thy lukewarm indifference has cancelled thy merit. The escape of Albert of Geierstein hath counterbalanced the death of Rudolph Donnerhugel.'

'Be it so, my lord,' said Arthur boldly. 'I neither claim your praises nor deprecate your

censure. I had to move me in either case motives personal to myself. Donnerhugel was my enemy, and to Count Albert I owe some kindness.'

The Burgundian nobles who stood around were terrified for the effect of this bold speech. But it was never possible to guess with accuracy how such things would affect Charles. He looked around him with a laugh — 'Hear you this English cockerel, my lords; what a note will he one day sound, that already crows so bravely in a prince's presence!'

A few horsemen now came in from different quarters, recounting that the Duke Ferrand and his company had retired into their encampment, and the country was clear of the enemy.

'Let us then draw back also,' said Charles, 'since there is no chance of breaking spears to-day. And thou, Arthur de Vere, attend me closely.'

Arrived at the Duke's pavilion, Arthur underwent an examination, in which he said nothing of Anne of Geierstein, or her father's designs concerning him, with which he considered Charles as having nothing to do; but he frankly conveyed to him the personal threats which the count had openly used. The Duke listened with more temper, and when he heard the expression, 'That a man who is desperate of his own life might command that of any other person,' he said, 'But there is a life beyond this, in which he who is treacherously murdered, and his base and desperate assassin, shall each meet their deserts.' He then took from his bosom a gold cross, and kissed it with much appearance of devotion. 'In this,' said he, 'I will place my trust. If I fail in this world, may I find grace in the next. Ho, Sir Marshal!' he exclaimed. 'Let your prisoners attend us.'

The Marshal of Burgundy entered with the Earl of Oxford, and stated that his other prisoner, Campo-Basso, had desired so earnestly that he might be suffered to go and post his sentinels on that part of the camp entrusted to the protection of his troops, that he, the Marshal, had thought fit to comply with his request.

'It is well,' said Burgundy, without further remark. 'Then to you, my Lord Oxford, I would present your son, had you not already locked him in your arms. He has won great *los* and honour, and done me brave service. This is a period of the year when good men forgive their enemies; I know not why—my mind was little apt to be charged with such matters—but I feel an unconquerable desire to stop the approaching combat betwixt you and Campo-Basso. For my sake, consent to be friends, and to receive back your gage of battle, and let me conclude this year—perhaps the last I may see —with a deed of peace.'

'My lord,' said Oxford, 'it is a small thing you ask of me, since your request only enforces a Christian duty. I was enraged at the loss of my son. I am grateful to Heaven and your Grace for restoring him. To be friends with Campo-Basso is to me impossible. Faith and treason, truth and falsehood, might as soon shake hands and embrace. But the Italian shall be to me no more than he has been before this rupture; and that is literally nothing. I put my honour in your Grace's hands; if he receives back his gage, I am willing to receive mine. John de Vere needs not be apprehensive that the world will suppose that he fears Campo-Basso.'

The Duke returned sincere thanks, and detained the officers to spend the evening in his tent. His manners seemed to Arthur to be more placid than he had ever seen them before, while to the Earl of Oxford they recalled the earlier days in which their intimacy commenced, ere absolute power and unbounded success had spoiled Charles's rough but not ungenerous disposition. The Duke ordered a distribution of provisions and wine to the soldiers, and expressed an anxiety about their lodgings, the cure of the wounded, and the health of the army, to which he received only unpleasing answers. To some of his counsellors, apart, he said, 'Were it not for our vow, we would relinquish this purpose till spring, when our poor soldiers might take the field with less of suffering.'

Nothing else remarkable appeared in the Duke's manner, save that he inquired repeatedly after Campo-Basso, and at length received accounts that he was indisposed, and that his physician had recommended rest; he had therefore retired to repose himself, in order that he might be stirring on his duty at peep of day, the safety of the camp depending much on his vigilance.

The Duke made no observation on the apology, which he considered as indicating some lurking disinclination, on the Italian's part, to meet Oxford. The guests at the ducal pavilion were dismissed an hour before midnight.

When Oxford and his son were in their own tent, the earl fell into a deep reverie, which lasted nearly ten minutes. At length, starting suddenly up, he said, 'My son, give orders to Thiebault and thy yeoman to have our horses before the tent by break of day, or rather before it; and it would not be amiss if you ask our neighbour Colvin to ride along with us. I will visit the outposts by daybreak.'

'It is a sudden resolution, my lord,' said Arthur.

'And yet it may be taken too late,' said his father. 'Had it been moonlight, I would have made the rounds to-night.'

'It is as dark as a wolf's throat,' said Arthur. 'But wherefore, my lord, can this night in particular excite your apprehensions?'

'Son Arthur, perhaps you will hold your father credulous. But my nurse, Martha Nixon, was a northern woman, and full of superstitions. In particular, she was wont to say that any sudden and causeless change of a man's nature, as from licence to sobriety, from temperance to indulgence, from avarice to extravagance, from prodigality to love of money, or the like, indicates an immediate change of his fortunes—that some great alteration of circumstances, either for good or evil (and for evil most likely, since we live in an evil world), is impending over him whose disposition is so much altered. This old woman's fancy has recurred so strongly to my mind, that I am determined to see with mine own eyes, ere to-morrow's dawn, that all our guards and patrols around the camp are on the alert.'

Arthur made the necessary communications to Colvin and to Thiebault, and then retired to rest.

It was ere daybreak of the first of January 1477, a period long memorable for the events which marked it, that the Earl of Oxford, Colvin, and the young Englishman, followed only by Thiebault and two other servants, commenced their rounds of the Duke of Burgundy's encampment. For the greater part of their progress they found sentinels and guards all on the alert and at their posts. It was a bitter morning. The ground was partly covered with snow, that snow had been partly melted by a thaw, which had prevailed for two days, and partly congealed into ice by a bitter frost, which had commenced the preceding evening, and still continued. A more dreary scene could scarcely be witnessed.

But what were the surprise and alarm of the Earl of Oxford and his companions, when they came to that part of the camp which had been occupied the day before by Campo-Basso and his Italians, who, reckoning men-at-arms and Stradiots, amounted to nigh two thousand men —not a challenge was given—not a horse neighed —no steeds were seen at picquet—no guard on the camp. They examined several of the tents and huts—they were empty.

'Let us back to alarm the camp,' said the Earl of Oxford; 'here is treachery.'

'Nay, my lord,' said Colvin, 'let us not carry back imperfect tidings. I have a battery an hundred yards in advance, covering the access to this hollow way; let us see if my German cannoniers are at their post, and I think I can swear that we shall find them so. The battery commands a narrow pass, by which alone the camp can be approached; and if my men are at their duty, I will pawn my life that we make the pass good till you bring up succours from the main body.'

'Forward, then, in God's name!' said the Earl of Oxford.

They galloped, at every risk, over broken ground, slippery with ice in some places, encumbered with snow in others. They came to the cannon, judiciously placed to sweep the pass, which rose towards the artillery on the outward side, and then descended gently from the battery into the lower ground. The waning winter moon, mingling with the dawning light, showed them that the guns were in their places, but no sentinel was visible.

'The villains cannot have deserted!' said the astonished Colvin—'But see, there is light in their cantonment. O, that unhallowed distribution of wine! Their usual sin of drunkenness has beset them. I will soon drive them from their revelry.'

He sprung from his horse, and rushed into the tent from whence the light issued. The cannoniers, or most of them, were still there, but stretched on the ground, their cups and flagons scattered around them; and so drenched were they in wassail, that Colvin could only, by commands and threats, awaken two or three, who, staggering, and obeying him rather from instinct than sense, reeled forward to man the battery. A heavy rushing sound, like that of men marching fast, was now heard coming up the pass.

'It is the roar of a distant avalanche,' said Arthur.

'It is an avalanche of Switzers, not of snow,' said Colvin. 'O, these drunken slaves! The cannon are deeply loaded, and well pointed—this volley must check them if they were fiends, and the report will alarm the camp sooner than we can do. But O, these drunken villains!'

'Care not for their aid,' said the earl; 'my son and I will each take a linstock, and be gunners for once.'

They dismounted, and bade Thiebault and the grooms look to the horses, while the Earl of Oxford and his son took each a linstock from one of the helpless gunners, three of whom were just sober enough to stand by their guns.

'Bravo!' cried the bold master of ordnance, 'never was a battery so noble. Now, my mates —your pardon, my lords, for there is no time for ceremony—and you, ye drunken knaves, take heed not to fire till I give the word, and were the ribs of these tramplers as flinty as their Alps, they shall know how old Colvin loads his guns.'

They stood breathless, each by his cannon. The dreaded sound approached nearer and more near, till the imperfect light showed a dark and shadowy but dense column of men, armed with long spears, pole-axes, and other weapons, amidst which banners dimly floated. Colvin suffered them to approach to the distance of about forty yards, and then gave the word, Fire! But his own piece alone exploded; a slight flame flashed from the touch-hole of the others, which had been spiked by the Italian deserters, and left in reality disabled, though apparently fit for service. Had they been all in the same condition with that fired by Colvin, they would probably have verified his prophecy; for even that single discharge produced an awful effect, and made a long lane of dead and wounded through the Swiss column, in which the first and leading banner was struck down.

'Stand to it yet,' said Colvin, 'and aid me if possible to reload the piece.'

For this, however, no time was allowed. A stately form, conspicuous in the front of the staggered column, raised up the fallen banner, and a voice as of a giant exclaimed, 'What, countrymen! have you seen Murten and Granson, and are you daunted by a single gun? Berne — Uri — Schwytz — banners forward! Unterwalden, here is your standard! Cry your war-cries, wind your horns; Unterwalden, follow your Landamman!'

They rushed on like a raging ocean, with a roar as deafening and a course as impetuous. Colvin, still labouring to reload his gun, was struck down in the act. Oxford and his son were overthrown by the multitude, the closeness of which prevented any blows being aimed at them. Arthur partly saved himself by getting under the gun he was posted at; his father, less fortunate, was much trampled upon, and must have been crushed to death but for his armour of proof. The human inundation, consisting of at least four thousand men, rushed down into the camp, continuing their dreadful shouts, soon

mingled with shrill shrieks, groans, and cries of alarm.

A broad red glare rising behind the assailants, and putting to shame the pallid lights of the winter morning, first recalled Arthur to a sense of his condition. The camp was on fire in his rear, and resounded with all the various shouts of conquest and terror that are heard in a town which is stormed. Starting to his feet, he looked around him for his father. He lay near him senseless, as were the gunners, whose condition prevented their attempting an escape. Having opened his father's casque, he was rejoiced to see him give symptoms of reanimation.

'The horses, the horses!' said Arthur. 'Thiebault, where art thou?'

'At hand, my lord,' said that trusty attendant, who had saved himself and his charge by a prudent retreat into a small thicket, which the assailants had avoided that they might not disorder their ranks.

'Where is the gallant Colvin?' said the earl; 'get him a horse, I will not leave him in jeopardy.'

'His wars are ended, my lord,' said Thiebault; 'he will never mount steed more.'

A look and a sigh, as he saw Colvin, with the ramrod in his hand, before the muzzle of the piece, his head cleft by a Swiss battle-axe, was all the moment permitted.

'Whither must we take our course?' said Arthur to his father.

'To join the Duke,' said the Earl of Oxford. 'It is not on a day like this that I will leave him.'

'So please you,' said Thiebault, 'I saw the Duke, followed by some half-score of his guards, riding at full speed across this hollow watercourse, and making for the open country to the northward. I think I can guide you on the track.'

'If that be so,' replied Oxford, 'we will mount and follow him. The camp has been assailed on several places at once, and all must be over since he has fled.'

With difficulty they assisted the Earl of Oxford to his horse, and rode, as fast as his returning strength permitted, in the direction which the Provençal pointed out. Their other attendants were dispersed or slain.

They looked back more than once on the camp, now one great scene of conflagration, by whose red and glaring light they could discover on the ground the traces of Charles's retreat. About three miles from the scene of their defeat, the sound of which they still heard, mingled with the bells of Nancy, which were ringing in triumph, they reached a half-frozen swamp, round which lay several dead bodies. The most conspicuous was that of Charles of Burgundy, once the possessor of such unlimited power—such unbounded wealth. He was partly stripped and plundered, as were those who lay round him. His body was pierced with several wounds, inflicted by various weapons. His sword was still in his hand, and the singular ferocity which was wont to animate his features in battle still dwelt on his stiffened countenance. Close behind him, as if they had fallen in the act of mutual fight, lay the corpse of Count Albert of Geierstein; and that of Ital Schreckenwald, the faithful though unscrupulous follower of the latter, lay not far distant. Both were in the dress of the men-at-arms composing the Duke's guard, a disguise probably assumed to execute the fatal commission of the Secret Tribunal. It is supposed that a party of the traitor Campo-Basso's men had been engaged in the skirmish in which the Duke fell, for six or seven of them, and about the same number of the Duke's guards, were found near the spot.

The Earl of Oxford threw himself from his horse, and examined the body of his deceased brother-in-arms, with all the sorrow inspired by early remembrance of his kindness. But, as he gave way to the feelings inspired by so melancholy an example of the fall of human greatness, Thiebault, who was looking out on the path they had just pursued, exclaimed, 'To horse, my lord! here is no time to mourn the dead, and little to save the living—the Swiss are upon us.'

'Fly thyself, good fellow,' said the earl; 'and do thou, Arthur, fly also, and save thy youth for happier days. I cannot and will not fly farther. I will render me to the pursuers; if they take me to grace, it is well; if not, there is ONE above that will receive me to his.'

'I will not fly,' said Arthur, 'and leave you defenceless; I will stay and share your fate.'

'And I will remain also,' said Thiebault; 'the Switzers make fair war when their blood has not been heated by much opposition, and they have had little enough to-day.'

The party of Swiss which came up proved to be Sigismund, with his brother Ernest, and some of the youths of Unterwalden. Sigismund kindly and joyfully received them to mercy; and thus, for the third time, rendered Arthur an important service in return for the kindness he had expressed towards him.

'I will take you to my father,' said Sigismund, 'who will be right glad to see you; only that he is ill at ease just now for the death of brother Rudiger, who fell with the banner in his hand, by the only cannon that was fired this morning; the rest could not bark; Campo-Basso had muzzled Colvin's mastiffs, or we should many more of us have been served like poor Rudiger. But Colvin himself is killed.'

'Campo-Basso, then, was in your correspondence?' said Arthur.

'Not in ours—we scorn such companions—but some dealing there was between the Italian and Duke Ferrand; and, having disabled the cannon, and filled the German gunners soundly drunk, he came off to our camp with fifteen hundred horse, and offered to act with us. But "No, no!" said my father, "traitors come not into our Swiss host;" and so, though we walked in at the door which he left open, we would not have his company. So he marched with Duke Ferrand to attack the other extremity of the camp, where he found them entrance by announcing them as the return of a reconnoitring party.'

'Nay, then,' said Arthur, 'a more accomplished traitor never drew breath, nor one who drew his net with such success.'

'You say well,' answered the young Swiss. 'The Duke will never, they say, be able to collect another army.'

'Never, young man,' said the Earl of Oxford, 'for he lies dead before you.' *

Sigismund started; for he had an inherent respect, and somewhat of fear, for the lofty name of Charles the Bold, and could hardly believe that the mangled corpse which now lay before him was once the personage he had been taught to dread. But his surprise was mingled with sorrow, when he saw the body of his uncle, Count Albert of Geierstein.

'O my uncle!' he said—'my dear uncle Albert! has all your greatness and your wisdom brought you to a death at the side of a ditch, like any crazed beggar?—Come, this sad news must be presently told to my father, who will be concerned to hear of his brother's death, which will add gall to bitterness, coming on the back of poor Rudiger's. It is some comfort, however, that father and uncle never could abide each other.'

With some difficulty they once more assisted the Earl of Oxford to horseback, and were proceeding to set forward, when the English lord said,—'You will place a guard here, to save these bodies from further dishonour, that they may be interred with due solemnity.'

'By Our Lady of Einsiedlen! I thank youf or the hint,' said Sigismund. 'Yes, we should do all that the Church can for Uncle Albert. It is to be hoped he has not gambled away his soul beforehand, playing with Satan at odds and evens. I would we had a priest to stay by his poor body; but it matters not, since no one ever heard of a demon appearing just before breakfast.'

They proceeded to the Landamman's quarters through sights and scenes which Arthur, and even his father, so well accustomed to war in all its shapes, could not look upon without shuddering. But the simple Sigismund, as he walked by Arthur's side, contrived to hit upon a theme so interesting as to divert his sense of the horrors around them.

'Have you further business in Burgundy, now this Duke of yours is at an end?'

'My father knows best,' said Arthur; 'but I apprehend we have none. The Duchess of Burgundy, who must now succeed to some sort of authority in her late husband's dominion, is sister to this Edward of York, and a mortal enemy to the House of Lancaster, and to those who have stood by it faithfully. It were neither prudent nor safe to tarry where she has influence.'

'In that case,' said Sigismund, 'my plan will fadge bravely. You shall go back to Geierstein, and take up your dwelling with us. Your father will be a brother to mine, and a better one than uncle Albert, whom he seldom saw or spoke with; while with your father he will converse from morning till night, and leave us all the work of the farm. And you, Arthur, you shall go with us, and be a brother to us all, in place of poor Rudiger, who was, to be sure, my real brother, which you cannot be; nevertheless, I did not like him so well, in respect he was not so good-natured. And then Anne—Cousin Anne—is left all to my father's charge, and is now at Geierstein—and you know, King Arthur, we used to call her Queen Guenever.'

'You spoke great folly, then,' said Arthur.

'But it is great truth—For look you, I loved to tell Anne tales of our hunting, and so forth, but she would not listen a word till I threw in something of King Arthur, and then I warrant she would sit still as a heath-hen when the hawk is in the heavens. And now Donnerhugel is slain, you know you may marry my cousin when you and she will, for nobody hath interest to prevent it.'

Arthur blushed with pleasure under his helmet, and almost forgave that new-year's morning all its complicated distresses.

'You forget,' he replied to Sigismund, with as much indifference as he could assume, 'that I may be viewed in your country with prejudice on account of Rudolph's death.'

'Not a whit, not a whit; we bear no malice for what is done in fair fight under shield. It is no more than if you had beat him in wrestling or at quoits—only it is a game cannot be played over again.'

They now entered the town of Nancy; the windows were hung with tapestry, and the streets crowded with tumultuous and rejoicing multitudes, whom the success of the battle had relieved from great alarm for the formidable vengeance of Charles of Burgundy.

The prisoners were received with the utmost kindness by the Landamman, who assured them of his protection and friendship. He appeared to support the death of his son Rudiger with stern resignation.

'He had rather,' he said, 'his son fell in battle than that he should live to despise the old simplicity of his country, and think the object of combat was the gaining of spoil. The gold of the dead Burgundy,' he added, 'would injure the morals of Switzerland more irretrievably than ever his sword did their bodies.'

He heard of his brother's death without surprise, but apparently with emotion.

'It was the conclusion,' he said, 'of a long tissue of ambitious enterprises, which often offered fair prospects, but uniformly ended in disappointment.'

The Landamman further intimated that his brother had apprised him that he was engaged in an affair of so much danger that he was almost certain to perish in it, and had bequeathed his daughter to her uncle's care, with instructions respecting her.

Here they parted for the present, but shortly after, the Landamman inquired earnestly of the Earl of Oxford what his motions were like to be, and whether he could assist them.

'I think of choosing Bretagne for my place of refuge,' answered the earl, 'where my wife has dwelt since the battle of Tewkesbury expelled us from England.'

'Do not so,' said the kind Landamman, 'but come to Geierstein with the Countess, where, if she can, like you, endure our mountain manners and mountain fare, you are welcome as to the house of a brother, to a soil where neither conspiracy nor treason ever flourished. Bethink

* Note F. Charles the Bold.

you, the Duke of Bretagne is a weak prince, entirely governed by a wicked favourite, Peter Landais. He is as capable—I mean the minister—of selling brave men's blood, as a butcher of selling bullock's flesh; and you know there are those, both in France and Burgundy, that thirst after yours.'

The Earl of Oxford expressed his thanks for the proposal, and his determination to profit by it, if approved of by Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Richmond, whom he now regarded as his sovereign.

To close the tale, about three months after the battle of Nancy, the banished Earl of Oxford resumed his name of Philipson, bringing with his lady some remnants of their former wealth, which enabled them to procure a commodious residence near to Geierstein; and the Landamman's interest in the State procured for them the right of denizenship. The high blood and the moderate fortunes of Anne of Geierstein and Arthur de Vere, joined to their mutual inclination, made their marriage in every respect rational; and Annette with her bachelor took up their residence with the young people, not as servants, but mechanical aids in the duties of the farm; for Arthur continued to prefer the chase to the labours of husbandry, which was of little consequence, as his separate income amounted, in that poor country, to opulence. Time glided on, till it amounted to five years since the exiled family had been inhabitants of Switzerland. In the year 1482, the Landamman Biederman died the death of the righteous, lamented universally, as a model of the true and valiant, simple-minded and sagacious chiefs, who ruled the ancient Switzers in peace, and headed them in battle. In the same year the Earl of Oxford lost his noble countess.

But the star of Lancaster at that period began again to culminate, and called the banished lord and his son from their retirement, to mix once more in politics. The treasured necklace of Margaret was then put to its destined use, and the produce applied to levy those bands which shortly after fought the celebrated battle of Bosworth, in which the arms of Oxford and his son contributed so much to the success of Henry VII. This changed the destinies of De Vere and his lady. Their Swiss farm was conferred on Annette and her husband; and the manners and beauty of Anne of Geierstein attracted as much admiration at the English court as formerly in the Swiss chalet.

A CASTLE ON THE RHINE

NOTES TO ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN.

Note A, p. 389.—Remarks on the Novel.

[*Anne of Geierstein*, which appeared in May 1829, may be almost called the last work of Scott's imaginative genius, and was received at least as well as the Fair Maid of Perth, or indeed as any novel of his, after the Crusaders. Its pages display in undiminished perfection all the skill and grace of the mere artist, with occasional outbreaks of the old poetic spirit. Indeed, the various play of fancy in the combination of persons and events, and the airy liveliness of both imagery and diction, may well justify us in applying to the Author what he beautifully says of his King René—

> A mirthful man he was; the snows of age
> Fell, but they did not chill him.—Chap. xxix.

It is a common saying, that there is nothing so distinctive of genius as the retention, in advanced years, of the capacity to depict the feelings of youth with all their original glow and purity. But I apprehend this blessed distinction belongs to, and is the just reward of, virtuous genius only. . . . Perhaps Scott has nowhere painted such feelings more deliciously than in those very scenes of Anne of Geierstein, which offer every now and then, in some incidental circumstance or reflection, the best evidence that they are drawn by a grey-headed man.—J. G. Lockhart.]

Note B, p. 457.—German Dungeon.

[In connection with the description of this dungeon, it may be stated that the Author, in composing this novel, derived considerable assistance from a journal of foreign travel, the work of his intimate friend the late James Skene of Rubislaw. It is also curious to observe, that in the *Archæologia Scotica*, 1823, vol. iii. p. 17, there appears an account by Mr. Skene of a 'suite of apartments excavated from the rocks on which the Castle of Baden, in Swabia, stands, supposed to have been connected with the jurisdiction of the Secret Tribunal in that country.']

Note C, p. 467.—Public Executioner.

There is abundant evidence that, in the Middle Ages, the office of public executioner was esteemed highly honourable all over Germany. It still is, in such parts of that country as retain the old custom of execution by stroke of sword, very far from being held discreditable to the extent to which we carry our feelings on the subject, and which exposed the magistrates of a Scotch town,—I rather think no less a one than Glasgow,—to a good deal of ridicule, when they advertised, some few years ago, on occasion of the death of their hangman, that 'none but persons of respectable character' need apply for the vacant situation. At this day, in China, in Persia, and probably in other Oriental kingdoms, the Chief Executioner is one of the great officers of state, and is as proud of the emblem of his fatal duty as any European Lord Chamberlain of his golden key.

The circumstances of the strange trial and execution of the Knight of Hagenbach are detailed minutely by M. de Barante, from contemporary MS. documents; and the reader will be gratified with a specimen of that writer's narrative. A translation is also given for the benefit of many of my kind readers.

'De toutes parts on était accourus par milliers pour assister au procès de ce cruel gouverneur, tant la haine était grande contre lui. De sa prison, il entendait retentir sur le pont le pas des chevaux, et s'enquérait à son geôlier de ceux qui arrivaient: soit pour être ses juges, soit pour être témoins de son supplice. Parfois le geôlier répondait, "Ce sont des étrangers; je ne les connais pas." "Ne sont-ce pas," disait le prisonnier, "des gens assez mal vêtus, de haute taille, de forte apparence, montés sur des chevaux aux courtes oreilles?" et si le geôlier répondait: "Oui."—"Ah, ce sont les Suisses," s'écriait Hagenbach; "Mon Dieu, ayez pitié de moi!" et il se rappelait toutes les insultes qu'il leur avait faites, toutes ses insolences envers eux. Il pensait, mais trop tard, que c'était leur alliance avec la maison d'Autriche qui était cause de sa perte. Le 4 Mai, 1474, après avoir été mis à la question, il fut, à la diligence d'Hermann d'Eptingen, gouverneur pour l'archiduc, amené devant ses juges, sur la place publique de Brisach. Sa contenance était ferme et d'un homme qui ne craint pas la mort. Henri Iselin de Bâle porta la parole au nom d'Hermann d'Eptingen, agissant pour le seigneur du pays. Il parla à peu près en ces termes: "Pierre de Hagenbach, chevalier, maître d'hôtel de Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, et son gouverneur dans le pays de Sératte et Haute Alsace, aurait dû respecter les privilèges reservés par l'acte d'engagement; mais il n'a pas moins frotté aux pieds les lois de Dieu et des hommes, que le droits jurés et garantis au pays. Il a fait mettre à mort sans jugement quatre honnêtes bourgeois de Sératte; il a depouillé la ville de Brisach de sa juridiction, et y a établi juges et consuls de son choix; il a rompu et dispersé les communautés de la bourgeoisie et des métiers; il a levé des impôts par sa seule volonté; il a, contre toutes les lois, logé chez les habitans des gens de guerre—Lombards, Français, Picards, ou Flamands; et a favorisé leur désordres et pillages. Il leur a même commandé d'égorger leurs hôtes durant la nuit, et avait fait préparer, pour y embarquer les femmes et les enfans, des bateaux qui devaient être submergés dans le Rhin. Enfin lors même qu'il rejetterait de telles cruautés sur les ordres qu'il a reçus, comment pourrait il s'excuser d'avoir fait violence et outrage à l'honneur de tant de filles et femmes, et même de saintes religieuses?"

'D'autres accusations furent portées dans les interrogatoires; et des témoins attesterent les violences faites aux gens de Mulhausen et aux marchands de Bâle.

'Pour suivre toutes les formes de la justice, on avait donné un avocat à l'accusé. "Messire Pierre de Hagenbach," dit-il, "ne reconnait d'autre juge et d'autre seigneur que Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne, dont il avait commission, et recevait les commandemens. Il n'avait nul droit de contrôler les ordres qu'il était chargé d'exécuter; et son devoir était d'obéir. Ne sait-on pas quelle soumission les gens de guerre doivent à leur seigneur et maître? Croit-on que le landvogt de Monseigneur le Duc eût à lui remontrer et à lui résister? Et monseigneur n'a-t-il pas ensuite, par sa présence, confirmé et ratifié tout ce qui avait été fait et son nom? Si des impôts ont été demandés, c'est qu'il avait besoin d'argent. Pour les recueillir il a bien fallu punir ceux qui se refusaient à payer. C'est ce que Monseigneur le Duc, et même l'Empereur, quand ils sont venus, ont reconnu nécessaire. Le logement des gens de guerre était aussi la suite des ordres du Duc. Quant à la juridiction de Brisach; le landvogt pouvait-il souffrir cette résistance? Enfin, dans une affaire si grave, où il y va de la vie, convient-il de produire comme un véritable grief, le dernier dont a parlé l'accusateur? Parmi ceux qui écoutent, y en a-t-il un seul qui puisse se vanter de ne pas avoir saisi les occasions de se divertir? N'est-il pas clair que Messire de Hagenbach a seulement profité de la bonne volonté de quelques femmes ou filles; ou, pour mettre les choses au pis, qu'il n'a exercé d'autre contrainte envers elles qu'au moyen de son bon argent?"

'Les juges siégèrent longtemps sur leur tribunal. Douze heures entières passerent sans que l'affaire fût terminée. Le Sire de Hagenbach, toujours ferme et calme, n'allégua d'autres défenses, d'autres excuses, que celles qu'il avait

donné déjà sous la torture—les ordres et la volonté de son seigneur, qui était son seul juge, et le seul qui pût lui demander compte.

'Enfin, à sept heures du soir, à la clarté des flambeaux, les juges, après avoir déclaré qu'à eux appartenait le droit de prononcer sur les crimes imputés au landvogt, le firent rappeler; et rendirent leur sentence qui le condamna à mort. Il ne s'émeut pas davantage; et demanda pour toute grace d'avoir seulement la tête tranchée. Huit bourreaux des diverses villes se présenterent pour exécuter l'arrêt. Celui de Colmar, qui passait pour le plus adroit, fut préféré. Avant de le conduire à l'échafaud, les seize chevaliers qui faisaient partie des juges requirent que Messire de Hagenbach fût dégradé de sa dignité de chevalier et de tous ses honneurs. Pour lors s'avança Gaspard Hurter, héraut de l'empereur; et il dit: "Pierre de Hagenbach, il me déplaît grandement que vous ayez si mal employé votre vie mortelle: de sorte qu'il convient que vous perdiez non-seulement la dignité et ordre de chevalerie, mais aussi la vie. Votre devoir était de rendre la justice, de protéger la veuve et l'orphelin; de respecter les femmes et les filles, d'honorer les saints prêtres; de vous opposer à toute injuste violence; et, au contraire, vous avez commis tout ce que vous deviez empêcher. Ayant ainsi forfait au noble ordre de chevalerie, et aux sermens que vous aviez jurés, les chevaliers ici présens m'ont enjoint de vous en ôter les insignes. Ne les voyant pas sur vous en ce moment, je vous proclame indigne chevalier de Saint George, au nom et à l'honneur duquel on vous avait autrefois honoré de l'ordre de chevalerie." Puis avança Hermann d'Eptingen: "Puis qu'on vient de te dégrader de chevalerie, je te dépouille de ton collier, chaine d'or, anneau, poignard, éperon, gantelet." Il les lui prit et lui en frappa le visage, et ajouta: "Chevaliers, et vous qui désirez le devenir, j'espère que cette punition publique vous servira d'exemple, et que vous vivrez dans la crainte de Dieu, noblement et vaillamment, selon la dignité de la chevalerie et l'honneur de votre nom." Enfin, le prévôt d'Einsilheim et maréchal de cette commission de juges se leva, et s'adressant au bourreau, lui dit: "Faites selon la justice."

'Tous les juges monterent à cheval ainsi qu'Hermann d'Eptingen. Au milieu d'eux marchait Pierre de Hagenbach, entre deux prêtres. C'etait pendant la nuit. Des torches éclairaient la marche; une foule immense se pressait autour de ce triste cortège. Le condamné s'entretenait avec son confesseur d'un air pieux et recueilli, mais ferme; se recommandant aussi aux prières de tous ceux qui l'entouraient. Arrivé dans une prairie devant la porte de la ville, il monta sur l'échafaud d'un pas assuré; puis élevant la voix:—

'"Je n'ai pas peur de la mort," dit-il; "encore que je ne l'attendisse pas de cette sorte, mais bien les armes à la main; que je plains c'est tout le sang que le mien fera couler. Monseigneur ne laissera point ce jour sans vengeance pour moi. Je ne regrette ni ma vie, ni mon corps. J'étais homme—priez pour moi." Il s'entretint encore un instant avec son confesseur, présenta la tête et reçut le coup.'—M. DE BARANTE, tom. x. p. 197.

TRANSLATION.

'Such was the detestation in which this cruel governor was held, that multitudes flocked in from all quarters to be present at his trial. He heard from his prison the bridge re-echo with the tread of horses, and would ask of his jailor respecting those who were arriving, whether they might be his judges, or those desirous of witnessing his punishment. Sometimes the jailer would answer, "These are strangers whom I know not."—"Are not they," said the prisoner, "men meanly clad, tall in stature, and of bold mien, mounted on short-eared horses?" And if the jailer answered in the affirmative, "Ah, these are the Swiss," cried Hagenbach. "My God, have mercy on me!" and he recalled to mind all the insults and cruelties he had heaped upon them. He considered, but too late, that their alliance with the House of Austria had been his destruction.

'On the 4th of May 1474, after being put to the torture, he was brought before his judges in the public square of Brisach, at the instance of Hermann d'Eptingen, who governed for the Archduke. His countenance was firm, as one who fears not death. Henry Iselin of Bâle first spoke in the name of Hermann d'Eptingen, who acted for the lord of the country. He proceeded in nearly these terms:—"Peter de Hagenbach, knight, steward of my lord the Duke of Burgundy, and his governor in the country of Seratte and Haute Alsace, was bound to observe the privileges reserved by act of compact, but he has alike trampled under foot the laws of God and man, and the rights which have been guaranteed by oath to the country. He has caused four worshipful burgesses of Seratte to be put to death without trial; he has spoiled the city of Brisach, and established there judges and consuls chosen by himself; he has broken and dispersed the various communities of burghers and craftsmen; he has levied imposts of his own will; contrary to every law, he has quartered upon the inhabitants soldiers of various countries—Lombards, French, men of Picardy, and Flemings, and has encouraged them in pillage and disorder; he has even commanded these men to butcher their hosts during night, and had caused boats to be prepared to embark therein women and children to be sunk in the Rhine. Finally, should he plead the orders which he had received as an excuse for these cruelties, how can he clear himself of having dishonoured so many women and maidens, even those under religious vows?"

'Other accusations were brought against him by examination, and witnesses proved outrages committed on the people of Mulhausen, and the merchants of Bâle.

'That every form of justice might be observed, an advocate was appointed to defend the accused. "Messire Peter de Hagenbach," said he, "recognises no other judge or master than my lord the Duke of Burgundy, whose commission he bore, and whose orders he received. He had no control over the orders he was charged to execute;—his duty was to obey. Who is ignorant of the submission due by military retainers to their lord and master? Can any one believe that the landvogt of my lord the Duke could remonstrate with or resist him? And has not my lord confirmed and ratified by his presence all acts done in his name? If imposts have been levied, it was because he had need of money; to obtain it, it was necessary to punish those who refused payment; this proceeding my lord the Duke, and the Emperor himself, when present, have considered as expedient. The quartering of soldiers was also in accordance with the orders of the Duke. With respect to the jurisdiction of Brisach, could the landvogt permit any resistance from that quarter? To conclude, in so serious an affair—one which touches the life of the prisoner—can the last accusation be really considered a grievance? Among all those who hear me, is there one man who can say he has never committed similar imprudences? Is it not evident that Messire de Hagenbach has only taken advantage of the goodwill of some girls and women; or, at the worst, that his money was the only restraint imposed upon them?"

'The judges sat for a long time on the tribunal. Twelve hours elapsed before the termination of the trial. The Knight of Hagenbach, always calm and undaunted, brought forward no other defence or excuse than what he had before given when under the torture: viz. the orders and will of his lord, who alone was his judge, and who alone could demand an explanation. At length, at seven in the evening, and by the light of torches, the judges, after having declared it their province to pronounce judgment on the crimes of which the landvogt was accused, caused him to be called before them, and delivered their sentence—condemning him to death. He betrayed no emotion, and only demanded, as a favour, that he should be beheaded. Eight executioners, of various towns, presented themselves to execute the sentence; the one belonging to Colmar, who was accounted the most expert, was preferred.

'Before conducting him to the scaffold, the sixteen knights who acted as judges required that Messire de Hagenbach should be degraded from the dignity of knight, and from all his honours. Then advanced Gasper Hurter, herald of the Emperor, and said:—"Peter de Hagenbach, I deeply deplore that you have so employed your mortal life, that you must lose not only the dignity and honour of knighthood, but your life also. Your duty was to render justice, to protect the widow and orphan, to respect women and maidens, to honour the holy priests, to oppose every unjust outrage; but you have yourself committed what you ought to have opposed in others. Having broken, therefore, the oaths which you have sworn, and having forfeited the noble order of knighthood, the knights here present have enjoined me to deprive you of its insignia. Not perceiving them on your person at this moment, I proclaim you unworthy Knight of Saint George, in whose name and honour you were formerly admitted in the order of knighthood." Then Hermann d'Eptingen advanced. "Since you are degraded from knighthood, I deprive you of your collar, gold chain, ring, poniard, spur and gauntlet." He then took them from him, and, striking him on the face, added:—"Knights, and you who aspire to that honour, I trust this public punishment will serve as an example to you, and that you will live in the fear of God, nobly and valiantly, in accordance with the dignity of knighthood, and the honour of your name." At last the provost of Einsilheim, and marshal of that commission of judges, arose, and

addressing himself to the executioner—"Let justice be done."

'All the judges, along with Hermann d'Eptingen, mounted on horseback; in the midst of them walked Peter de Hagenbach between two priests. It was night, and they marched by the light of torches; an immense crowd pressed around this sad procession. The prisoner conversed with his confessor, with pious, collected, and firm demeanour, recommending himself to the prayers of the spectators. On arriving at a meadow without the gate of the town, he mounted the scaffold with a firm step, and, elevating his voice, exclaimed:—

"'I fear not death, I have always expected it; not, indeed, in this manner, but with arms in my hand. I regret alone the blood which mine will cause to be shed; my lord will not permit this day to pass unavenged. I regret neither my life nor body. I was a man—pray for me!" He conversed an instant more with his confessor, presented his head, and received the blow.'—M. DE BARANTE, tom. x. p. 197.

NOTE D, p. 530.—PROVENÇAL TROUBADOURS.

The smoothness of the Provençal dialect, partaking strongly of the Latin, which had been spoken for so many ages in what was called for distinction's sake the Roman Province of Gaul, and the richness and fertility of a country abounding in all that could delight the senses and soothe the imagination, naturally disposed the inhabitants to cultivate the art of poetry, and to value and foster the genius of those who distinguished themselves by attaining excellence in it. Troubadours, that is, *finders* or *inventors*, equivalent to the northern term of *makers*, arose in every class, from the lowest to the highest, and success in their art dignified men of the meanest rank, and added fresh honours to those who were born in the patrician file of society. War and love, more especially the latter, were dictated to them by the chivalry of the times as the especial subjects of their verse. Such, too, were the themes of our northern minstrels. But whilst the latter confined themselves in general to those well-known metrical histories in which scenes of strife and combat mingled with adventures of enchantment, and fables of giants and monsters subdued by valiant champions, such as best attracted the ears of the somewhat duller and more barbarous warriors of northern France, of Britain, and of Germany—the more lively Troubadours produced poems which turned on human passion, and on love, affection, and dutiful observance, with which the faithful knight was bound to regard the object of his choice, and the honour and respect with which she was bound to recompense his faithful services.

Thus far it cannot be disputed that the themes selected by the Troubadours were those on which poetry is most naturally exerted, and with the best chance of rising to excellence. But it usually happens that when any one of the fine arts is cultivated exclusively, the taste of those who practise and admire its productions loses sight of nature, simplicity, and true taste, and the artist endeavours to discover, while the public learn to admire, some more complicated system, in which pedantry supersedes the dictates of natural feeling, and metaphysical ingenuity is used instead of the more obvious qualifications of simplicity and good sense. Thus, with the unanimous approbation of their hearers, the Troubadours framed for themselves a species of poetry describing and inculcating a system of metaphysical affection, as inconsistent with nature as the minstrel's tales of magicians and monsters; with this evil to society, that it was calculated deeply to injure its manners and its morals. Every Troubadour, or good knight, who took the maxims of their poetical school for his rule, was bound to choose a lady-love, the fairest and noblest to whom he had access, to whom he dedicated at once his lyre and his sword, and who, married or single, was to be the object to whom his life, words, and actions were to be devoted. On the other hand, a lady thus honoured and distinguished was bound, by accepting the services of such a gallant, to consider him as her lover, and on all due occasions to grace him as such with distinguished marks of personal favour. It is true that, according to the best authorities, the intercourse betwixt her lover and herself was to be entirely of a Platonic character, and the loyal swain was not to require, or the chosen lady to grant, anything beyond the favour she might in strict modesty bestow. Even under this restriction, the system was like to make wild work with the domestic peace of families, since it permitted, or rather enjoined, such familiarity betwixt the fair dame and her poetical admirer; and very frequently human passions, placed in such a dangerous situation, proved too strong to be confined within the metaphysical bounds prescribed to them by so fantastic and perilous a system. The injured husbands on many occasions avenged themselves with severity, and even with dreadful cruelty, on the unfaithful ladies, and the musical skill and chivalrous character of the lover proved no protection to his person. But the real spirit of the system was seen in this, that in the poems of the other Troubadours, by whom such events are recorded, their pity is all bestowed on the hapless lovers, while, without the least allowance for just provocation, the injured husband is held up to execration.

NOTE E, p. 531.—PARLIAMENT OF LOVE.

In Provence, during the flourishing time of the Troubadours, Love was esteemed so grave and formal a part of the business of life, that a Parliament or High Court of Love was appointed for deciding such questions. This singular tribunal was, it may be supposed, conversant with more of imaginary than of real suits; but it is astonishing with what cold and pedantic ingenuity the Troubadours of whom it consisted set themselves to plead and to decide, upon reasoning which was not less singular and able than out of place, the absurd questions which their own fantastic imaginations had previously devised. There, for example, is a reported case, of much celebrity, where a lady sitting in company with three persons, who were her admirers, listened to one with the most favourable smiles, while she pressed the hand of the second, and touched with her own the foot of the third. It was a case much agitated and keenly contested in the Parliament of Love, which of these rivals had received the distinguishing mark of the lady's favour. Much ingenuity was wasted on this and similar cases, of which there is a collection, in all judicial form of legal proceedings, under the title of *Arrêts d'Amour* (Adjudged cases of the Court of Love).

NOTE F, p. 567.—CHARLES THE BOLD.

The following very striking passage is that in which Philip de Commines sums up the last scene of Charles the Bold, whose various fortunes he had long watched with a dark anticipation that a character so reckless, and capable of such excess, must sooner or later lead to a tragical result:—

'As soon as the Count de Campo-Basso arrived in the Duke of Lorrain's army, word was sent him to leave the camp immediately, for they would not entertain nor have any communication with such traytors. Upon which message he retir'd with his party to a Castle and Pass not far off, where he fortified himself with carts and other things as well as he could, in hopes that, if the Duke of Burgundy was routed, he might have an opportunity of coming in for a share of the plunder, as he did afterwards. Nor was this practice with the Duke of Lorrain the most execrable action that Campo-Basso was guilty of; but before he left the army he conspired with several other officers (finding it was impracticable to attempt anything against the Duke of Burgundy's person) to leave him just as they came to charge, for at that time he suppos'd it would put the Duke into the greatest terror and consternation, and if he fled, he was sure he could not escape alive, for he had order'd thirteen or fourteen sure men, some to run as soon as the Germans came up to charge 'em, and others to watch the Duke of Burgundy, and kill him in the rout, which was well enough contrived; I myself have seen two or three of those who were employed to kill the Duke. Having thus settled his conspiracy at home, he went over to the Duke of Lorrain upon the approach of the German army; but finding they would not entertain him, he retired to Conde.

'The German army march'd forward, and with 'em a considerable body of French horse, whom the King had given leave to be present at that action. Several parties lay in ambush not far off, that if the Duke of Burgundy was routed, they might surprise some person of quality, or take some considerable booty. By this every one may see into what a deplorable condition this poor Duke had brought himself by his contempt of good counsel. Both armies being joyn'd, the Duke of Burgundy's forces having been twice beaten before, and by consequence weak and dispirited, and ill provided besides, were quickly broken and entirely defeated: Many sav'd themselves and got off; the rest were either taken or kill'd; and among 'em the Duke of Burgundy himself was kill'd on the spot. One Monsieur Claude of Bausmont, Captain of the Castle of Dier in Lorrain, kill'd the Duke of Burgundy. Finding his army routed, he mounted a swift horse, and, endeavouring to swim a little river in order to make his escape, his

horse fell with him, and overset him: The Duke cry'd out for quarter to this gentleman who was pursuing him, but he being deaf, and not hearing him, immediately kill'd and stripp'd him, not knowing who he was, and left him naked in the ditch, where his body was found the next day after the battle; which the Duke of Lorrain (to his eternal honour) buried with great pomp and magnificence in Saint George's Church, in the old town of Nancy, himself and all his nobility, in deep mourning, attending the corpse to the grave. The following epitaph was sometime afterwards ingrav'd on his tomb :—

Carolus hoc busto Burgundæ gloria gentis
Conditur, Europæ qui fuit ante timor.

I saw a seal ring of his, since his death, at Milan, with his arms cut curiously upon a sardonix that I have seen him often wear in a ribbon at his breast, which was sold at Milan for two ducats, and had been stolen from him by a rascal that waited on him in his chamber. I have often seen the Duke dress'd and undress'd in great state and formality, and attended by very great persons; but at his death all this pomp and magnificence ceas'd, and his family was involved in the same ruin with himself, and very likely as a punishment for his having deliver'd up the Constable not long before, out of a base and avaricious principle; but God forgive him. I have known him a powerful and honourable Prince, in as great esteem, and as much courted by his neighbours (when his affairs were in a prosperous condition), as any Prince in Europe, and perhaps more; and I cannot conceive what should provoke God Almighty's displeasure so highly against him, unless it was his self-love and arrogance, in appropriating all the success of his enterprises, and all the renown he ever acquir'd, to his own wisdom and conduct, without attributing anything to God. Yet, to speak truth, he was master of several good qualities: No Prince ever had a greater ambition to entertain young noblemen than he, nor was more careful of their education: His presents and bounty were never profuse and extravagant, because he gave to many, and had a mind everybody should taste of it. No Prince was ever more easie of access to his servants and subjects. Whilst I was in his service he was never cruel, but a little before his death he took up that humour, which was an infallible sign of the shortness of his life. He was very splendid and curious in his dress, and in everything else, and indeed a little too much. He paid great honours to all ambassadors and foreigners, and entertain'd them nobly: His ambitious desire of fame was insatiable, and it was that which induced him to be eternally in wars, more than any other motive. He ambitiously desired to imitate the old Kings and Heroes of antiquity, whose actions still shine in History, and are so much talked of in the world, and his courage was equal to any Prince's of his time.

'But all his designs and imaginations were vain and extravagant, and turn'd afterwards to his own dishonour and confusion, for 'tis the conquerors and not the conquer'd that purchase to themselves renown. I cannot easily determine towards whom God Almighty showed his anger most, whether towards him who died suddenly without pain or sickness in the field of battle, or towards his subjects who never enjoy'd peace after his death, but were continually involv'd in wars, against which they were not able to maintain themselves, upon account of the civil dissentions and cruel animosities that arose among 'em; and that which was the most insupportable was, that the very people to whom they were now obliged for their defence and preservation were the Germans, who were strangers, and not long since their profess'd enemies. In short, after the Duke's death, there was not a neighbouring State that wish'd them to prosper, nor even Germany that defended 'em. And by the management of their affairs, their understanding seem'd to be as much infatuated as their master's, for they rejected all good counsel, and pursued such methods as directly tended to their destruction; and they are still in such a condition, that though they have at present some little ease and relaxation from their sorrows, yet it is with great danger of a relapse, and 'tis well if it turns not in the end to their utter ruin.

'I am partly of their opinion who maintain that God gives Princes, as he in his wisdom thinks fit, to punish or chastise the subjects; and he disposes the affection of subjects to their Princes, as he has determin'd to raise or depress 'em. Just so it has pleas'd him to deal with the House of Burgundy; for after a long series of riches and prosperity, and six-and-twenty years' peace under three illustrious Princes, predecessors to this Charles (all of 'em excellent persons, and of great prudence and discretion), it pleased God to send this Duke Charles, who involv'd them in bloody wars, as well winter as summer, to their great affliction and expense, in which most of their richest and stoutest men were either killed or utterly undone. Their misfortunes continu'd successively to the very hour of his death; and after such a manner, that at the last the whole strength of their country was destroy'd, and all kill'd or taken prisoners who had any zeal or affection for the House of Burgundy, and had power to defend the state and dignity of that family; so that in a manner their losses were equal to, if not over-balanc'd their former prosperity; for as I have seen those Princes heretofore puissant, rich, and honourable, so it fared the same with their subjects; for I think I have seen and known the greatest part of Europe; yet I never knew any province, or country, tho' perhaps of a larger extent, so abounding in money, so extravagantly fine in furniture for their horses, so sumptuous in their buildings, so profuse in their expenses, so luxurious in their feasts and entertainments, and so prodigal in all respects, as the subjects of these Princes, in my time; but it has pleased God at one blow to subvert and ruin this illustrious family. Such changes and revolutions in states and kingdoms, God in his providence has wrought before we were born, and will do again when we are in our graves; for this is a certain maxim, that the prosperity or adversity of Princes are wholly at his disposal.'—COMMINES, Bk. v. chap. 9.

GLOSSARY TO ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN.

Abettance, support, encouragement.
Abye, to pay the penalty of, atone for.
Acolyte, an attendant upon an ecclesiastic of higher rank.
Adjected, appended, added.
Aigrette, a plume of feathers.
Albe, a long white linen robe, worn by priests.
Alembic, an old chemical apparatus or vessel, used for distilling.
Alter ego, another self, a second self.
Ariette, a little song.
Arquebusier, a soldier armed with an arquebuse, an early form of musket.
Arras, a hanging, curtain of tapestry.
Astucious, astute, shrewd and cunning.
Au secret, for a confidential consultation.
Ave Maria, Hail to thee, Mary! A prayer beginning with these words.

Baaren - hauter, or *Bärenhäuter*, a nickname for a German private soldier.
Baldrick, a belt worn round the waist, or across the breast and over one shoulder.
Ban, an imperial edict; the laws of the Empire.
Bandog, a large, fierce dog, as a mastiff, kept on a chain.
Banneret, a standard-bearer.
Banquette, the walk behind the parapet of a fortress.
Barbed, clad in armour.
Barbican, the outwork defending the gate of a fortress.
Bartizan, a small overhanging turret or projecting parapet.
Beauffet, a sideboard.
Benedicite, my blessing rest upon you.
Blink out of, to evade, escape.
Bordel, a brothel, house of ill fame.
Botargo, the roe of the mullet or tunny, salted and dried.
Brache, a kind of sporting dog.
Braggadocio, a blusterer, boaster.
Brand, a sword.
Bretagne, Brittany.
Broad-piece, an old English gold coin.
Bruit, rumour.
Buon campagna, open country.

Cabaret, a wine-shop.
Caftan, a long robe worn by men in the East.
Caravansera, an inn.
Carbonado, a piece of meat or game, seasoned and broiled.
Carcanet, a necklace, circlet of jewels.
Carolus hoc busto etc., p. (572). In this tomb is embalmed Charles, the glory of the Burgundian nation, formerly the terror of Europe.
Caviare, the roe of the sturgeon pickled in salt.
Chaffron, or *chamfron*, the armoured frontlet of a horse.
Chalet, a Swiss cottage.
Chalumeau, a reed or pipe made into an instrument of music.
Coif, a woman's headdress.
Cornucopia, horn of plenty.
Corselet, a coat of armour.
Corso, the chief street or square in an Italian town.
Côté roti, wine grown on a sunny slope.
Cour plénière, a gathering of all a king's vassals.
Credo, the Apostles' (or other) Creed.
Cresset, a large kind of candlestick for holding a small fire or illuminant.

Dalmatic, *Dalmatique*, a long ecclesiastical robe.
Debonair, affable, courteous.
Deo gratias, To God be the thanks.
Diet, the national assembly.
Dishabille, undress, negligent dress.
Doomsmen, all who gathered at the doom, or great popular court of the ancient Scandinavians.
Dorf, a village.
Double-ganger, or *doppelgänger*, a spectral counterpart of a living person.
Ducat, an old gold coin, worth about 9s. 4d.

Earth-shoot, a landslip.
Emprise, feat, enterprise.
Entrechat, a caper.
Espadon, a long heavy sword.
Eulogium, praise.

Fadge, to succeed, turn out well.
Fain, to make one, to please, give pleasure or joy to.
Fane, abbey, chapel.
Faustrecht, the right claimed by the petty barons of the Empire to wage private warfare.
Fiat voluntas tua, Thy will be done.
Filles repentées, fallen women.
Folter-kammer, a torture-chamber.

Galilee, a porch or chapel beside a monastery or church, in which the monks received visitors, where processions were formed, penitents stationed, and so forth.
Gammon, a smoked ham.
Gauds, trinkets, ornaments.
Gear, business, affair.
Geierstein, vulture-stone.
Graffs-lust, the count's delight.
Grave, a count.
Gutter - blooded, of the meanest birth.

Hagbut, a musket or arquebuse.
Halberd, a pike, axe, and hook, all mounted on a long shaft.
Halidome, on my word of honour.
Hauberk, a shirt of mail.
Hauptman, a captain.
Hundred, an old subdivision of the English counties.
Hypocaust, a stove, heating apparatus.

Ignis fatuus, a will o' the wisp.
Insouciant, heedless, regardless.

Jongleur, a minstrel-poet of Northern France.
Joyeuse entrée, a making entry in festal fashion.

Kreutzer, a German copper coin, worth ⅓ of a penny English.

Lammergeier, the bearded vulture.
Lanceolated, long and narrow, like a lance head.
Landamman, the chief magistrate in a Swiss canton.
Landvogt, a bailiff.
Lanzknecht, a German mercenary soldier.
Largesse, a free distribution of money.
Lauds, a daily service of the Roman Catholic Church.
Leaguer, a camp.
Le bon Roi Réné, good King Réné.
Los, praise.
Losel, a slothful person.
Lyme-hound, a large dog, as a bloodhound.

Maen Gorsedd, the stone of the British bards.
Mainour, a thing stolen, discovered in the hands of the thief.
Maison du Duc, the ducal palace.
Maison du Roy, the royal palace.
Maladroit, awkward, ungainly.
Malcredence, mistrust, the condition of not being believed.
Meinherr, Mr.
Mêlée, a confused conflict at close quarters.
Merlin, a kind of hawk, formerly trained to hunt game birds.
Minnesinger, a poet-minstrel of mediæval Germany.
Montero-cap, a horseman's scarlet cap, of fine Spanish cloth, trimmed with fur.
Morgue, the proud, disdainful look of a superior to an inferior.
Morisco, a Moor of Spain, Moorish.

Naiad, a water-nymph.
Naïveté, artlessness.
Neophyte, a novice, one newly admitted to the orders of a priest.
Noblesse, nobles and courtiers.
Non frater, etc. (p. 490), brother is not safe from brother, nor the guest from his host.

Palmer, a pilgrim to the Holy Land.
Paramours, forbidden love.
Pardoner, a licensed seller of papal indulgences.
Partizan, a kind of pike or halberd.
Pavin, a stately Spanish dance.
Pays de Vaud, the country of Vaud.
Peltry, skins and furs of wild animals.
Pennoncelle, a little flag fixed to a lance.
Peste, plague on't!
Piastre, a silver coin, worth 4s.
Pight, pitched, placed, fixed.
Plump, a clump, collection.
Potz element, a German oath.
Pound, or *Pinfold*, an enclosure in which strayed animals were confined.
Provost-marshal, a military officer charged with police duties in a camp, fortress, or occupied province.
Pursuivant, a herald's attendant.

Questionary, a pedlar of relics or indulgences.

Rebeck, or *rebec*, an instrument resembling the violin.
Reiter, a horse-soldier.
Réveille, the awakening signal with drum or trumpet.
Rhein-Thal, the valley of the Rhine.
Rhinegrave, Count of the Rhine, whose estate was situated in the county of the Rhine.
Rigadoon, a dance with a peculiar hopping step.
Ritter, a knight.
Roba di guadagno, profitable goods.
Roi d'amour, king of love.
Romaunt, a story or tale in verse.
Rote, a kind of harp, played by turning a wheel.

Salamander, a kind of fire-spirit.
Saltire-wise, two lines crossing one another diagonally like a Saint Andrew's cross.
Samite, a textile made of gold cloth or satin.
Sanctum sanctorum, the most private apartment.
Sang froid, coolness, collectedness.
Sapperment der Teufel, a German oath.
Schlaf-trunk, a sleeping draught.
Schwarz-bier, black beer.
Schwarz-reiter, a German mercenary horse-soldier.
Seigniory, the right of ownership vested in a feudal superior or lord.
Shaveling, a priest, his head being shaved.
Sibylline leaf, the oracular or precious saying.
Signeted, stamped with a signet.
Soothfast, true, worthy of belief.
Stadtholder, the emperor's deputy in ancient Westphalia.
Stoup, a drinking-cup.
Strappado, a military punishment: the offender's hands were tied behind his back, then he was lifted up by them to a certain height, and suddenly let fall.
Strick-kind, the child of the cord, the prisoner on trial before the Vehmic Tribunal.
Stube, a sitting-room, public room.
Sumpter-horse, a pack-horse, baggage animal.
Switzer, a native of Switzerland.

Table d'hôte, general dinner or ordinary of an inn.
Talliage, a subsidy, tax.
Tête-du-pont, the defensive outwork upon which the drawbridge rested when it was lowered.
Thane, intermediate between a freeman and a noble.
Tiers état, the third estate, or representatives of the people.
Tisanne, or *Ptisan*, a decoction of barley.
Titan, a giant.
Tournay, a single combat between knights on horseback.
Treillage, trellis-work.
Troubadour, a minstrel poet of the south of France.
Turnpike-stair, a spiral or winding staircase.

Usum non habeo, I do not know how to use it.

Vade retro, get thee behind.
Vail, to doff, lower, take off.
Vambrace, the piece of armour that covered the forearm.
Verfämbt, condemned by the Vehmic Tribunal.
Vestiary, a room for keeping vestments.
Videlicet, namely.
Vidette, an advanced sentinel.
Violer, a player on a viol, a kind of violin.
Visard, a mask to cover the face.
Visne, venue, the place where a law action can be tried.

Wapentake, an old subdivision of the English counties.
Warrand, a defender.
Wassail, ale or wine sweetened and flavoured with spices.
Wassel-song, a drinking song, carousing song.
Welked, marked with protuberances.
Wimple, a shawl worn by women out of doors.
Wroge, or *Vroge*, lists of offences that called for the attention of the court.

Yungfrau, or *Jungfrau*, a maiden; an unmarried lady of the minor nobility of Germany.
Yung-herren or *Jungherren*, or *Junker*, the sons of a German minor noble.

Zecchin, or *Sequin*, a Venetian gold coin, worth 9s. to 10s.

COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS

By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

The European with the Asian shore—
  Sophia's cupola with golden gleam—
The cypress groves—Olympus high and hoar—
  The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream.
Far less describe, present the very view
That charm'd the charming Mary Montague.

Don Juan

COUNT ROBERT ON THE EMPEROR'S THRONE, *page* 632

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
1892

INTRODUCTION

COUNT ROBERT SLAYING THE TIGER.—PAGE 657.

Sir Walter Scott transmitted from Naples, in February 1832, an Introduction for Castle Dangerous; *but if he ever wrote one for a second edition of* Count Robert of Paris, *it has not been discovered among his papers.*

Some notes, chiefly extracts from the books which he had been observed to consult while dictating *this novel, are now appended to its pages; and in addition to what the Author had given in the shape of historical information respecting the principal real persons introduced, the reader is here presented with what may probably amuse him, the passage of the Alexiad in which Anna Comnena describes the incident which originally, no doubt, determined Sir Walter's choice of a hero.*

May, A.D. *1097.—'As for the multitude of those who advanced towards* THE GREAT CITY,* *let it be enough to say, that they were as the stars in the heaven, or as the sand upon the sea-shore. They were, in the words of Homer,* as many as the leaves and flowers of spring. *But for the names of the leaders, though they are present in my memory, I will not relate them. The numbers of these would alone deter me, even if my language furnished the means of expressing their barbarous sounds; and for what purpose should I afflict my readers with a long enumeration of the names of those whose visible presence gave so much horror to all that beheld them?*

'As soon, therefore, as they approached the Great City, they occupied the station appointed for them by the Emperor, near to the Monastery of Cosmidius. But this multitude were not, like the Hellenic one of old, to be restrained and governed by the loud voices of nine heralds; they required the constant superintendence of chosen and valiant soldiers to keep them from violating the commands of the Emperor.

'He, meantime, laboured to obtain from the other leaders that acknowledgment of his supreme authority which had already been drawn from Godfrey† [Γοντοφρε] himself. But notwithstanding the willingness of some to accede to this proposal, and their assistance in working on the minds of their associates, the Emperor's endeavours had little success, as the majority were looking for the arrival of Bohemond‡ [Βαιμοντος], in whom they placed their chief confidence, and resorted to every art with the view of gaining time. The Emperor, whom it was not easy to deceive, penetrated their motives; and by granting to one powerful person demands which had been supposed out of all bounds of expectation, and by resorting to a variety of other devices, he at length prevailed, and won general assent to the following of the example of Godfrey, who also was sent for in person to assist in this business.

'All, therefore, being assembled, and Godfrey among them, the oath was taken; but when all

* [Byzantium or Constantinople, at that time the capital of the Eastern or Greek (Roman) Empire.]

† [Godfrey of Bouillon, chief leader of the First Crusade, and founder of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.]

‡ [Bohemond of Tarentum was the son of the Norman chief, Robert Guiscard, and afterwards Prince of Antioch in Syria.]

was finished, a certain Noble among these Counts had the audacity to seat himself on the throne of the Emperor. [Τολμησας τις ἀπο παντων των κομητων εὐγενης εἰς τον σκιμποδα του Βασιλεως ἐκαθισεν.] *The Emperor restrained himself and said nothing, for he was well acquainted of old with the nature of the Latins.*

*'But the Count Baldwin** [Βαλδουινος] *stepping forth, and seizing him by the hand, dragged him thence, and with many reproaches said, "It becomes thee not to do such things here, especially after having taken the oath of fealty.* [δουλειαν ὑποσχομενος.] *It is not the custom of the Roman Emperors to permit any of their inferiors to sit beside them, not even of such as are born subjects of their empire; and it is necessary to respect the customs of the country." But he, answering nothing to Baldwin, stared yet more fixedly upon the Emperor, and muttered to himself something in his own dialect, which, being interpreted, was to this effect—"Behold, what rustic fellow* [χωριτης] *is this, to be seated alone while such leaders stand around him?" The movement of his lips did not escape the Emperor, who called to him one that understood the Latin dialect, and inquired what words the man had spoken. When he heard them, the Emperor said nothing to the other Latins, but kept the thing to himself. When, however, the business was all over, he called near to him by himself that swelling and shameless Latin* [ὑψηλοφρονα ἐκεινον και ἀναιδη], *and asked of him who he was, of what lineage, and from what region he had come. "I am a Frank," said he, "of pure blood, of the Nobles. One thing I know, that where three roads meet in the place from which I came, there is an ancient church, in which whosoever has the desire to measure himself against another in single combat, prays God to help him therein, and afterwards abides the coming of one willing to encounter him. At that spot long time did I remain, but the man bold enough to stand against me, I found not." Hearing these words, the Emperor said, "If hitherto thou hast sought battles in vain, the time is at hand which will furnish thee with abundance of them. And I advise thee to place thyself neither before the phalanx, nor in its rear, but to stand fast in the midst of thy fellow-soldiers; for of old time I am well acquainted with the warfare of the Turks." With such advice he dismissed not only this man, but the rest of those who were about to depart on that expedition.'*—Alexiad, Book x. pp. 237, 238.

Ducange,† *as is mentioned in the novel, identifies the church, thus described by the Crusader, with that of* Our Lady of Soissons, *of which a French poet of the days of Louis VII. says—*

> *Veiller y vont encore li Pelerin*
> *Cil qui bataille veulent fere et fournir.*
> DUCANGE *in* Alexiad, p. 86.

The Princess Anna Comnena, it may be proper to observe, was born on the first of December, A.D. *1083, and was consequently in her fifteenth year when the chiefs of the First Crusade made their appearance in her father's court. Even then, however, it is not improbable that she might have been the wife of Nicephorus Bryennius, whom, many years after his death, she speaks of in her history as* τον ἐμου Καισαρα, *and in other terms equally affectionate. The bitterness with which she uniformly mentions Bohemond, Count of Tarentum, afterwards Prince of Antioch, has, however, been ascribed to a disappointment in love; and on one remarkable occasion the Princess certainly expressed great contempt of her husband. I am aware of no other authorities for the liberties taken with this lady's conjugal character in the novel.*

Her husband, Nicephorus Bryennius, was the grandson of the person of that name who figures in history as the rival, in a contest for the Imperial throne, of Nicephorus Botoniates. He was, on his marriage with Anna Comnena, invested with the rank of Panhypersebastos, *or* Omnium Augustissimus; *but Alexius deeply offended him by afterwards recognising the superior and simpler dignity of a* Sebastos. *His eminent qualities, both in peace and war, are acknowledged by Gibbon; and he has left us four books of Memoirs, detailing the early part of his father-in-law's history, and valuable as being the work of an eye-witness of the most important events which he describes. Anna Comnena appears to have considered it her duty to take up the task which her husband had not lived to complete; and hence the* Alexiad—*certainly, with all its defects, the first historical work that has as yet proceeded from a female pen.*

'The life of the Emperor Alexius' (says Gibbon), 'has been delineated by the pen of a favourite daughter, who was inspired by tender regard for his person, and a laudable zeal to perpetuate his virtues. Conscious of the just suspicion of her readers, the Princess repeatedly protests that, besides her personal knowledge, she had searched the discourses and writings of the most respectable veterans; and that, after an interval of thirty years, forgotten by and forgetful of the world, her mournful solitude was inaccessible to hope and fear; that truth, the naked perfect truth, was more dear than the memory of her parent. Yet, instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins our belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays in every page the vanity of a female author. The genuine character of Alexius is lost in a vague constellation of virtues; and the perpetual strain of panegyric and apology awakens our jealousy, to question the veracity of the historian and the merit of her hero. We cannot, however, refuse her judicious and important remark, that the disorders of the times were the misfortune and the glory of Alexis; and that every calamity which can afflict a declining empire was accumulated on his reign by the justice of Heaven and the vices of his predecessors. In the east the victorious Turks had spread, from Persia to the Hellespont, the reign of the Koran and the Crescent;‡ *the west was invaded by the adven-*

* [Brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, whom he accompanied in the Crusade. When Godfrey declined the crown of Jerusalem, it was offered to Baldwin, who accepted it, and so became the first king of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem.]

† [A celebrated French scholar of the seventeenth century.]

‡ [The sacred book and the sacred symbol of the Mohammedan faith.]

turous valour of the Normans; and, in the moments of peace, the Danube poured forth new swarms, who had gained in the science of war what they had lost in the ferociousness of their manners. The sea was not less hostile than the land; and while the frontiers were assaulted by an open enemy, the palace was distracted with secret conspiracy and treason.

'On a sudden, the banner of the Cross was displayed by the Latins; Europe was precipitated on Asia; and Constantinople had almost been swept away by this impetuous deluge. In the tempest Alexius steered the Imperial vessel with dexterity and courage. At the head of his armies, he was bold in action, skilful in stratagem, patient of fatigue, ready to improve his advantages, and rising from his defeats with inexhaustible vigour. The discipline of the camp was reversed, and a new generation of men and soldiers was created by the precepts and example of their leader. In his intercourse with the Latins, Alexius was patient and artful; his discerning eye pervaded the new system of an unknown world.

'The increase of the male and female branches of his family adorned the throne, and secured the succession; but their princely luxury and pride offended the patricians, exhausted the revenue, and insulted the misery of the people. Anna is a faithful witness that his happiness was destroyed and his health broken by the cares of a public life; the patience of Constantinople was fatigued by the length and severity of his reign; and before Alexius expired, he had lost the love and reverence of his subjects. The clergy could not forgive his application of the sacred riches to the defence of the State; but they applauded his theological learning and ardent zeal for the orthodox faith, which he defended with his tongue, his pen, and his sword. Even the sincerity of his moral and religious virtues was suspected by the persons who had passed their lives in his confidence. In his last hours, when he was pressed by his wife Irene to alter the succession, he raised his head, and breathed a pious ejaculation on the vanity of the world. The indignant reply of the Empress may be inscribed as an epitaph on his tomb—"You die as you have lived—a hypocrite."

'It was the wish of Irene to supplant the eldest of her sons in favour of her daughter, the Princess Anna, whose philosophy would not have refused the weight of a diadem. But the order of male succession was asserted by the friends of their country; the lawful heir drew the royal signet from the finger of his insensible or conscious father, and the empire obeyed the master of the palace. Anna Comnena was stimulated by ambition and revenge to conspire against the life of her brother; and when the design was prevented by the fears or scruples of her husband, she passionately exclaimed that nature had mistaken the two sexes, and had endowed Bryennius with the soul of a woman. After the discovery of her treason, the life and fortune of Anna were justly forfeited to the laws. Her life was spared by the clemency of the Emperor, but he visited the pomp and treasures of her palace, and bestowed the rich confiscation on the most deserving of his friends.'—History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. xlviii.

The year of Anna's death is nowhere recorded. She appears to have written the Alexiad *in a convent; and to have spent nearly thirty years in this retirement before her book was published.*

For accurate particulars of the public events touched on in Robert of Paris, *the reader is referred to the above-quoted author,* chapters xlviii., xlix., and l.; *and to the first volume of Mills'* History of the Crusades.*

J. G. L.†

London, *1st March* 1833.

* [The article 'Chivalry' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (ed. 1830), written by Scott, will also be found to contain an interesting allusion to the chief incident in Chapter ix. of the novel.]

† [John Gibson Lockhart—Sir Walter's literary executor.]

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM, A.M.,

TO THE LOVING READER WISHETH HEALTH AND PROSPERITY.

It would ill become me, whose name has been spread abroad by those former collections bearing this title of 'Tales of my Landlord,' and who have, by the candid voice of a numerous crowd of readers, been taught to think that I merit not the empty fame alone, but also the more substantial rewards, of successful pencraft—it would, I say, ill become me to suffer this my youngest literary babe, and probably, at the same time, the last child of mine old age, to pass into the world without some such modest apology for its defects, as it has been my custom to put forth on preceding occasions of the like nature. The world has been sufficiently instructed, of a truth, that I am not individually the person to whom is to be ascribed the actual inventing or designing of the scheme upon which these Tales, which men have found so pleasing, were originally constructed, as also that neither am I the actual workman, who, furnished by a skilful architect with an accurate plan, including elevations and directions, both general and particular, has from thence toiled to bring forth and complete the intended shape and proportion of each division of the edifice. Nevertheless, I have been indisputably the man, who, in placing my name at the head of the undertaking, have rendered myself mainly and principally responsible for its general success. When a ship of war goeth forth to battle with her crew, consisting of sundry foremast men and various officers, such subordinate persons are not said to gain or lose the vessel which they have manned or attacked (although each was natheless sufficiently active in his own department); but it is forthwith bruited and noised abroad, without further phrase, that Captain Jedediah Cleishbotham hath lost such a seventy-four, or won that which, by the united exertions of all thereto pertaining, is taken from the enemy. In the same manner, shame and sorrow it were, if I, the voluntary captain and founder of these adventures, after having upon three divers occasions assumed to myself the emolument and reputation thereof, should now withdraw myself from the risks of failure proper to this fourth and last out-going. No! I will rather address my associates in this bottom with the constant spirit of Matthew Prior's heroine: *

Did I but purpose to embark with thee
On the smooth surface of some summer sea,
But would forsake the waves, and make the shore,
When the winds whistle, and the billows roar?

As little, nevertheless, would it become my years and station not to admit without cavil certain errors which may justly be pointed out in these concluding 'Tales of my Landlord,'—the last, and, it is manifest, never carefully revised or corrected, handiwork of Mr. Peter Pattieson, now no more; the same worthy young man so repeatedly mentioned in these Introductory Essays, and never without that tribute to his good sense and talents, nay, even genius, which his contributions to this my undertaking fairly entitled him to claim at the hands of his surviving friend and patron. These pages, I have said, were the ultimus labor *of mine ingenious assistant; but I say not, as the great Doctor Pitcairn † of his hero* —ultimus atque optimus. *Alas! even the giddiness attendant on a journey on this Manchester rail-road ‡ is not so perilous to the nerves, as that too frequent exercise in the merry-go-round of the ideal world, whereof the tendency to render the fancy confused, and the judgment inert, hath in all ages been noted, not only by the erudite of the earth, but even by many of the thick-witted Ofelli§ themselves; whether the rapid pace at which the fancy moveth in such exercitations, where the wish of the penman is to him like Prince Houssain's tapestry ‖ in the Eastern fable, be the chief source of peril—or whether, without reference to this wearing speed of movement, the dwelling habitually in those realms of imagination be as little suited for a man's intellect, as to breathe for any considerable space 'the difficult air of the mountain top' is to the physical structure of his outward frame—this question belongeth not to me; but certain it is, that we often discover in the works of the foremost of this order of men, marks of bewilderment and confusion, such as do not so frequently occur in those of persons to whom nature hath conceded fancy weaker of wing, or less ambitious in flight.*

It is affecting to see the great Miguel Cervantes himself, even like the sons of meaner men, defending himself against the critics of the day, who assailed him upon such little discrepancies and inaccuracies as are apt to cloud the progress even of a mind like his, when the evening is closing around it. 'It is quite a common thing,' says

* [Emma, in *Henry and Emma*, a poem.]

† [A celebrated doctor and writer of Edinburgh in the end of the 17th and early part of the 18th century.]

‡ [Opened in 1829, shortly before this Introductory Address was penned.]

§ [Ofellus is an unpolished but upright countryman in Horace's *Satires*, ii. 2.]

‖ [Prince Hussain's carpet would waft whoever sat down upon it instantaneously to whatever place he wished to go to. See *Arabian Nights*: 'Prince Ahmed.']

Don Quixote, 'for men who have gained a very great reputation by their writings before they were printed, quite to lose it afterwards, or, at least, the greater part.'—'The reason is plain,' answers the Bachelor Carrasco; 'their faults are more easily discovered after the books are printed, as being then more read, and more narrowly examined, especially if the author has been much cried up before, for then the severity of the scrutiny is sure to be the greater. Those who have raised themselves a name by their own ingenuity, great poets and celebrated historians, are commonly, if not always, envied by a set of men who delight in censuring the writings of others, though they could never produce any of their own.'—'That is no wonder,' quoth Don Quixote; 'there are many divines that would make but very dull preachers, and yet are quick enough at finding faults and superfluities in other men's sermons.'—'All this is true,' says Carrasco, 'and therefore I could wish such censurers would be more merciful and less scrupulous, and not dwell ungenerously upon small spots that are in a manner but so many atoms on the face of the clear sun they murmur at. If aliquando dormitat Homerus, *let them consider how many nights he kept himself awake to bring his noble works to light as little darkened with defects as might be. But, indeed, it may many times happen that what is censured for a fault is rather an ornament, as moles often add to the beauty of a face. When all is said, he that publishes a book runs a great risk, since nothing can be so unlikely as that he should have composed one capable of securing the approbation of every reader.'—'Sure,' says Don Quixote, 'that which treats of me can have pleased but few?'—'Quite the contrary,' says Carrasco; 'for as* infinitus est numerus stultorum, *so an infinite number have admired your history. Only some there are who have taxed the author with want of memory or sincerity, because he forgot to give an account who it was that stole Sancho's Dapple, for that particular is not mentioned there, only we find, by the story, that it was stolen; and yet, by and by, we find him riding the same ass again, without any previous light given us into the matter. Then they say that the author forgot to tell the reader what Sancho did with the hundred pieces of gold he found in the portmanteau in the Sierra Morena, for there is not a word said of them more; and many people have a great mind to know what he did with them, and how he spent them; which is one of the most material points in which the work is defective.'*

How amusingly Sancho is made to clear up the obscurities thus alluded to by the Bachelor Carrasco no reader can have forgotten; but there remained enough of similar lacunæ, *inadvertencies, and mistakes, to exercise the ingenuity of those Spanish critics, who were too wise in their own conceit to profit by the good-natured and modest apology of this immortal author.*

There can be no doubt that if Cervantes had deigned to use it, he might have pleaded also the apology of indifferent health, under which he certainly laboured while finishing the second part of 'Don Quixote.' It must be too obvious that the intervals of such a malady as then affected Cervantes could not be the most favourable in the world for revising lighter compositions, and correcting, at least, those grosser errors and imperfections which each author should, if it were but for shame's sake, remove from his work, before bringing it forth into the broad light of day, where they will never fail to be distinctly seen, nor lack ingenious persons, who will be too happy in discharging the office of pointing them out.

It is more than time to explain with what purpose we have called thus fully to memory the many venial errors of the inimitable Cervantes, and those passages in which he has rather defied his adversaries than pleaded his own justification; for I suppose it will be readily granted that the difference is too wide betwixt that great wit of Spain and ourselves, to permit us to use a buckler which was rendered sufficiently formidable only by the strenuous hand in which it was placed.

The history of my first publications is sufficiently well known. Nor did I relinquish the purpose of concluding these 'Tales of my Landlord,' which had been so remarkably fortunate; but Death, which steals upon us all with an inaudible foot, cut short the ingenious young man to whose memory I composed that inscription, and erected, at my own charge, that monument which protects his remains, by the side of the river Gander, which he has contributed so much to render immortal, and in a place of his own selection, not very distant from the school under my care. In a word, the ingenious Mr. Pattieson was removed from his place.*

Nor did I confine my care to his posthumous fame alone, but carefully inventoried and preserved the effects which he left behind him, namely, the contents of his small wardrobe, and a number of printed books of somewhat more consequence, together with certain woefully blurred manuscripts, discovered in his repository. On looking these over, I found them to contain two tales, called 'Count Robert of Paris,' and 'Castle Dangerous;' but was seriously disappointed to perceive that they were by no means in that state of correctness which would induce an experienced person to pronounce any writing, in the technical language of book-craft, 'prepared for press.' There were not only hiatus valde deflendi, *but even grievous inconsistencies, and other mistakes, which the penman's leisurely revision, had he been spared to bestow it, would doubtless have cleared away. After a considerate perusal, I no question flattered myself that these manuscripts, with all their faults, contained here and there passages, which seemed plainly to intimate that severe indisposition had been unable to extinguish altogether the brilliancy of that fancy which the world had been pleased to acknowledge in the creations of Old Mortality, the Bride of Lammermoor, and others of these narratives. But I, nevertheless, threw the manuscripts into my drawer, resolving not to think of committing them to the Ballantynian† ordeal, until I could either obtain the assistance of some capable person to supply deficiencies and correct errors, so as they might face the public with credit, or perhaps numerous and more serious avocations might permit me to dedicate my own time and labour to that task.*

* [See Old Mortality, p. 708, of this edition.]

† [Having them printed by Ballantyne.]

While I was in this uncertainty, I had a visit from a stranger, who was announced as a young gentleman desirous of speaking with me on particular business. I immediately augured the accession of a new boarder, but was at once checked by observing that the outward man of the stranger was, in a most remarkable degree, what mine host of the Sir William Wallace, in his phraseology, calls seedy. *His black cloak had seen service; the waistcoat of grey plaid bore yet stronger marks of having encountered more than one campaign; his third piece of dress was an absolute veteran compared to the others; his shoes were so loaded with mud as showed his journey must have been pedestrian; and a grey* maud, *which fluttered around his wasted limbs, completed such an equipment as, since Juvenal's days, has been the livery of the poor scholar. I therefore concluded that I beheld a candidate for the vacant office of usher, and prepared to listen to his proposals with the dignity becoming my station; but what was my surprise when I found I had before me, in this rusty student, no less a man than Paul, the brother of Peter Pattieson, come to gather in his brother's succession, and possessed, it seemed, with no small idea of the value of that part of it which consisted in the productions of his pen!*

*By the rapid study I made of him, this Paul was a sharp lad, imbued with some tincture of letters, like his regretted brother, but totally destitute of those amiable qualities which had often induced me to say within myself that Peter was, like the famous John Gay,**—

In wit a man, simplicity a child.

He set little by the legacy of my deceased assistant's wardrobe, nor did the books hold much greater value in his eyes; but he peremptorily demanded to be put in possession of the manuscripts, alleging, with obstinacy, that no definite bargain had been completed between his late brother and me, and at length produced the opinion to that effect of a writer, or man of business—a class of persons with whom I have always chosen to have as little concern as possible.

But I had one defence left, which came to my aid, tanquam deus ex machinâ. *This rapacious Paul Pattieson could not pretend to wrest the disputed manuscripts out of my possession, unless upon repayment of a considerable sum of money, which I had advanced from time to time to the deceased Peter, and particularly to purchase a small annuity for his aged mother. These advances, with the charges of the funeral and other expenses, amounted to a considerable sum, which the poverty-struck student and his acute legal adviser equally foresaw great difficulty in liquidating. The said Mr. Paul Pattieson, therefore, listened to a suggestion, which I dropped as if by accident, that if he thought himself capable of filling his brother's place of carrying the work through the press, I would make him welcome to bed and board within my mansion while he was thus engaged, only requiring his occasional assistance at hearing the more advanced scholars. This seemed to promise a close of our dispute, alike satisfactory to all parties, and the first act of Paul was to draw on me for a round sum, under pretence that his wardrobe must be wholly refitted. To this I made no objection, though it certainly showed like vanity to purchase garments in the extremity of the mode, when not only great part of the defunct's habiliments were very fit for a twelvemonth's use, but as I myself had been but yesterday, as it were, equipped in a becoming new stand of black clothes, Mr. Pattieson would have been welcome to the use of such of my quondam raiment as he thought suitable, as indeed had always been the case with his deceased brother.*

The school, I must needs say, came tolerably on. My youngster was very smart, and seemed to be so active in his duty of usher, if I may so speak, that he even overdid his part therein, and I began to feel myself a cipher in my own school.

I comforted myself with the belief that the publication was advancing as fast as I could desire. On this subject, Paul Pattieson, like ancient Pistol,† 'talked bold words at the bridge,' and that not only at our house, but in the society of our neighbours, amongst whom, instead of imitating the retired and monastic manner of his brother deceased, he became a gay visitor, and such a reveller, that in process of time he was observed to vilipend the modest fare which had at first been esteemed a banquet by his hungry appetite, and thereby highly displeased my wife, who, with justice, applauds herself for the plentiful, cleanly, and healthy victuals wherewith she maintains her ushers and boarders.

Upon the whole, I rather hoped than entertained a sincere confidence that all was going on well, and was in that unpleasant state of mind which precedes the open breach between two associates who have been long jealous of each other, but are as yet deterred by a sense of mutual interest from coming to an open rupture.

The first thing which alarmed me was a rumour in the village, that Paul Pattieson intended, in some little space, to undertake a voyage to the Continent—on account of his health, as was pretended, but, as the same report averred, much more with the view of gratifying the curiosity which his perusal of the classics had impressed upon him than for any other purpose. I was, I say, rather alarmed at this susurrus, *and began to reflect that the retirement of Mr. Pattieson, unless his loss could be supplied in good time, was like to be a blow to the establishment; for, in truth, this Paul had a winning way with the boys, especially those who were gentle-tempered; so that I must confess my doubts whether, in certain respects, I myself could have fully supplied his place in the school, with all my authority and experience. My wife, jealous, as became her station, of Mr. Pattieson's intentions, advised me to take the matter up immediately, and go to the bottom at once; and, indeed, I had always found that way answered best with my boys.*

Mrs. Cleishbotham was not long before renewing the subject; for, like most of the race of Xantippe‡ (though my helpmate is a well-spoken woman), she loves to thrust in her oar where she is not able to pull it to purpose. 'You are a sharp-witted man, Mr. Cleishbotham,' would she

* [The English poet, author of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728).]

† [Sir John Falstaff's lieutenant.]

‡ [The vixenish wife of the Greek sage Socrates.]

observe, 'and a learned man, Mr. Cleishbotham—and the schoolmaster of Gandercleuch, Mr. Cleishbotham, which is saying all in one word; but many a man almost as great as yourself has lost the saddle by suffering an inferior to get up behind him; and though, with the world, Mr. Cleishbotham, you have the name of doing everything, both in directing the school and in this new profitable book line which you have taken up, yet it begins to be the common talk of Gandercleuch, both up the water and down the water, that the usher both writes the dominie's books, and teaches the dominie's school. Ay, ay, ask maid, wife, or widow, and she'll tell ye, the least gaitling among them all comes to Paul Pattieson with his lesson as naturally as they come to me for their four-hours, puir things; and never ane thinks of applying to you aboot a kittle turn, or a crabbed word, or aboot onything else, unless it were for licet exire, or the mending of an auld pen.'

Now, this address assailed me on a summer evening, when I was whiling away my leisure hours with the end of a cutty-pipe, and indulging in such bland imaginations as the nicotian weed is wont to produce, more especially in the case of studious persons, devoted musis severioribus. I was naturally loth to leave my misty sanctuary; and endeavoured to silence the clamour of Mrs. Cleishbotham's tongue, which has something in it peculiarly shrill and penetrating. 'Woman,' said I, with a tone of domestic authority befitting the occasion, 'res tuas agas;—mind your washings and your wringings, your stuffings and your physicking, or whatever concerns the outward person of the pupils, and leave the progress of their education to my usher, Paul Pattieson, and myself.'

'I am glad to see,' added the accursed woman (that I should say so!), 'that ye have the grace to name him foremost, for there is little doubt that he ranks first of the troop, if ye wad but hear what the neighbours speak—or whisper.'

'What do they whisper, thou sworn sister of the Eumenides?'* cried I,—the irritating œstrum of the woman's objurgation totally counterbalancing the sedative effects both of pipe and pot.

'Whisper?' resumed she in her shrillest note—'why, they whisper loud enough for me at least to hear them, that the schoolmaster of Gandercleuch is turned a doited auld woman, and spends all his time in tippling strong drink with the keeper of the public-house, and leaves school and bookmaking, and a' the rest o't, to the care of his usher; and also, the wives in Gandercleuch say that you have engaged Paul Pattieson to write a new book, which is to beat a' the lave that gaed afore it; and to show what a sair lift you have o' the job, you didna sae muckle as ken the name o't—no, nor whether it was to be about some heathen Greek, or the Black Douglas.'

This was said with such bitterness that it penetrated to the very quick, and I hurled the poor old pipe, like one of Homer's spears, not in the face of my provoking helpmate, though the temptation was strong, but into the river Gander, which, as is now well known to tourists from the uttermost parts of the earth, pursues its quiet meanders beneath the bank on which the schoolhouse is pleasantly situated; and, starting up, fixed on my head the cocked hat (the pride of Messrs. Grieve and Scott's repository),† and, plunging into the valley of the brook, pursued my way upwards, the voice of Mrs. Cleishbotham accompanying me in my retreat with something like the angry scream of triumph with which the brook-goose pursues the flight of some unmannerly cur or idle boy who has intruded upon her premises, and fled before her. Indeed, so great was the influence of this clamour of scorn and wrath which hung upon my rear, that, while it rung in my ears, I was so moved that I instinctively tucked the skirts of my black coat under my arm, as if I had been in actual danger of being seized on by the grasp of the pursuing enemy. Nor was it till I had almost reached the well-known burial-place, in which it was Peter Pattieson's hap to meet the far-famed personage called Old Mortality, that I made a halt for the purpose of composing my perturbed spirits, and considering what was to be done; for as yet my mind was agitated by a chaos of passions, of which anger was predominant; and for what reason, or against whom, I entertained such tumultuous displeasure, it was not easy for me to determine.

Nevertheless, having settled my cocked hat with becoming accuracy on my well-powdered wig, and suffered it to remain uplifted for a moment to cool my flushed brow — having, moreover, readjusted and shaken to rights the skirts of my black coat, I came into case to answer to my own questions, which, till these manœuvres had been sedately accomplished, I might have asked myself in vain.

In the first place, therefore, to use the phrase of Mr. Docket, the writer (that is, the attorney) of our village of Gandercleuch, I became satisfied that my anger was directed against all and sundry, or, in law Latin, contra omnes mortales, and more particularly against the neighbourhood of Gandercleuch, for circulating reports to the prejudice of my literary talents, as well as my accomplishments as a pedagogue, and transferring the fame thereof to mine own usher. Secondly, against my spouse, Dorothea Cleishbotham, for transferring the said calumnious reports to my ears in a prerupt and unseemly manner, and without due respect either to the language which she made use of, or the person to whom she spoke,—treating affairs in which I was so intimately concerned as if they were proper subjects for jest among gossips at a christening, where the womankind claim the privilege of worshipping the Bona Dea,‡ according to their secret female rites.

Thirdly, I became clear that I was entitled to respond to any whom it concerned to inquire, that my wrath was kindled against Paul Pattieson, my usher, for giving occasion both for the neighbours of Gandercleuch entertaining such opinions, and for Mrs. Cleishbotham disrespectfully urging them to my face, since neither circumstance could have existed, without he had put forth sinful misrepresentations of transactions, private and

* [The Furies, monsters of terror, in ancient Greek mythology.]

† [A well-known firm of hatters in Edinburgh.]

‡ [A Roman goddess, peculiarly the goddess of women.]

confidential, and of which I had myself entirely refrained from dropping any the least hint to any third person.

This arrangement of my ideas having contributed to soothe the stormy atmosphere of which they had been the offspring, gave reason a time to predominate, and to ask me, with her calm but clear voice, whether, under all the circumstances, I did well to nourish so indiscriminate an indignation? In fine, on closer examination, the various splenetic thoughts I had been indulging against other parties began to be merged in that resentment against my perfidious usher, which, like the serpent of Moses, swallowed up all subordinate objects of displeasure. To put myself at open feud with the whole of my neighbours, unless I had been certain of some effectual mode of avenging myself upon them, would have been an undertaking too weighty for my means, and not unlikely, if rashly grappled withal, to end in my ruin. To make a public quarrel with my wife, on such an account as her opinion of my literary accomplishments, would sound ridiculous; and besides, Mrs. C. was sure to have all the women on her side, who would represent her as a wife persecuted by her husband for offering him good advice, and urging it upon him with only too enthusiastic sincerity.

There remained Paul Pattieson, undoubtedly, the most natural and proper object of my indignation, since I might be said to have him in my own power, and might punish him by dismissal at my pleasure. Yet even vindictive proceedings against the said Paul, however easy to be enforced, might be productive of serious consequences to my own purse; and I began to reflect, with anxiety, that in this world it is not often that the gratification of our angry passions lies in the same road with the advancement of our interest, and that the wise man, the verè sapiens, *seldom hesitates which of these two he ought to prefer.*

I recollected also that I was quite uncertain how far the present usher had really been guilty of the foul acts of assumption charged against him.

In a word, I began to perceive that it would be no light matter at once, and without maturer perpending of sundry collateral punctiuncula, *to break up a joint-stock adventure, or society, as civilians term it, which, if profitable to him, had at least promised to be no less so to me, established in years and learning and reputation so much his superior. Moved by which, and other the like considerations, I resolved to proceed with becoming caution on the occasion, and not, by stating my causes of complaint too hastily in the outset, exasperate into a positive breach what might only prove some small misunderstanding, easily explained or apologized for, and which, like a leak in a new vessel, being once discovered and carefully stopped, renders the vessel but more seaworthy than it was before.*

About the time that I had adopted this healing resolution, I reached the spot where the almost perpendicular face of a steep hill seems to terminate the valley, or at least divides it into two dells, each serving as a cradle to its own mountain-stream, the Gruffquack, namely, and the shallower but more noisy Gusedub, on the left hand, which at their union form the Gander, properly so called. Each of these little valleys has a walk winding up to its recesses, rendered more easy by the labours of the poor during the late hard season, and one of which bears the name of Pattieson's Path, while the other had been kindly consecrated to my own memory, by the title of the Dominie's Daidling-bit. Here I made certain to meet my associate, Paul Pattieson, for by one or other of these roads he was wont to return to my house of an evening, after his lengthened rambles.

Nor was it long before I espied him descending the Gusedub by that tortuous path, marking so strongly the character of a Scottish glen. He was easily distinguished, indeed, at some distance, by his jaunty swagger, in which he presented to you the flat of his leg, like the manly knave of clubs, apparently with the most perfect contentment, not only with his leg and boot, but with every part of his outward man, and the whole fashion of his garments, and, one would almost have thought, the contents of his pockets.

In this, his wonted guise, he approached me, where I was seated near the meeting of the waters, and I could not but discern that his first impulse was to pass me without any prolonged or formal greeting. But as that would not have been decent, considering the terms on which we stood, he seemed to adopt, on reflection, a course directly opposite; bustled up to me with an air of alacrity, and, I may add, impudence; and hastened at once into the middle of the important affairs which it had been my purpose to bring under discussion in a manner more becoming their gravity. 'I am glad to see you, Mr. Cleishbotham,' said he, with an inimitable mixture of confusion and effrontery; 'the most wonderful news which has been heard in the literary world in my time—all Gandercleuch rings with it—they positively speak of nothing else, from Miss Buskbody's youngest apprentice to the minister himself, and ask each other in amazement whether the tidings are true or false — to be sure they are of an astounding complexion, especially to you and me.'

'Mr. Pattieson,' said I, 'I am quite at a loss to guess at your meaning. Davus sum, non Œdipus *—I am Jedediah Cleishbotham, Schoolmaster of the parish of Gandercleuch; no conjuror, and neither reader of riddles nor expounder of enigmata.'*

'Well,' replied Paul Pattieson, 'Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, Schoolmaster of the parish of Gandercleuch, and so forth, all I have to inform you is, that our hopeful scheme is entirely blown up. The tales, on publishing which we reckoned with so much confidence, have already been printed; they are abroad, over all America, and the British papers are clamorous.'

I received this news with the same equanimity with which I should have accepted a blow addressed to my stomach by a modern gladiator, with the full energy of his fist. 'If this be correct information, Mr. Pattieson,' said I, 'I must of necessity suspect you to be the person who have supplied the foreign press with the copy which the printers have thus made an unscrupulous use of, without respect to the rights of the undeniable proprietors of the manuscripts; and I request to know whether this American production embraces the alterations which you as well as I judged necessary, before the work could be fitted to meet the public eye?' To this my gentleman saw it necessary to make a

direct answer, for my manner was impressive, and my tone decisive. His native audacity enabled him, however, to keep his ground, and he answered with firmness:—

'Mr. Cleishbotham, in the first place, these manuscripts, over which you claim a very doubtful right, were never given to any one by me, and must have been sent to America either by yourself, or by some one of the various gentlemen to whom, I am well aware, you have afforded opportunities of perusing my brother's MS. remains.'

'Mr. Pattieson,' I replied, 'I beg to remind you that it never could be my intention, either by my own hands, or through those of another, to remit these manuscripts to the press, until, by the alterations which I meditated, and which you yourself engaged to make, they were rendered fit for public perusal.'

Mr. Pattieson answered me with much heat:—'Sir, I would have you to know that, if I accepted your paltry offer, it was with less regard to its amount, than to the honour and literary fame of my late brother. I foresaw that if I declined it, you would not hesitate to throw the task into incapable hands, or, perhaps, have taken it upon yourself, the most unfit of all men to tamper with the works of departed genius, and that, God willing, I was determined to prevent—but the justice of Heaven has taken the matter into its own hands. Peter Pattieson's last labours shall now go down to posterity unscathed by the scalping-knife of alteration, in the hands of a false friend—shame on the thought that the unnatural weapon could ever be wielded by the hand of a brother!'

I heard this speech not without a species of vertigo or dizziness in my head, which would probably have struck me lifeless at his feet, had not a thought like that of the old ballad—

Earl Percy sees my fall,

called to my recollection, that I should only afford an additional triumph by giving way to my feelings in the presence of Mr. Paul Pattieson, who, I could not doubt, must be more or less directly at the bottom of the Transatlantic publication, and had in one way or another found his own interest in that nefarious transaction.

To get quit of his odious presence I bade him an unceremonious good-night, and marched down the glen with the air not of one who has parted with a friend, but who rather has shaken off an intrusive companion. On the road I pondered the whole matter over with an anxiety which did not in the smallest degree tend to relieve me. Had I felt adequate to the exertion, I might, of course, have supplanted this spurious edition (of which the literary gazettes are already doling out copious specimens) by introducing into a copy, to be instantly published at Edinburgh, adequate correction of the various inconsistencies and imperfections which have already been alluded to. I remember the easy victory of the real second part of these 'Tales of my Landlord' over the performance sent forth by an interloper under the same title; and why should not the same triumph be repeated now? There would, in short, have been a pride of talent in this manner of avenging myself, which would have been justifiable in the case of an injured man; but the state of my health has for some time been such as to render any attempt of this nature in every way imprudent.

Under such circumstances, the last 'Remains' of Peter Pattieson must even be accepted as they were left in his desk; and I humbly retire in the hope that, such as they are, they may receive the indulgence of those who have ever been but too merciful to the productions of his pen, and in all respects to the courteous reader's obliged servant,

J. C.

GANDERCLEUCH, 15*th Oct.* 1831.

CHAPTER the FIRST

HEREWARD AND BERTHA.—PAGE 676.

Leontius. ——— That power that kindly spreads
The clouds, a signal of impending showers,
To warn the wandering linnet to the shade,
Beheld without concern expiring Greece,
And not one prodigy foretold our fate.
Demetrius. A thousand horrid prodigies foretold it:
A feeble government, eluded laws,
A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
And all the maladies of sinking States.
When public villany, too strong for justice,
Shows his bold front, the harbinger of ruin,
Can brave Leontius call for airy wonders,
Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?
IRENE, *Act* i.

THE close observers of vegetable nature have remarked that, when a new graft is taken from an aged tree, it possesses indeed in exterior form the appearance of a youthful shoot, but has in fact attained to the same state of maturity, or even decay, which has been reached by the parent stem. Hence, it is said, arises the general decline and death that about the same season is often observed to spread itself through individual trees of some particular species, all of which, deriving their vital powers from the parent stock, are therefore incapable of protracting their existence longer than it does.

In the same manner, efforts have been made by the mighty of the earth to transplant large cities, states, and communities by one great and sudden exertion, expecting to secure to the new capital the wealth, the dignity, the magnificent decorations and unlimited extent of the ancient city, which they desire to renovate; while, at the same time, they hope to begin a new succession of ages from the date of the new structure, to last, they imagine, as long, and with as much fame, as its predecessor, which the founder hopes his new metropolis may replace in all its youthful glories. But nature has her laws which seem to apply to the social as well as the vegetable system. It appears to be a general rule, that what is to last long should be slowly matured and gradually improved, while every sudden effort, however gigantic, to bring about the speedy execution of a plan calculated to endure for ages is doomed to exhibit symptoms of premature decay from its very commencement. Thus, in a beautiful Oriental tale, a dervise explains to the sultan how he had reared the magnificent trees among which they walked, by nursing their shoots from the seed; and the prince's pride is damped when he reflects that those plantations, so simply raised, were gathering new vigour from each returning sun, while his own exhausted cedars, which had been transplanted by one violent effort, were drooping their majestic heads in the valley of Orez.*

It has been allowed, I believe, by all men of taste, many of whom have been late visitants of Constantinople, that if it were possible to survey the whole globe with a view to fixing a seat of universal empire, all who are capable of

* Tale of 'Mirglip the Persian,' in the *Tales of the Genii.*

making such a choice would give their preference to the city of Constantine, as including the great recommendations of beauty, wealth, security, and eminence. Yet with all these advantages of situation and climate, and with all the architectural splendour of its churches and halls, its quarries of marble, and its treasure-houses of gold, the Imperial founder must himself have learned that, although he could employ all these rich materials in obedience to his own wish, it was the mind of man itself, those intellectual faculties refined by the ancients to the highest degree, which had produced the specimens of talent at which men paused and wondered, whether as subjects of art or of moral labour. The power of the emperor might indeed strip other cities of their statues and their shrines, in order to decorate that which he had fixed upon as his new capital; but the men who had performed great actions, and those, almost equally esteemed, by whom such deeds were celebrated in poetry, in painting, and in music, had ceased to exist. The nation, though still the most civilised in the world, had passed beyond that period of society when the desire of fair fame is of itself the sole or chief motive for the labour of the historian or the poet, the painter or the statuary. The slavish and despotic constitution introduced into the empire had long since entirely destroyed that public spirit which animated the free history of Rome, leaving nothing but feeble recollections, which produced no emulation.

To speak as of an animated substance,—if Constantine could have regenerated his new metropolis, by transfusing into it the vital and vivifying principles of old Rome, that brilliant spark no longer remained for Constantinople to borrow, or for Rome to lend.

In one most important circumstance, the state of the capital of Constantine had been totally changed, and unspeakably to its advantage. The world was now Christian, and, with the pagan code, had got rid of its load of disgraceful superstition. Nor is there the least doubt that the better faith produced its natural and desirable fruits in society, in gradually ameliorating the hearts and taming the passions of the people. But while many of the converts were turning meekly towards their new creed, some, in the arrogance of their understanding, were limiting the Scriptures by their own devices, and others failed not to make religious character or spiritual rank the means of rising to temporal power. Thus it happened at this critical period, that the effects of this great change in the religion of the country, although producing an immediate harvest, as well as sowing much good seed which was to grow hereafter, did not, in the fourth century, flourish so as to shed at once that predominating influence which its principles might have taught men to expect.

Even the borrowed splendour in which Constantine decked his city, bore in it something which seemed to mark premature decay. The imperial founder, in seizing upon the ancient statues, pictures, obelisks, and works of art, acknowledged his own incapacity to supply their place with the productions of later genius; and when the world, and particularly Rome, was plundered to adorn Constantinople, the emperor, under whom the work was carried on, might be compared to a prodigal youth, who strips an aged parent of her youthful ornaments, in order to decorate a flaunting paramour, on whose brow all must consider them as misplaced.

Constantinople, therefore, when in 324 it first arose in imperial majesty out of the humble Byzantium, showed, even in its birth, and amid its adventitious splendour, as we have already said, some intimations of that speedy decay to which the whole civilised world, then limited within the Roman Empire, was internally and imperceptibly tending. Nor was it many ages ere these prognostications of declension were fully verified.

In the year 1080, Alexius Comnenus* ascended the throne of the empire; that is, he was declared sovereign of Constantinople, its precincts and dependencies; nor, if he was disposed to lead a life of relaxation, would the savage incursions of the Scythians or the Hungarians frequently disturb the Imperial slumbers, if limited to his own capital. It may be supposed that this safety did not extend much farther; for it is said that the Empress Pulcheria had built a church to the Virgin Mary as remote as possible from the gate of the city, to save her devotions from the risk of being interrupted by the hostile yell of the barbarians, and the reigning emperor had constructed a palace near the same spot, and for the same reason.

Alexius Comnenus was in the condition of a monarch who rather derives consequence from the wealth and importance of his predecessors, and the great extent of their original dominions, than from what remnants of fortune had descended to the present generation. This emperor, except nominally, no more ruled over his dismembered provinces than a half-dead horse can exercise power over those limbs on which the hooded crow and the vulture have already begun to settle and select their prey.

In different parts of his territory different enemies arose, who waged successful or dubious war against the emperor; and of the numerous nations with whom he was engaged in hostilities, whether the Franks from the west, the Turks advancing from the east, the Cumans and Scythians pouring their barbarous numbers and unceasing storm of arrows from the north, and the Saracens, or the tribes into which they were divided, pressing from the south, there was not one for whom the Grecian Empire did not spread a tempting repast. Each of these various enemies had their own particular habits of war, and a way of manœuvring in battle peculiar to themselves. But the Roman, as the unfortunate subject of the Greek Empire was still called, was by far the weakest, the most ignorant, and most timid who could be dragged into the field; and the emperor was happy in his own good luck, when he found it possible to conduct a defensive war on a counterbalancing principle, making use of the Scythian to repel the Turk, or of both these savage people to drive back the fiery-footed Frank, whom Peter the Hermit had, in the time

* See Gibbon, chap. xlviii., for the origin and early history of the House of the Comneni.

of Alexius, waked to double fury, by the powerful influence of the Crusades.

If, therefore, Alexius Comnenus was, during his anxious seat upon the throne of the East, reduced to use a base and truckling course of policy—if he was sometimes reluctant to fight when he had a conscious doubt of the valour of his troops—if he commonly employed cunning and dissimulation instead of wisdom, and perfidy instead of courage—his expedients were the disgrace of the age, rather than his own.

Again, the Emperor Alexius may be blamed for affecting a degree of state which was closely allied to imbecility. He was proud of assuming in his own person, and of bestowing upon others, the painted show of various orders of nobility, even now, when the rank within the prince's gift was become an additional reason for the free barbarian despising the Imperial noble. That the Greek court was encumbered with unmeaning ceremonies, in order to make amends for the want of that veneration which ought to have been called forth by real worth and the presence of actual power, was not the particular fault of that prince, but belonged to the system of the government of Constantinople for ages. Indeed, in its trumpery etiquette, which provided rules for the most trivial points of a man's behaviour during the day, the Greek Empire resembled no existing power in its minute follies, except that of Pekin; both, doubtless, being influenced by the same vain wish, to add seriousness and an appearance of importance to objects which from their trivial nature could admit no such distinction.

Yet thus far we must justify Alexius, that, humble as were the expedients he had recourse to, they were more useful to his empire than the measures of a more proud and high-spirited prince might have proved in the same circumstances. He was no champion to break a lance against the breastplate of his Frankish rival, the famous Bohemond of Antioch,* but there were many occasions on which he hazarded his life freely; and, so far as we can see, from a minute perusal of his achievements, the Emperor of Greece was never so dangerous 'under shield' as when any foeman desired to stop him while retreating from a conflict in which he had been worsted.

But besides that he did not hesitate, according to the custom of the time, at least occasionally, to commit his person to the perils of close combat, Alexius also possessed such knowledge of a general's profession as is required in our modern days. He knew how to occupy military positions to the best advantage, and often covered defeats, or improved dubious conflicts, in a manner highly to the disappointment of those who deemed that the work of war was done only on the field of battle.

If Alexius Comnenus thus understood the evolutions of war, he was still better skilled in those of politics, where, soaring far above the express purpose of his immediate negotiation, the emperor was sure to gain some important and permanent advantage; though very often he was ultimately defeated by the unblushing fickleness or avowed treachery of the barbarians, as the Greeks generally termed all other nations, and particularly those tribes (they can hardly be termed states) by which their own empire was surrounded.

We may conclude our brief character of Comnenus, by saying that, had he not been called on to fill the station of a monarch who was under the necessity of making himself dreaded, as one who was exposed to all manner of conspiracies, both in and out of his own family, he might in all probability have been regarded as an honest and humane prince. Certainly he showed himself a good-natured man, and dealt less in cutting off heads and extinguishing eyes than had been the practice of his predecessors, who generally took this method of shortening the ambitious views of competitors.

It remains to be mentioned, that Alexius had his full share of the superstition of the age, which he covered with a species of hypocrisy. It is even said that his wife Irene, who of course was best acquainted with the real character of the emperor, taxed her dying husband with practising in his last moments the dissimulation which had been his companion during life.† He took also a deep interest in all matters respecting the Church, where heresy, which the emperor held, or affected to hold, in great horror, appeared to him to lurk. Nor do we discover in his treatment of the Manichæans, or Paulicians, that pity for their speculative errors, which modern times might think had been well purchased by the extent of the temporal services of these unfortunate sectaries. Alexius knew no indulgence for those who misinterpreted the mysteries of the Church, or of its doctrines; and the duty of defending religion against schismatics was, in his opinion, as peremptorily demanded from him as that of protecting the empire against the numberless tribes of barbarians who were encroaching on its boundaries on every side.

Such a mixture of sense and weakness, of meanness and dignity, of prudent discretion and poverty of spirit, which last, in the European mode of viewing things, approached to cowardice, formed the leading traits of the character of Alexius Comnenus, at a period when the fate of Greece, and all that was left in that country of art and civilisation, was trembling in the balance, and likely to be saved or lost according to the abilities of the emperor for playing the very difficult game which was put into his hands.

These few leading circumstances will recall, to any one who is tolerably well read in history, the peculiarities of the period at which we have found a resting-place for the foundation of our story.

* Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard, the Norman conqueror of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, was, at the time when the First Crusade began, Count of Tarentum. Though far advanced in life, he eagerly joined the expedition of the Latins, and became Prince of Antioch. For details of his adventures, death, and extraordinary character, see Gibbon, chap. lix., and Mill's History of the Crusades, vol. i.

† See Gibbon, chap. lvi.

CHAPTER II.

Othus. ——— This superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speakest,
Stands midst these ages as, on the wide ocean,
The last spared fragment of a spacious land,
That in some grand and awful ministration
Of mighty nature has engulfed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
In lonely majesty.
CONSTANTINE PALEOLOGUS, *Scene* I.

OUR scene in the capital of the Eastern Empire opens at what is termed the Golden Gate of Constantinople; and it may be said in passing, that this splendid epithet is not so lightly bestowed as may be expected from the inflated language of the Greeks, which throws such an appearance of exaggeration about them, their buildings, and monuments.

The massive and seemingly impregnable walls with which Constantine surrounded the city were greatly improved and added to by Theodosius, called the Great. A triumphal arch, decorated with the architecture of a better, though already a degenerate age, and serving, at the same time, as a useful entrance, introduced the stranger into the city. On the top, a statue of bronze represented Victory, the goddess who had inclined the scales of battle in favour of Theodosius; and, as the artist determined to be wealthy if he could not be tasteful, the gilded ornaments with which the inscriptions were set off readily led to the popular name of the gate. Figures carved in a distant and happier period of the art glanced from the walls, without assorting happily with the taste in which these were built. The more modern ornaments of the Golden Gate bore, at the period of our story, an aspect very different from those indicating the 'conquest brought back to the city,' and the 'eternal peace' which the flattering inscriptions recorded as having been extorted by the sword of Theodosius. Four or five military engines, for throwing darts of the largest size, were placed upon the summit of the arch; and what had been originally designed as a specimen of architectural embellishment, was now applied to the purposes of defence.

It was the hour of evening, and the cool and refreshing breeze from the sea inclined each passenger, whose business was not of a very urgent description, to loiter on his way, and cast a glance at the romantic gateway, and the various interesting objects of nature and art which the city of Constantinople presented as well to the inhabitants as to strangers.*

One individual, however, seemed to indulge more wonder and curiosity than could have been expected from a native of the city, and looked upon the rarities around with a quick and startled eye, that marked an imagination awakened by sights that were new and strange. The appearance of this person bespoke a foreigner of military habits, who seemed, from his complexion, to have his birthplace far from the Grecian metropolis, whatever chance had at present brought him to the Golden Gate, or whatever place he filled in the emperor's service.

This young man was about two-and-twenty years old, remarkably finely formed and athletic —qualities well understood by the citizens of Constantinople, whose habits of frequenting the public games had taught them at least an acquaintance with the human person, and where, in the select of their own countrymen, they saw the handsomest specimens of the human race.

These were, however, not generally so tall as the stranger at the Golden Gate, while his piercing blue eyes, and the fair hair which descended from under a light helmet gaily ornamented with silver, bearing on its summit a crest resembling a dragon in the act of expanding its terrible jaws, intimated a Northern descent, to which the extreme purity of his complexion also bore witness. His beauty, however, though he was eminently distinguished both in features and in person, was not liable to the charge of effeminacy. From this it was rescued, both by his strength, and by the air of confidence and self-possession with which the youth seemed to regard the wonders around him, not indicating the stupid and helpless gaze of a mind equally inexperienced and incapable of receiving instruction, but expressing the bold intellect which at once understands the greater part of the information which it receives, and commands the spirit to toil in search of the meaning of that which it has not comprehended, or may fear it has misinterpreted. This look of awakened attention and intelligence gave interest to the young barbarian; and while the bystanders were amazed that a savage from some unknown or remote corner of the universe should possess a noble countenance bespeaking a mind so elevated, they respected him for the composure with which he witnessed so many things, the fashion, the splendour, nay, the very use of which must have been recently new to him.

The young man's personal equipments exhibited a singular mixture of splendour and effeminacy, and enabled the experienced spectators to ascertain his nation, and the capacity in which he served. We have already mentioned the fanciful and crested helmet, which was a distinction of the foreigner, to which the reader must add in his imagination a small cuirass, or breastplate of silver, so sparingly fashioned as obviously to afford little security to the broad chest, on which it rather hung like an ornament than covered as a buckler; nor, if a well-thrown dart or strongly-shod arrow should alight full on this rich piece of armour, was there much hope that it could protect the bosom which it partially shielded.

From betwixt the shoulders hung down over the back what had the appearance of a bearskin; but, when more closely examined, it was only a very skilful imitation of the spoils of the chase, being in reality a surcoat composed of strong shaggy silk, so woven as to exhibit, at a little distance, no inaccurate representation of a bear's hide. A light crooked sword, or scimitar, sheathed in a scabbard of gold and ivory, hung by the left side of the stranger, the ornamented hilt of which appeared much too small for the large-jointed hand of the young Hercules who

* Note A. Constantinople.

was thus gaily attired. A dress, purple in colour, and sitting close to the limbs, covered the body of the soldier to a little above the knee; from thence the knees and legs were bare to the calf, to which the reticulated strings of the sandals rose from the instep, the ligatures being there fixed by a golden coin of the reigning emperor, converted into a species of clasp for the purpose.

But a weapon which seemed more particularly adapted to the young barbarian's size, and incapable of being used by a man of less formidable limbs and sinews, was a battle-axe, the firm iron-guarded staff of which was formed of tough elm, strongly inlaid and defended with brass, while many a plate and ring were indented in the handle, to hold the wood and the steel parts together. The axe itself was composed of two blades, turning different ways, with a sharp steel spike projecting from between them. The steel part, both spike and blade, was burnished as bright as a mirror; and though its ponderous size must have been burdensome to one weaker than himself, yet the young soldier carried it as carelessly along as if it were but a feather's weight. It was, indeed, a skilfully-constructed weapon, so well balanced, that it was much lighter in striking and in recovery than he who saw it in the hands of another could easily have believed.

The carrying arms of itself showed that the military man was a stranger. The native Greeks had that mark of a civilised people, that they never bore weapons during the time of peace, unless the wearer chanced to be numbered among those whose military profession and employment required them to be always in arms. Such soldiers by profession were easily distinguished from the peaceful citizens; and it was with some evident show of fear as well as dislike, that the passengers observed to each other, that the stranger was a Varangian, an expression which intimated a barbarian of the Imperial Body-guard.

To supply the deficiency of valour among his own subjects, and to procure soldiers who should be personally dependent on the emperor, the Greek sovereigns had been, for a great many years, in the custom of maintaining in their pay, as near their person as they could, the steady services of a select number of mercenaries in the capacity of Body-guards, which were numerous enough, when their steady discipline and inflexible loyalty were taken in conjunction with their personal strength and indomitable courage, to defeat, not only any traitorous attempt on the Imperial person, but to quell open rebellions, unless such were supported by a great proportion of the military force. Their pay was therefore liberal; their rank and established character for prowess gave them a degree of consideration among the people, whose reputation for valour had not for some ages stood high; and if, as foreigners, and the members of a privileged body, the Varangians were sometimes employed in arbitrary and unpopular services, the natives were so apt to fear, while they disliked them, that the hardy strangers disturbed themselves but little about the light in which they were regarded by the inhabitants of Constantinople. Their dress and accoutrements, while within the city, partook of the rich, or rather gaudy costume which we have described, bearing only a sort of affected resemblance to that which the Varangians wore in their native forests. But the individuals of this select corps were, when their services were required beyond the city, furnished with armour and weapons more resembling those which they were accustomed to wield in their own country, possessing much less of the splendour of war and a far greater portion of its effective terrors; and thus they were summoned to take the field.

This body of Varangians (which term is, according to one interpretation, merely a general expression for barbarians) was, in an early age of the empire, formed of the roving and piratical inhabitants of the North, whom a love of adventure, the greatest, perhaps, that ever was indulged, and a contempt of danger, which never had a parallel in the history of human nature, drove forth upon the pathless ocean. 'Piracy,' says Gibbon, with his usual spirit, 'was the exercise, the trade, the glory, and the virtue of the Scandinavian youth. Impatient of a bleak climate and narrow limits, they started from the banquet, grasped their arms, sounded their horn, ascended their ships, and explored every coast that promised either spoil or settlement.'*

The conquests made in France and Britain by these wild sea-kings, as they were called, have obscured the remembrance of other Northern champions, who, long before the time of Comnenus, made excursions as far as Constantinople, and witnessed with their own eyes the wealth and the weakness of the Grecian Empire itself. Numbers found their way thither through the pathless wastes of Russia; others navigated the Mediterranean in their sea-serpents, as they termed their piratical vessels. The emperors, terrified at the appearance of these daring inhabitants of the frozen zone, had recourse to the usual policy of a rich and unwarlike people, bought with gold the service of their swords, and thus formed a corps of satellites more distinguished for valour than the famed Prætorian Bands† of Rome, and, perhaps because fewer in number, unalterably loyal to their new princes.

But, at a later period of the empire, it began to be more difficult for the emperors to obtain recruits for their favourite and selected corps, the Northern nations having now in a great measure laid aside the piratical and roving habits which had driven their ancestors from the straits of Elsinore to those of Sestos and Abydos.‡ The corps of the Varangians must therefore have died out, or have been filled up with less worthy materials, had not the conquests made by the Normans in the far distant west sent to the aid of Comnenus a large body of the dispossessed inhabitants of the islands of Britain, and particularly of England, who furnished recruits to his chosen Body-guard. These were, in fact, Anglo-Saxons; but, in the confused idea of geography received at the court of Constantinople, they were naturally enough called Anglo-Danes, as their native country was con-

* *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. lv. vol. x. p. 221, 8vo edition.

† [The household troops of the Roman emperors.]

‡ [From The Sound, Denmark, to the Hellespont.]

founded with the Thule of the ancients, by which expression the archipelago of Zetland and Orkney is properly to be understood, though, according to the notions of the Greeks, it comprised either Denmark or Britain. The emigrants, however, spoke a language not very dissimilar to the original Varangians, and adopted the name the more readily, that it seemed to remind them of their unhappy fate, the appellation being in one sense capable of being interpreted as exiles. Excepting one or two chief commanders, whom the emperor judged worthy of such high trust, the Varangians were officered by men of their own nation; and with so many privileges, being joined by many of their countrymen from time to time, as the Crusades, pilgrimages, or discontent at home drove fresh supplies of the Anglo-Saxons, or Anglo-Danes, to the East, the Varangians subsisted in strength to the last days of the Greek Empire, retaining their native language, along with the unblemished loyalty and unabated martial spirit which characterized their fathers.

This account of the Varangian Guard is strictly historical, and might be proved by reference to the Byzantine historians; most of whom, and also Villehardouin's account of the taking of the city of Constantinople by the Franks and Venetians, make repeated mention of this celebrated and singular body of Englishmen, forming a mercenary guard attendant on the person of the Greek emperors.*

Having said enough to explain why an individual Varangian should be strolling about the Golden Gate, we may proceed in the story which we have commenced.

Let it not be thought extraordinary that this soldier of the Life-guard should be looked upon with some degree of curiosity by the passing citizens. It must be supposed that, from their peculiar duties, they were not encouraged to hold frequent intercourse or communication with the inhabitants; and besides that they had duties of police occasionally to exercise amongst them, which made them generally more dreaded than beloved, they were at the same time conscious that their high pay, splendid appointments, and immediate dependence on the emperor were subjects of envy to the other forces. They therefore kept much in the neighbourhood of their own barracks, and were seldom seen straggling remote from them, unless they had a commission of government entrusted to their charge.

This being the case, it was natural that a people so curious as the Greeks should busy themselves in eyeing the stranger as he loitered in one spot, or wandered to and fro, like a man who either could not find some place which he was seeking, or had failed to meet some person with whom he had an appointment, for which the ingenuity of the passengers found a thousand different and inconsistent reasons. 'A Varangian,' said one citizen to another, 'and upon duty—ahem! Then I presume to say in your ear'——

'What do you imagine is his object?' inquired the party to whom this information was addressed.

'Gods and goddesses! do you think I can tell you? but suppose that he is lurking here to hear what folks say of the Emperor?' answered the quidnunc of Constantinople.

'That is not likely,' said the querist; 'these Varangians do not speak our language, and are not extremely well fitted for spies, since few of them pretend to any intelligible notion of the Grecian tongue. It is not likely, I think, that the Emperor would employ as a spy a man who did not understand the language of the country.'

'But if there are, as all men fancy,' answered the politician, 'persons among these barbarian soldiers who can speak almost all languages, you will admit that such are excellently qualified for seeing clearly around them, since they possess the talent of beholding and reporting, while no one has the slightest idea of suspecting them.'

'It may well be,' replied his companion; 'but since we see so clearly the fox's foot and paws protruding from beneath the seeming sheep's fleece, or rather, by your leave, the *bear's* hide yonder, had we not better be jogging homeward, ere it be pretended we have insulted a Varangian Guard?'

This surmise of danger insinuated by the last speaker, who was a much older and more experienced politician than his friend, determined both on a hasty retreat. They adjusted their cloaks, caught hold of each other's arm, and, speaking fast and thick as they started new subjects of suspicion, they sped, close coupled together, towards their habitations, in a different and distant quarter of the town.

In the meantime the sunset was nigh over; and the long shadows of the walls, bulwarks, and arches were projecting from the westward in deeper and blacker shade. The Varangian seemed tired of the short and lingering circle in which he had now trodden for more than an hour, and in which he still loitered like an unliberated spirit, which cannot leave the haunted spot till licensed by the spell which has brought it hither. Even so the barbarian, casting an impatient glance to the sun, which was setting in a blaze of light behind a rich grove of cypress-trees, looked for some accommodation on the benches of stone which were placed under shadow of the triumphal arch of Theodosius, drew the axe, which was his principal weapon, close to his side, wrapped his cloak about him, and, though his dress was not in other respects a fit attire for slumber, any more than the place well selected for repose, yet in less than three minutes he was fast asleep. The irresistible impulse which induced him to seek for repose in a place very indifferently fitted for the purpose might be weariness consequent upon the military vigils, which had proved a part of his duty on the preceding evening. At the same time, his spirit was so alive within him, even while he gave way to this transient fit of oblivion, that he remained almost awake even with shut eyes, and no hound ever seemed to sleep more lightly than our Anglo-Saxon at the Golden Gate of Constantinople.

And now the slumberer, as the loiterer had been before, was the subject of observation to the accidental passengers. Two men entered the porch in company. One was a somewhat slight made, but alert-looking man, by name

* Note B. Varangians.

Lysimachus, and by profession a designer. A roll of paper in his hand, with a little satchel containing a few chalks, or pencils, completed his stock in trade; and his acquaintance with the remains of ancient art gave him a power of talking on the subject, which unfortunately bore more than due proportion to his talents of execution. His companion, a magnificent-looking man in form, and so far resembling the young barbarian, but more clownish and peasant-like in the expression of his features, was Stephanos the wrestler, well known in the *palæstra*.

'Stop here, my friend,' said the artist, producing his pencils, 'till I make a sketch for my youthful Hercules.'

'I thought Hercules had been a Greek,' said the wrestler. 'This sleeping animal is a barbarian.'

The tone intimated some offence, and the designer hastened to soothe the displeasure which he had thoughtlessly excited. Stephanos, known by the surname of Castor, who was highly distinguished for gymnastic exercises, was a sort of patron to the little artist, and not unlikely by his own reputation to bring the talents of his friend into notice.

'Beauty and strength,' said the adroit artist, 'are of no particular nation; and may our Muse never deign me her prize, but it is my greatest pleasure to compare them, as existing in the uncultivated savage of the North, and when they are found in the darling of an enlightened people, who has added the height of gymnastic skill to the most distinguished natural qualities, such as we can now only see in the works of Phidias and Praxiteles*—or in our living model of the gymnastic champions of antiquity.'

'Nay, I acknowledge that the Varangian is a proper man,' said the athletic hero, softening his tone; 'but the poor savage hath not, perhaps, in his lifetime, had a single drop of oil on his bosom! Hercules instituted the Isthmian Games'——

'But hold! what sleeps he with, wrapped so close in his bear-skin?' said the artist. 'Is it a club?'

'Away, away, my friend!' cried Stephanos, as they looked closer on the sleeper. 'Do you not know that is the instrument of their barbarous office? They do not war with swords or lances, as if destined to attack men of flesh and blood, but with maces and axes, as if they were to hack limbs formed of stone and sinews of oak. I will wager my crown (of withered parsley) that he lies here to arrest some distinguished commander who has offended the government! He would not have been thus formidably armed otherwise. Away, away, good Lysimachus; let us respect the slumbers of the bear.'

So saying, the champion of the *palæstra* made off, with less apparent confidence than his size and strength might have inspired.

Others, now thinly straggling, passed onward as the evening closed, and the shadows of the cypress-trees fell darker around. Two females of the lower rank cast their eyes on the sleeper.

'Holy Maria!' said one, 'if he does not put me in mind of the Eastern tale, how the genie brought a gallant young prince from his nuptial chamber in Egypt and left him sleeping at the gate of Damascus. I will awake the poor lamb, lest he catch harm from the night dew.'

'Harm?' answered the older and crosser-looking woman. 'Ay, such harm as the cold water of the Cydnus† does to the wild-swan. A lamb? ay, forsooth! Why, he's a wolf or a bear, at least a Varangian, and no modest matron would exchange a word with such an unmannered barbarian. I'll tell you what one of these English Danes did to me'——

So saying, she drew on her companion, who followed with some reluctance, seeming to listen to her gabble, while she looked back upon the sleeper.

The total disappearance of the sun, and nearly at the same time the departure of the twilight, which lasts so short time in that tropical region—one of the few advantages which a more temperate climate possesses over it being the longer continuance of that sweet and placid light—gave signal to the warders of the city to shut the folding leaves of the Golden Gate, leaving a wicket lightly bolted for the passage of those whom business might have detained too late without the walls, and indeed for all who chose to pay a small coin. The position and apparent insensibility of the Varangian did not escape those who had charge of the gate, of whom there was a strong guard, which belonged to the ordinary Greek forces.

'By Castor and by Pollux,' said the centurion—for the Greeks swore by the ancient deities, although they no longer worshipped them, and preserved those military distinctions with which 'the steady Romans shook the world,' although they were altogether degenerated from their original manners—'By Castor and Pollux, comrades, we cannot gather gold in this gate, according as its legend tells us: yet it will be our fault if we cannot glean a goodly crop of silver; and though the golden age be the most ancient and honourable, yet in this degenerate time it is much if we see a glimpse of the inferior metal.'

'Unworthy are we to follow the noble centurion Harpax,' answered one of the soldiers of the watch, who showed the shaven head and the single tuft‡ of a Mussulman, 'if we do not hold silver a sufficient cause to bestir ourselves, when there has been no gold to be had—as, by the faith of an honest man, I think we can hardly tell its colour—whether out of the Imperial treasury, or obtained at the expense of individuals, for many long moons!'

'But this silver,' said the centurion, 'thou shalt see with thine own eye, and hear it ring a knell in the purse which holds our common stock.'

'Which *did* hold it, as thou wouldst say, most valiant commander,' replied the inferior warder; 'but what that purse holds now, save a few miserable oboli for purchasing certain pickled potherbs and salt fish, to relish our allowance of stummed wine, I cannot tell, but willingly give my share of the contents to the

* [Ancient Greek sculptors.]

† [A river in the south of Asia Minor.]

‡ One tuft is left on the shaven crown of the Moslem, for the angel to grasp by, when conveying him to Paradise.

devil, if either purse or platter exhibits symptom of any age richer than the age of copper.'

'I will replenish our treasury,' said the centurion, 'were our stock yet lower than it is. Stand up close by the wicket, my masters. Bethink you we are the Imperial Guards, or the Guards of the Imperial City, it is all one, and let us have no man rush past us on a sudden;—and now that we are on our guard, I will unfold to you—— But stop,' said the valiant centurion, 'are we all here true brothers? Do all well understand the ancient and laudable customs of our watch—keeping all things secret which concern the profit and advantage of this our vigil, and aiding and abetting the common cause, without information or treachery?'

'You are strangely suspicious to-night,' answered the sentinel. 'Methinks we have stood by you without tale-telling in matters which were more weighty. Have you forgot the passage of the jeweller—which was neither the gold nor silver age; but if there were a diamond one'——

'Peace, good Ismail the Infidel,' said the centurion,—'for, I thank Heaven, we are of all religions, so it is to be hoped we must have the true one amongst us,—Peace, I say; it is unnecessary to prove thou canst keep new secrets, by ripping up old ones. Come hither; look through the wicket to the stone bench, on the shady side of the grand porch; tell me, old lad, what dost thou see there?'

'A man asleep,' said Ismail. 'By Heaven, I think, from what I can see by the moonlight, that it is one of those barbarians, one of those island dogs, whom the Emperor sets such store by!'

'And can thy fertile brain,' said the centurion, 'spin nothing out of his present situation tending towards our advantage?'

'Why, ay,' said Ismail; 'they have large pay, though they are not only barbarians, but pagan dogs, in comparison with us Moslems and Nazarenes. That fellow hath besotted himself with liquor, and hath not found his way home to his barracks in good time. He will be severely punished, unless we consent to admit him; and to prevail on us to do so, he must empty the contents of his girdle.'

'That, at least—that, at least,' answered the soldiers of the city watch, but carefully suppressing their voices, though they spoke in an eager tone.

'And is that all that you would make of such an opportunity?' said Harpax scornfully. 'No, no, comrades. If this outlandish animal indeed escape us, he must at least leave his fleece behind. See you not the gleams from his headpiece and his cuirass? I presume these betoken substantial silver, though it may be of the thinnest. There lies the silver mine I spoke of, ready to enrich the dexterous hands who shall labour it.'

'But,' said timidly a young Greek, a companion of their watch lately enlisted in the corps, and unacquainted with their habits, 'still, this barbarian, as you call him, is a soldier of the Emperor; and if we are convicted of depriving him of his arms, we shall be justly punished for a military crime.'

'Hear to a new Lycurgus* come to teach us our duty!' said the centurion. 'Learn first, young man, that the metropolitan cohort never can commit a crime; and learn next, of course, that they can never be convicted of one. Suppose we found a straggling barbarian, a Varangian, like this slumberer, perhaps a Frank, or some other of these foreigners bearing unpronounceable names, while they dishonour us by putting on the arms and apparel of the real Roman soldier, are we, placed to defend an important post, to admit a man so suspicious within our postern, when the event may probably be to betray both the Golden Gate and the hearts of gold who guard it,—to have the one seized, and the throats of the others handsomely cut?'

'Keep him without the gate, then,' replied the novice, 'if you think him so dangerous. For my part, I should not fear him, were he deprived of that huge double-edged axe, which gleams from under his cloak, having a more deadly glare than the comet which astrologers prophesy such strange things of.'

'Nay, then, we agree together,' answered Harpax, 'and you speak like a youth of modesty and sense; and I promise you the State will lose nothing in the despoiling of this same barbarian. Each of these savages hath a double set of accoutrements, the one wrought with gold, silver, inlaid work, and ivory, as becomes their duties in the prince's household; the other fashioned of triple steel, strong, weighty, and irresistible. Now, in taking from this suspicious character his silver helmet and cuirass, you reduce him to his proper weapons, and you will see him start up in arms fit for duty.'

'Yes,' said the novice; 'but I do not see that this reasoning will do more than warrant our stripping the Varangian of his armour, to be afterwards heedfully returned to him on the morrow, if he prove a true man. How, I know not, but I had adopted some idea that it was to be confiscated for our joint behoof.'

'Unquestionably,' said Harpax; 'for such has been the rule of our watch ever since the days of the excellent centurion Sisyphus, in whose time it first was determined that all contraband commodities or suspicious weapons, or the like, which were brought into the city during the night-watch, should be uniformly forfeited to the use of the soldiery of the guard; and where the Emperor finds the goods or arms unjustly seized, I hope he is rich enough to make it up to the sufferer.'

'But still—but still,' said Sebastes of Mitylene, the young Greek aforesaid, 'were the Emperor to discover'——

'Ass!' replied Harpax, 'he cannot discover, if he had all the eyes of Argus's tail.† Here are twelve of us sworn, according to the rules of the watch, to abide in the same story. Here is a barbarian, who, if he remembers anything of the matter,—which I greatly doubt, his choice of a lodging arguing his familiarity with the wine-pot,—tells but a wild tale of losing his armour, which we, my masters' (looking round to his

* [A lawgiver of the Spartans in ancient Greece.]

† [In ancient Greek mythology, a being with one hundred eyes. After his death they were put in the tail of the peacock.]

companions), 'deny stoutly—I hope we have courage enough for that—and which party will be believed? The companions of the watch, surely!'

'Quite the contrary,' said Sebastes. 'I was born at a distance from hence; yet even in the island of Mitylene the rumour had reached me, that the cavaliers of the City Guard of Constantinople were so accomplished in falsehood that the oath of a single barbarian would outweigh the Christian oath of the whole body, if Christians some of them are—for example, this dark man with a single tuft on his head.'

'And if it were even so,' said the centurion, with a gloomy and sinister look, 'there is another way of making the transaction a safe one.'

Sebastes, fixing his eye on his commander, moved his hand to the hilt of an Eastern poniard which he wore, as if to penetrate his exact meaning. The centurion nodded in acquiescence.

'Young as I am,' said Sebastes, 'I have been already a pirate five years at sea, and a robber three years now in the hills, and it is the first time I have seen or heard a man hesitate, in such a case, to take the only part which is worth a brave man's while to resort to in a pressing affair.'

Harpax struck his hand into that of the soldier, as sharing his uncompromising sentiments; but when he spoke, it was in a tremulous voice.

'How shall we deal with him?' said he to Sebastes, who, from the most raw recruit in the corps, had now risen to the highest place in his estimation.

'Anyhow,' returned the islander; 'I see bows here and shafts, and if no other person can use them'——

'They are not,' said the centurion, 'the regular arms of our corps.'

'The fitter you to guard the gates of a city,' said the young soldier, with a horse-laugh, which had something insulting in it. 'Well—be it so. I can shoot like a Scythian,'* he proceeded; 'nod but with your head, one shaft shall crash among the splinters of his skull and his brains; the second shall quiver in his heart.'

'Bravo, my noble comrade!' said Harpax, in a tone of affected rapture, always lowering his voice, however, as respecting the slumbers of the Varangian. 'Such were the robbers of ancient days, the Diomedes, Corynetes, Synnes, Scyrons, Procrustes, whom it required demigods to bring to what was miscalled justice, and whose compeers and fellows will remain masters of the continent and isles of Greece until Hercules and Theseus† shall again appear upon earth. Nevertheless, shoot not, my valiant Sebastes—draw not the bow, my invaluable Mitylenian; you may wound and not kill.'

'I am little wont to do so,' said Sebastes, again repeating the hoarse, chuckling, discordant laugh, which grated upon the ears of the centurion, though he could hardly tell the reason why it was so uncommonly unpleasant.

'If I look not about me,' was his internal reflection, 'we shall have two centurions of the watch, instead of one. This Mitylenian, or be he who the devil will, is a bow's length beyond me. I must keep my eye on him.' He then spoke aloud, in a tone of authority. 'But come, young man, it is hard to discourage a young beginner. If you have been such a rover of wood and river as you tell us of, you know how to play the *sicarius;* there lies your object, drunk or asleep, we know not which; you will deal with him in either case.'

'Will you give me no odds to stab a stupefied or drunken man, most noble centurion?' answered the Greek. 'You would perhaps love the commission yourself?' he continued, somewhat ironically.

'Do as you are directed, friend,' said Harpax, pointing to the turret staircase which led down from the battlement to the arched entrance underneath the porch.

'He has the true cat-like stealthy pace,' half muttered the centurion, as his sentinel descended to do such a crime as he was posted there to prevent. 'This cockerel's comb must be cut, or he will become king of the roost. But let us see if his hand be as resolute as his tongue; then we will consider what turn to give to the conclusion.'

As Harpax spoke between his teeth, and rather to himself than any of his companions, the Mitylenian emerged from under the archway, treading on tiptoe, yet swiftly, with an admirable mixture of silence and celerity. His poniard, drawn as he descended, gleamed in his hand, which was held a little behind the rest of his person, so as to conceal it. The assassin hovered less than an instant over the sleeper, as if to mark the interval between the ill-fated silver corselet and the body which it was designed to protect, when, at the instant the blow was rushing to its descent, the Varangian started up at once, arrested the armed hand of the assassin, by striking it upwards with the head of his battle-axe; and, while he thus parried the intended stab, struck the Greek a blow heavier than Sebastes had ever learned at the *pancration*, which left him scarce the power to cry help to his comrades on the battlements. They saw what had happened, however, and beheld the barbarian set his foot on their companion, and brandish high his formidable weapon, the whistling sound of which made the old arch ring ominously, while he paused an instant, with his weapon upheaved, ere he gave the finishing blow to his enemy. The warders made a bustle, as if some of them would descend to the assistance of Sebastes, without, however, appearing very eager to do so, when Harpax, in a rapid whisper, commanded them to stand fast.

'Each man to his place,' he said, 'happen what may. Yonder comes a captain of the Guard—the secret is our own, if the savage has killed the Mitylenian, as I well trust, for he stirs neither hand nor foot. But if he lives, my comrades, make hard your faces as flints; he is but one man, we are twelve. We know nothing of his purpose, save that he went to see wherefore the barbarian slept so near the post.'

While the centurion thus bruited his purpose in busy insinuation to the companions of his watch, the stately figure of a tall soldier, richly armed and presenting a lofty crest, which glistened

* [A nomad race dwelling in the south of Russia; they were celebrated as skilful bowmen.]

† [Both these Greek demigods or heroes figure as deliverers.]

as he stepped from the open moonlight into the shade of the vault, became visible beneath. A whisper passed among the warders on the top of the gate.

'Draw bolt, shut gate, come of the Mitylenian what will,' said the centurion; 'we are lost men if we own him. Here comes the chief of the Varangian axes, the Follower himself.'

'Well, Hereward,' said the officer who came last upon the scene, in a sort of *lingua franca* generally used by the barbarians of the Guard, 'hast thou caught a night-hawk?'

'Ay, by Saint George!' answered the soldier; 'and yet, in my country, we would call him but a kite.'

'What is he?' said the leader.

'He will tell you that himself,' replied the Varangian, 'when I take my grasp from his windpipe.'

'Let him go, then,' said the officer.

The Englishman did as he was commanded; but, escaping as soon as he felt himself at liberty, with an alertness which could scarce have been anticipated, the Mitylenian rushed out at the arch, and, availing himself of the complicated ornaments which had originally graced the exterior of the gateway, he fled around buttress and projection, closely pursued by the Varangian, who, cumbered with his armour, was hardly a match in the course for the light-footed Grecian, as he dodged his pursuer from one skulking-place to another. The officer laughed heartily as the two figures, like shadows appearing and disappearing as suddenly, held rapid flight and chase around the Arch of Theodosius.

'By Hercules! it is Hector pursued round the walls of Ilion by Achilles,' said the officer; 'but my Pelides will scarce overtake the son of Priam. What ho! goddess-born—son of the white-footed Thetis!—But the allusion is lost on the poor savage. Hollo, Hereward! I say, stop; know thine own most barbarous name.' These last words were muttered; then raising his voice, 'Do not out-run thy wind, good Hereward. Thou mayst have more occasion for breath to-night.'

'If it had been my leader's will,' answered the Varangian, coming back in sulky mood, and breathing like one who had been at the top of his speed, 'I would have had him as fast as ever greyhound held hare, ere I left off the chase. Were it not for this foolish armour, which encumbers without defending one, I would not have made two bounds without taking him by the throat.'

'As well as it is,' said the officer, who was, in fact, the Acoulouthos, or *Follower*, so called because it was the duty of this highly-trusted officer of the Varangian Guards constantly to attend on the person of the emperor. 'But let us now see by what means we are to regain our entrance through the gate; for if, as I suspect, it was one of those warders who was willing to have played thee a trick, his companions may not let us enter willingly.'

'And is it not,' said the Varangian, 'your valour's duty to probe this want of discipline to the bottom?'

'Hush thee here, my simple-minded savage! I have often told you, most ignorant Hereward, that the skulls of those who come from your cold and muddy Bœotia* of the North are fitter to bear out twenty blows with a sledge-hammer than turn off one witty or ingenious idea. But follow me, Hereward, and although I am aware that showing the fine meshes of Grecian policy to the coarse eye of an unpractised barbarian like thee is much like casting pearls before swine, a thing forbidden in the blessed Gospel, yet, as thou hast so good a heart, and so trusty, as is scarce to be met with among my Varangians themselves, I care not if, while thou art in attendance on my person, I endeavour to indoctrinate thee in some of that policy by which I myself—the Follower—the chief of the Varangians, and therefore erected by their axes into the most valiant of the valiant, am content to guide myself, although every way qualified to bear me through the cross currents of the court by main pull of oar and press of sail—a condescension in me, to do that by policy which no man in this imperial court, the chosen sphere of superior wits, could so well accomplish by open force as myself. What think'st thou, good savage?'

'I know,' answered the Varangian, who walked about a step and a half behind his leader, like an orderly of the present day behind his officer's shoulder, 'I should be sorry to trouble my head with what I could do by my hands at once.'

'Did I not say so?' replied the Follower, who had now for some minutes led the way from the Golden Gate, and was seen gliding along the outside of the moonlight walls, as if seeking an entrance elsewhere. 'Lo, such is the stuff of what you call your head is made! Your hands and arms are perfect Achitophels,† compared to it. Hearken to me, thou most ignorant of all animals,—but for that very reason, thou stoutest of confidants and bravest of soldiers,—I will tell thee the very riddle of this night-work, and yet, even then, I doubt if thou canst understand me.'

'It is my present duty to try to comprehend your valour,' said the Varangian—'I would say your policy, since you condescend to expound it to me. As for your valour,' he added, 'I should be unlucky if I did not think I understand its length and breadth already.'

The Greek general coloured a little, but replied, with unaltered voice, 'True, good Hereward. We have seen each other in battle.'

Hereward here could not suppress a short cough, which to those grammarians of the day who were skilful in applying the use of accents would have implied no peculiar eulogium on his officer's military bravery. Indeed, during their whole intercourse, the conversation of the general, in spite of his tone of affected importance and superiority, displayed an obvious respect for his companion, as one who, in many points of action, might, if brought to the test, prove a more effective soldier than himself. On the other hand, when the powerful Northern warrior replied, although it was with all observance of discipline and duty, yet the discussion might sometimes resemble that between an ignorant macaroni

* [A part of ancient Greece reputed to have the most boorish and unpolished inhabitants of all the country.]

† [The councillor of King David.]

officer, before the Duke of York's reformation of the British army, and a steady sergeant of the regiment in which they both served. There was a consciousness of superiority, disguised by external respect, and half admitted by the leader.

'You will grant me, my simple friend,' continued the chief, in the same tone as before, 'in order to lead thee by a short passage into the deepest principle of policy which pervades this same court of Constantinople, that the favour of the Emperor'—(here the officer raised his casque, and the soldier made a semblance of doing so also)—'who (be the place where he puts his foot sacred!) is the vivifying principle of the sphere in which we live, as the sun itself is that of humanity'——

'I have heard something like this said by our tribunes,' said the Varangian.

'It is their duty so to instruct you,' answered the leader; 'and I trust that the priests also, in their sphere, forget not to teach my Varangians their constant service to their Emperor?'

'They do not omit it,' replied the soldier, 'though we of the exiles know our duty.'

'God forbid I should doubt it,' said the commander of the battle-axes. 'All I mean is to make thee understand, my dear Hereward, that as there are, though perhaps such do not exist in thy dark and gloomy climate, a race of insects which are born in the first rays of the morning, and expire with those of sunset (thence called by us ephemeræ, as enduring one day only), such is the case of a favourite at court, while enjoying the smiles of the most sacred Emperor. And happy is he whose favour, rising as the person of the sovereign emerges from the level space which extends around the throne, displays itself in the first Imperial blaze of glory, and who, keeping his post during the meridian splendour of the crown, has only the fate to disappear and die with the last beam of Imperial brightness.'

'Your valour,' said the islander, 'speaks higher language than my Northern wits are able to comprehend. Only, methinks, rather than part with life at the sunset, I would, since insect I must needs be, become a moth for two or three dark hours.'

'Such is the sordid desire of the vulgar, Hereward,' answered the Follower, with assumed superiority, 'who are contented to enjoy life, lacking distinction; whereas we, on the other hand, we of choicer quality, who form the nearest and innermost circle around the Imperial Alexius, in which he himself forms the central point, are watchful, to woman's jealousy, of the distribution of his favours, and omit no opportunity, whether by leaguing with or against each other, to recommend ourselves individually to the peculiar light of his countenance.'

'I think I comprehend what you mean,' said the Guardsman; 'although, as for living such a life of intrigue——but that matters not.'

'It does indeed matter not, my good Hereward,' said his officer; 'and thou art lucky in having no appetite for the life I have described. Yet have I seen barbarians rise high in the empire, and if they have not altogether the flexibility, the malleability, as it is called—that happy ductility which can give way to circumstances, I have yet known those of barbaric tribes, especially if bred up at court from their youth, who joined to a limited portion of this flexile quality enough of a certain tough durability of temper, which, if it does not excel in availing itself of opportunity, has no contemptible talent at creating it. But letting comparisons pass, it follows from this emulation of glory, that is, of royal favour, amongst the servants of the Imperial and most sacred court, that each is desirous of distinguishing himself by showing to the Emperor, not only that he fully understands the duties of his own employments, but that he is capable, in case of necessity, of discharging those of others.'

'I understand,' said the Saxon; 'and thence it happens that the under-ministers, soldiers, and assistants of the great crown-officers are perpetually engaged, not in aiding each other, but in acting as spies on their neighbours' actions?'

'Even so,' answered the commander; 'it is but few days since I had a disagreeable instance of it. Every one, however dull in the intellect, hath understood thus much, that the great Protospathaire,* which title thou knowest signifies the General-in-chief of the Forces of the Empire, hath me at hatred, because I am the leader of those redoubtable Varangians, who enjoy, and well deserve, privileges exempting them from the absolute command which he possesses over all other corps of the army—an authority which becomes Nicanor, notwithstanding the victorious sound of his name, nearly as well as a war-saddle would become a bullock.'

'How!' said the Varangian, 'does the Protospathaire pretend to any authority ever the noble exiles? By the Red Dragon, under which we will live and die, we will obey no man alive but Alexius Comnenus himself, and our own officers!'

'Rightly and bravely resolved,' said the leader; 'but, my good Hereward, let not your just indignation hurry you so far as to name the most sacred Emperor, without raising your hand to your casque, and adding the epithets of his lofty rank.'

'I will raise my hand often enough and high enough,' said the Norseman, 'when the Emperor's service requires it.'

'I dare be sworn thou wilt,' said Achilles Tatius, the commander of the Varangian Imperial Body-guard, who thought the time was unfavourable for distinguishing himself by insisting on that exact observance of etiquette, which was one of his great pretensions to the name of a soldier. 'Yet were it not for the constant vigilance of your leader, my child, the noble Varangians would be trod down, in the common mass of the army, with the heathen cohorts of Huns, Scythians, or those turbaned infidels the renegade Turks; and even for this is your commander here in peril, because he vindicates his axe-men as worthy of being prized above the paltry shafts of the Eastern tribes and the javelins of the Moors, which are only fit to be playthings for children.'

'You are exposed to no danger,' said the soldier, closing up to Achilles in a confidential manner, 'from which these axes can protect you.'

'Do I not know it?' said Achilles. 'But it is to your arms alone that the Follower of his most sacred Majesty now entrusts his safety.'

* Literally, the First Swordsman.

'In aught that a soldier may do,' answered Hereward; 'make your own computation, and then reckon this single arm worth two against any man the Emperor has, not being of our own corps.'

'Listen, my brave friend,' continued Achilles. 'This Nicanor was daring enough to throw a reproach on our noble corps, accusing them—gods and goddesses!—of plundering in the field, and, yet more sacrilegious, of drinking the precious wine which was prepared for his most sacred Majesty's own blessed consumption. I, the sacred person of the Emperor being present, proceeded, as thou mayest well believe'——

'To give him the lie in his audacious throat!' burst in the Varangian—'named a place of meeting somewhere in the vicinity, and called the attendance of your poor follower, Hereward of Hampton, who is your bond-slave for life long, for such an honour! I wish only you had told me to get my work-day arms; but however, I have my battle-axe, and'—— Here his companion seized a moment to break in, for he was somewhat abashed at the lively tone of the young soldier.

'Hush thee, my son,' said Achilles Tatius; 'speak low, my excellent Hereward. Thou mistakest this thing. With thee by my side I would not, indeed, hesitate to meet five such as Nicanor; but such is not the law of this most hallowed empire, nor the sentiments of the three times illustrious prince who now rules it. Thou art debauched, my soldier, with the swaggering stories of the Franks, of whom we hear more and more every day.'

'I would not willingly borrow anything from those whom you call Franks, and we Normans,' answered the Varangian, in a disappointed, dogged tone.

'Why, listen then,' said the officer, as they proceeded on their walk, 'listen to the reason of the thing, and consider whether such a custom can obtain, as that which they term the duello, in any country of civilisation and common sense, to say nothing of one which is blessed with the domination of the most rare Alexius Comnenus. Two great lords, or high officers, quarrel in the court, and before the reverend person of the Emperor. They dispute about a point of fact. Now, instead of each maintaining his own opinion by argument or evidence, suppose they had adopted the custom of these barbarous Franks,—"Why, thou liest in thy throat," says the one; "And thou liest in thy very lungs," says another; and they measure forth the lists of battle in the next meadow. Each swears to the truth of his quarrel, though probably neither well knows precisely how the fact stands. One, perhaps the hardier, truer, and better man of the two, the Follower of the Emperor, and father of the Varangians (for death, my faithful follower, spares no man), lies dead on the ground, and the other comes back to predominate in the court, where, had the matter been inquired into by the rules of common sense and reason, the victor, as he is termed, would have been sent to the gallows. And yet this is the law of arms, as your fancy pleases to call it, friend Hereward!'

'May it please your valour,' answered the barbarian, 'there is a show of sense in what you say; but you will sooner convince me that this blessed moonlight is the blackness of a wolf's mouth than that I ought to hear myself called liar, without cramming the epithet down the speaker's throat with the spike of my battle-axe. The lie is to a man the same as a blow, and a blow degrades him into a slave and a beast of burden, if endured without retaliation.'

'Ay, there it is!' said Achilles; 'could I but get you to lay aside that inborn barbarism, which leads you, otherwise the most disciplined soldiers who serve the sacred Emperor, into such deadly quarrels and feuds'——

'Sir Captain,' said the Varangian, in a sullen tone, 'take my advice, and take the Varangians as you have them; for, believe my word, that if you could teach them to endure reproaches, bear the lie, or tolerate stripes, you would hardly find them, when their discipline is completed, worth the single day's salt which they cost to his Holiness, if that be his title. I must tell you, moreover, valorous sir, that the Varangians will little thank their leader, who heard them called marauders, drunkards, and what not, and repelled not the charge on the spot.'

'Now, if I knew not the humours of my barbarians,' thought Tatius, in his own mind, 'I should bring on myself a quarrel with these untamed islanders, who the Emperor thinks can be so easily kept in discipline. But I will settle this sport presently.' Accordingly, he addressed the Saxon in a soothing tone.

'My faithful soldier,' he proceeded aloud, 'we Romans, according to the custom of our ancestors, set as much glory on actually telling the truth as you do in resenting the imputation of falsehood; and I could not with honour return a charge of falsehood upon Nicanor, since what he said was substantially true.'

'What! that we Varangians were plunderers, drunkards, and the like?' said Hereward, more impatient than before.

'No, surely, not in that broad sense,' said Achilles; 'but there was too much foundation for the legend.'

'When and where?' asked the Anglo-Saxon.

'You remember,' replied his leader, 'the long march near Laodicea, where the Varangians beat off a cloud of Turks, and retook a train of the Imperial baggage? You know what was done that day—how you quenched your thirst, I mean?'

'I have some reason to remember it,' said Hereward of Hampton; 'for we were half choked with dust, fatigue, and, which was worst of all, constantly fighting with our faces to the rear, when we found some firkins of wine in certain carriages which were broken down; down our throats it went, as if it had been the best ale in Southampton.'

'Ah, unhappy!' said the Follower; 'saw ye not that the firkins were stamped with the thrice excellent Grand Butler's own inviolable seal, and set apart for the private use of his Imperial Majesty's most sacred lips?'

'By good Saint George of merry England, worth a dozen of your Saint George of Cappadocia, I neither thought nor cared about the matter,' answered Hereward. 'And I know your valour drank a mighty draught yourself out of my headpiece; not this silver bauble,

but my steel-cap, which is twice as ample. By the same token, that whereas before you were giving orders to fall back, you were a changed man when you had cleared your throat of the dust, and cried, "Bide the other brunt, my brave and stout boys of Britain!"'

'Ay,' said Achilles, 'I know I am but too apt to be venturous in action. But you mistake, good Hereward; the wine I tasted in the extremity of martial fatigue was not that set apart for his sacred Majesty's own peculiar mouth, but a secondary sort, preserved for the Grand Butler himself, of which, as one of the great officers of the household, I might right lawfully partake; the chance was nevertheless sinfully unhappy.'

'On my life,' replied Hereward, 'I cannot see the infelicity of drinking when we are dying of thirst.'

'But cheer up, my noble comrade,' said Achilles, after he had hurried over his own exculpation, and without noticing the Varangian's light estimation of the crime, 'his Imperial Majesty, in his ineffable graciousness, imputes these ill-advised draughts as a crime to no one who partook of them. He rebuked the Protospathaire for fishing up this accusation, and said, when he had recalled the bustle and confusion of that toilsome day, "I thought myself well off amid that seven times heated furnace, when we obtained a draught of the barley-wine drunk by my poor Varangians; and I drank their health, as well I might, since, had it not been for their services, I had drunk my last; and well fare their hearts, though they quaffed my wine in return!" And with that he turned off, as one who said, "I have too much of this, being a finding of matter and ripping up of stories against Achilles Tatius and his gallant Varangians."'

'Now, may God bless his honest heart for it!' said Hereward, with more downright heartiness than formal respect. 'I'll drink to his health in what I put next to my lips that quenches thirst, whether it be ale, wine, or ditch-water.'

'Why, well said, but speak not above thy breath! and remember to put thy hand to thy forehead, when naming, or even thinking of, the Emperor! Well, thou knowest, Hereward, that having thus obtained the advantage, I knew that the moment of a repulsed attack is always that of a successful charge; and so I brought against the Protospathaire, Nicanor, the robberies which have been committed at the Golden Gate and other entrances of the city, where a merchant was but of late kidnapped and murdered, having on him certain jewels, the property of the Patriarch.'

'Ay! indeed?' said the Varangian; 'and what said Alex—— I mean the most sacred Emperor, when he heard such things said of the city warders?—though he had himself given, as we say in our land, the fox the geese to keep.'

'It may be he did,' replied Achilles; 'but he is a sovereign of deep policy, and was resolved not to proceed against these treacherous warders, or their general, the Protospathaire, without decisive proof. His sacred Majesty, therefore, charged me to obtain specific circumstantial proof by thy means.'

'And that I would have managed in two minutes, had you not called me off the chase of yon cut-throat vagabond. But his Grace knows the word of a Varangian, and I can assure him that either lucre of my silver gaberdine, which they nickname a cuirass, or the hatred of my corps, would be sufficient to incite any of these knaves to cut the throat of a Varangian, who appeared to be asleep. So we go, I suppose, Captain, to bear evidence before the Emperor to this night's work?'

'No, my active soldier, hadst thou taken the runaway villain, my first act must have been to set him free again; and my present charge to you is, to forget that such an adventure has ever taken place.'

'Ha!' said the Varangian; 'this is a change of policy indeed!'

'Why, yes, brave Hereward; ere I left the palace this night, the Patriarch made overtures of reconciliation betwixt me and the Protospathaire, which, as our agreement is of much consequence to the State, I could not very well reject, either as a good soldier or a good Christian. All offences to my honour are to be in the fullest degree repaid, for which the Patriarch interposes his warrant. The Emperor, who will rather wink hard than see disagreements, loves better the matter should be slurred over thus.'

'And the reproaches upon the Varangians?'—said Hereward.

'Shall be fully retracted and atoned for,' answered Achilles; 'and a weighty donative in gold dealt among the corps of the Anglo-Danish axe-men. Thou, my Hereward, mayst be distributor; and thus, if well managed, mayst plate thy battle-axe with gold.'

'I love my axe better as it is,' said the Varangian. 'My father bore it against the robber Normans at Hastings. Steel instead of gold for my money.'

'Thou mayst make thy choice, Hereward,' answered his officer; 'only, if thou art poor, say the fault was thine own.'

But here, in the course of their circuit round Constantinople, the officer and his soldier came to a very small wicket or sally-port, opening on the interior of a large and massive advanced work, which terminated an entrance to the city itself. Here the officer halted, and made his obedience, as a devotee who is about to enter a chapel of peculiar sanctity.

CHAPTER III.

Here, youth, thy foot unbrace,
Here, youth, thy brow unbraid;
Each tribute that may grace
The threshold here be paid.
Walk with the stealthy pace
Which nature teaches deer,
When, echoing in the chase,
The hunter's horn they hear.
THE COURT.

BEFORE entering, Achilles Tatius made various gesticulations, which were imitated roughly and awkwardly by the unpractised Varangian, whose service with his corps had been almost entirely in the field, his routine of duty not having, till very lately, called him to serve as one of the garrison of Constantinople. He was not, there-

fore, acquainted with the minute observances which the Greeks, who were the most formal and ceremonious soldiers and courtiers in the world, rendered not merely to the Greek emperor in person, but throughout the sphere which peculiarly partook of his influence.

Achilles, having gesticulated after his own fashion, at length touched the door with a rap, distinct at once and modest. This was thrice repeated, when the captain whispered to his attendant, 'The interior!—for thy life, do as thou seest me do.' At the same moment he started back, and, stooping his head on his breast, with his hands over his eyes, as if to save them from being dazzled by an unexpected burst of light, awaited the answer to his summons. The Anglo-Dane, desirous to obey his leader, imitating him as near as he could, stood side by side in the posture of Oriental humiliation. The little portal opened inwards, when no burst of light was seen, but four of the Varangians were made visible in the entrance, holding each his battle-axe, as if about to strike down the intruders who had disturbed the silence of their watch.

'Acoulouthos,' said the leader, by way of password.

'Tatius and Acoulouthos,' murmured the warders as a countersign.

Each sentinel sunk his weapon.

Achilles then reared his stately crest, with a conscious dignity at making this display of court influence in the eyes of his soldiers. Hereward observed an undisturbed gravity, to the surprise of his officer, who marvelled in his own mind how he could be such a barbarian as to regard with apathy a scene which had in his eyes the most impressive and peculiar awe. This indifference he imputed to the stupid insensibility of his companion.

They passed on between the sentinels, who wheeled backward in file, on each side of the portal, and gave the strangers entrance to a long narrow plank, stretched across the city moat, which was here drawn within the enclosure of an external rampart, projecting beyond the principal wall of the city.

'This,' he whispered to Hereward, 'is called the Bridge of Peril, and it is said that it has been occasionally smeared with oil, or strewed with dried peas, and that the bodies of men, known to have been in company with the Emperor's most sacred person, have been taken out of the Golden Horn,* into which the moat empties itself.'

'I would not have thought,' said the islander, raising his voice to its usual rough tone, 'that Alexius Comnenus'——

'Hush, rash and regardless of your life!' said Achilles Tatius; 'to awaken the daughter of the Imperial arch† is to incur deep penalty at all times; but when a rash delinquent has disturbed her with reflections on his most sacred Highness the Emperor, death is a punishment far too light for the effrontery which has interrupted her blessed slumber! Ill hath been my fate, to have positive commands laid on me, enjoining me to bring into the sacred precincts a creature who hath no more of the salt of civilisation in him than to keep his mortal frame from corruption, since of all mental culture he is totally incapable. Consider thyself, Hereward, and bethink thee what thou art. By nature a poor barbarian, thy best boast that thou hast slain certain Mussulmans in thy sacred master's quarrel; and here art thou admitted into the inviolable enclosure of the Blaquernal, and in the hearing not only of the royal daughter of the Imperial arch, which means,' said the eloquent leader, 'the echo of the sublime vaults; but,—Heaven be our guide!—for what I know, within the natural hearing of the Sacred Ear itself!'

'Well, my Captain,' replied the Varangian, 'I cannot presume to speak my mind after the fashion of this place; but I can easily suppose I am but ill qualified to converse in the presence of the court, nor do I mean therefore to say a word till I am spoken to, unless when I shall see no better company than ourselves. To be plain, I find difficulty in modelling my voice to a smoother tone than nature has given it. So, henceforth, my brave Captain, I will be mute, unless when you give me a sign to speak.'

'You will act wisely,' said the captain. 'Here be certain persons of high rank, nay, some that have been born in the purple itself, that will, Hereward (alas for thee!) prepare to sound with the line of their courtly understanding the depths of thy barbarous and shallow conceit. Do not, therefore, then, join their graceful smiles with thy inhuman bursts of cachinnation, with which thou art wont to thunder forth when opening in chorus with thy messmates.'

'I tell thee I will be silent,' said the Varangian, moved somewhat beyond his mood. 'If you trust my word, so; if you think I am a jackdaw that must be speaking, whether in or out of place and purpose, I am contented to go back again, and therein we can end the matter.'

Achilles, conscious perhaps that it was his best policy not to drive his subaltern to extremity, lowered his tone somewhat in reply to the uncourtly note of the soldier, as if allowing something for the rude manners of one whom he considered as not easily matched among the Varangians themselves for strength and valour; qualities which, in despite of Hereward's discourtesy, Achilles suspected in his heart were fully more valuable than all those nameless graces which a more courtly and accomplished soldier might possess.

The expert navigator of the intricacies of the imperial residence carried the Varangian through two or three small complicated courts, forming a part of the extensive Palace of the Blacquernal,‡ and entered the building itself by a side-door, watched in like manner by a sentinel of the Varangian Guard, whom they passed on being recognised. In the next apartment was stationed the court of guard, where were certain soldiers of the same corps amusing themselves at games somewhat resembling the modern draughts and dice, while they seasoned their pastime with

* The harbour of Constantinople.

† The daughter of the arch was a courtly expression for the echo, as we find explained by the courtly commander himself.

‡ This palace derived its name from the neighbouring Blachernian Gate and Bridge.

frequent applications to deep flagons of ale, which were furnished to them while passing away their hours of duty. Some glances passed between Hereward and his comrades, and he would have joined them, or at least spoken to them; for since the adventure of the Mitylenian, Hereward had rather thought himself annoyed than distinguished by his moonlight ramble in the company of his commander, excepting always the short and interesting period during which he conceived they were on the way to fight a duel. Still, however negligent in the strict observance of the ceremonies of the sacred palace, the Varangians had, in their own way, rigid notions of calculating their military duty; in consequence of which, Hereward, without speaking to his companions, followed his leader through the guard-room, and one or two antechambers adjacent, the splendid and luxurious furniture of which convinced him that he could be nowhere else save in the sacred residence of his master the emperor.

At length, having traversed passages and apartments with which the captain seemed familiar, and which he threaded with a stealthy, silent, and apparently reverential pace, as if, in his own inflated phrase, afraid to awaken the sounding echoes of those lofty and monumental halls, another species of inhabitants began to be visible. In different entrances, and in different apartments, the Northern soldier beheld those unfortunate slaves, chiefly of African descent, raised occasionally under the Emperors of Greece to great power and honours, who in that respect imitated one of the most barbarous points of Oriental despotism. These slaves were differently occupied; some standing, as if on guard, at gates or in passages, with their drawn sabres in their hands; some were sitting in the Oriental fashion on carpets, reposing themselves or playing at various games, all of a character profoundly silent. Not a word passed between the guide of Hereward and the withered and deformed beings whom they thus encountered. The exchange of a glance with the principal soldier seemed all that was necessary to insure both an uninterrupted passage.

After making their way through several apartments, empty or thus occupied, they at length entered one of black marble, or some other dark-coloured stone, much loftier and longer than the rest. Side passages opened into it, so far as the islander could discern, descending from several portals in the wall; but as the oils and gums with which the lamps in these passages were fed diffused a dim vapour around, it was difficult to ascertain, from the imperfect light, either the shape of the hall or the style of its architecture. At the upper and lower ends of the chamber there was a stronger and clearer light. It was when they were in the middle of this huge and long apartment that Achilles said to the soldier, in the sort of cautionary whisper which he appeared to have substituted in place of his natural voice since he had crossed the Bridge of Peril—

'Remain here till I return, and stir from this hall on no account.'

'To hear is to obey,' answered the Varangian, an expression of obedience which, like many other phrases and fashions, the empire, which still affected the name of Roman, had borrowed from the barbarians of the East. Achilles Tatius then hastened up the steps which led to one of the side-doors of the hall, which, being slightly pressed, its noiseless hinge gave way and admitted him.

Left alone to amuse himself as he best could, within the limits permitted to him, the Varangian visited in succession both ends of the hall, where the objects were more visible than elsewhere. The lower end had in its centre a small low-browed door of iron. Over it was displayed the Greek crucifix in bronze, and around and on every side the representation of shackles, fetter-bolts, and the like was also executed in bronze, and disposed as appropriate ornaments over the entrance. The door of the dark archway was half open, and Hereward naturally looked in, the orders of his chief not prohibiting his satisfying his curiosity thus far. A dense red light, more like a distant spark than a lamp, affixed to the wall of what seemed a very narrow and winding stair, resembling in shape and size a draw-well, the verge of which opened on the threshold of the iron door, showed a descent which seemed to conduct to the infernal regions. The Varangian, however obtuse he might be considered by the quick-witted Greeks, had no difficulty in comprehending that a staircase having such a gloomy appearance, and the access to which was by a portal decorated in such a melancholy style of architecture, could only lead to the dungeons of the Imperial palace, the size and complicated number of which were neither the least remarkable nor the least awe-imposing portion of the sacred edifice. Listening profoundly, he even thought he caught such accents as befit those graves of living men, the faint echoing of groans and sighs, sounding as it were from the deep abyss beneath. But in this respect his fancy probably filled up the sketch which his conjectures bodied out.

'I have done nothing,' he thought, 'to merit being immured in one of these subterranean dens. Surely, though my Captain, Achilles Tatius, is, under favour, little better than an ass, he cannot be so false of word as to train me to prison under false pretexts? I trow he shall first see for the last time how the English axe plays, if such is to be the sport of the evening. But let us see the upper end of this enormous vault; it may bear a better omen.'

Thus thinking, and not quite ruling the tramp of his armed footstep according to the ceremonies of the place, the large-limbed Saxon strode to the upper end of the black marble hall. The ornament of the portal here was a small altar, like those in the temples of the heathen deities, which projected above the centre of the arch. On this altar smoked incense of some sort, the fumes of which rose curling in a thin cloud to the roof, and thence extending through the hall, enveloped in its column of smoke a singular emblem, of which the Varangian could make nothing. It was the representation of two human arms and hands, seeming to issue from the wall, having the palms extended and open, as about to confer some boon on those who approached the altar. These arms were formed

of bronze, and, being placed farther back than the altar with its incense, were seen through the curling smoke by lamps so disposed as to illuminate the whole archway. 'The meaning of this,' thought the simple barbarian, 'I should well know how to explain, were these fists clenched, and were the hall dedicated to the *pancration*, which we call boxing; but as even these helpless Greeks use not their hands without their fingers being closed, by Saint George, I can make out nothing of their meaning.'

At this instant Achilles entered the black marble hall at the same door by which he had left it, and came up to his neophyte, as the Varangian might be termed.

'Come with me now, Hereward, for here approaches the thick of the onset. Now, display the utmost courage that thou canst summon up, for, believe me, thy credit and name also depend on it.'

'Fear nothing for either,' said Hereward, 'if the heart or hand of one man can bear him through the adventure by the help of a toy like this.'

'Keep thy voice low and submissive, I have told thee a score of times,' said the leader, 'and lower thine axe, which, as I bethink me, thou hadst better leave in the outer apartment.'

'With your leave, noble Captain,' replied Hereward, 'I am unwilling to lay aside my bread-winner. I am one of those awkward clowns who cannot behave seemly unless I have something to occupy my hands, and my faithful battle-axe comes most natural to me.'

'Keep it, then; but remember thou dash it not about according to thy custom, nor bellow, nor shout, nor cry as in a battlefield; think of the sacred character of the place, which exaggerates riot into blasphemy, and remember the persons whom thou mayst chance to see, an offence to some of whom, it may be, ranks in the same sense with blasphemy against Heaven itself.'

This lecture carried the tutor and the pupil so far as to the side-door, and thence inducted them into a species of anteroom, from which Achilles led his Varangian forward, until a pair of folding-doors, opening into what proved to be a principal apartment of the palace, exhibited to the rough-hewn native of the North a sight equally new and surprising.

It was an apartment of the Palace of the Blacquernal dedicated to the special service of the beloved daughter of the Emperor Alexius, the Princess Anna Comnena, known to our times by her literary talents, which record the history of her father's reign. She was seated, the queen and sovereign of a literary circle, such as an Imperial princess, porphyrogenita, or born in the sacred purple chamber itself, could assemble in those days, and a glance round will enable us to form an idea of her guests or companions.

The literary princess herself had the bright eyes, straight features, and comely and pleasing manners, which all would have allowed to the emperor's daughter, even if she could not have been, with severe truth, said to have possessed them. She was placed upon a small bench, or sofa, the fair sex here not being permitted to recline, as was the fashion of the Roman ladies. A table before her was loaded with books, plants, herbs, and drawings. She sat on a slight elevation, and those who enjoyed the intimacy of the princess, or to whom she wished to speak in particular, were allowed, during such sublime colloquy, to rest their knees on the little dais, or elevated place where her chair found its station, in a posture half standing, half kneeling. Three other seats, of different heights, were placed on the dais, and under the same canopy of state which overshadowed that of the Princess Anna.

The first, which strictly resembled her own chair in size and convenience, was one designed for her husband, Nicephorus Briennius. He was said to entertain or affect the greatest respect for his wife's erudition, though the courtiers were of opinion he would have liked to absent himself from her evening parties more frequently than was particularly agreeable to the Princess Anna and her Imperial parents. This was partly explained by the private tattle of the court, which averred that the Princess Anna Comnena had been more beautiful when she was less learned; and that, though still a fine woman, she had somewhat lost the charms of her person as she became enriched in her mind.

To atone for the lowly fashion of the seat of Nicephorus Briennius, it was placed as near to his princess as it could possibly be edged by the ushers, so that she might not lose one look of her handsome spouse, nor he the least particle of wisdom which might drop from the lips of his erudite consort.

Two other seats of honour, or rather thrones, —for they had footstools placed for the support of the feet, rests for the arms, and embroidered pillows for the comfort of the back, not to mention the glories of the outspreading canopy, —were destined for the Imperial couple, who frequently attended their daughter's studies, which she prosecuted in public in the way we have intimated. On such occasions, the Empress Irene enjoyed the triumph peculiar to the mother of an accomplished daughter, while Alexius, as it might happen, sometimes listened with complacence to the rehearsal of his own exploits in the inflated language of the princess, and sometimes mildly nodded over her dialogues upon the mysteries of philosophy with the Patriarch Zosimus and other sages.

All these four distinguished seats for the persons of the Imperial family were occupied at the moment which we have described, excepting that which ought to have been filled by Nicephorus Briennius, the husband of the fair Anna Comnena. To his negligence and absence was perhaps owing the angry spot on the brow of his fair bride. Beside her on the platform were two white-robed nymphs of her household; female slaves, in a word, who reposed themselves on their knees on cushions, when their assistance was not wanted as a species of living book-desks, to support and extend the parchment rolls in which the princess recorded her own wisdom, or from which she quoted that of others. One of these young maidens, called Astarte, was so distinguished as a caligrapher, or beautiful writer of various alphabets and languages, that she narrowly escaped being sent as a present to the

Caliph (who could neither read nor write) at a time when it was necessary to bribe him into peace. Violante, usually called the Muse, the other attendant of the princess, a mistress of the vocal and instrumental art of music, was actually sent in a compliment to soothe the temper of Robert Guiscard, the Archduke of Apulia, who, being aged and stone-deaf, and the girl under ten years old at the time, returned the valued present to the Imperial donor, and, with the selfishness which was one of that wily Norman's characteristics, desired to have some one sent him who could contribute to his pleasure instead of a twangling, squalling infant.

Beneath these elevated seats there sat, or reposed on the floor of the hall, such favourites as were admitted. The Patriarch Zosimus, and one or two old men, were permitted the use of certain lowly stools, which were the only seats prepared for the learned members of the princess's evening parties, as they would have been called in our days. As for the younger magnates, the honour of being permitted to join the Imperial conversation was expected to render them far superior to the paltry accommodation of a joint-stool. Five or six courtiers, of different dress and ages, might compose the party, who either stood, or relieved their posture by kneeling, along the verge of an adorned fountain, which shed a mist of such very small rain as to dispel almost insensibly, cooling the fragrant breeze which breathed from the flowers and shrubs, that were so disposed as to send a waste of sweets around. One goodly old man, named Michael Agelastes, big, burly, and dressed like an ancient Cynic philosopher, was distinguished by assuming, in a great measure, the ragged garb and mad bearing of that sect, and by his inflexible practice of the strictest ceremonies exigible by the Imperial family. He was known by an affectation of cynical principle and language, and of republican philosophy, strangely contradicted by his practical deference to the great. It was wonderful how long this man, now sixty years old and upwards, disdained to avail himself of the accustomed privilege of leaning, or supporting his limbs, and with what regularity he maintained either the standing posture or that of absolute kneeling; but the first was so much his usual attitude, that he acquired among his court friends the name of Elephas, or the Elephant, because the ancients had an idea that the half-reasoning animal, as it is called, has joints incapable of kneeling down.

'Yet I have seen them kneel when I was in the country of the Gymnosophists,' * said a person present on the evening of Hereward's introduction.

'To take up their master on their shoulders? so will ours,' said the Patriarch Zosimus, with the slight sneer which was the nearest advance to a sarcasm that the etiquette of the Greek court permitted; for on all ordinary occasions, it would not have offended the presence more surely, literally to have drawn a poniard, than to exchange a repartee in the Imperial circle. Even the sarcasm, such as it was, would have been thought censurable by that ceremonious court in any but the Patriarch, to whose high rank some licence was allowed.

Just as he had thus far offended decorum, Achilles Tatius and his soldier Hereward entered the apartment. The former bore him with even more than his usual degree of courtliness, as if to set his own good-breeding off by a comparison with the inexpert bearing of his follower; while, nevertheless, he had a secret pride in exhibiting, as one under his own immediate and distinct command, a man whom he was accustomed to consider as one of the finest soldiers in the army of Alexius, whether appearance or reality were to be considered.

Some astonishment followed the abrupt entrance of the new comers. Achilles indeed glided into the presence with the easy and quiet extremity of respect which intimated his habitude in these regions. But Hereward started on his entrance, and, perceiving himself in company of the court, hastily strove to remedy his disorder. His commander, throwing round a scarce visible shrug of apology, made then a confidential and monitory sign to Hereward to mind his conduct. What he meant was, that he should doff his helmet and fall prostrate on the ground. But the Anglo-Saxon, unaccustomed to interpret obscure inferences, naturally thought of his military duties, and advanced in front of the emperor, as when he rendered his military homage. He made reverence with his knee, half touched his cap, and then, recovering and shouldering his axe, stood in advance of the Imperial chair, as if on duty as a sentinel.

A gentle smile of surprise went round the circle, as they gazed on the manly appearance and somewhat unceremonious but martial deportment of the Northern soldier. The various spectators around consulted the emperor's face, not knowing whether they were to take the intrusive manner of the Varangian's entrance as matter of ill-breeding, and manifest their horror, or whether they ought rather to consider the bearing of the Life-guardsman as indicating blunt and manly zeal, and therefore to be received with applause.

It was some little time ere the emperor recovered himself sufficiently to strike a key-note, as was usual upon such occasions. Alexius Comnenus had been wrapped for a moment into some species of slumber, or at least absence of mind. Out of this he had been startled by the sudden appearance of the Varangian; for though he was accustomed to commit the outer guards of the palace to this trusty corps, yet the deformed blacks whom we have mentioned, and who sometimes rose to be ministers of state and commanders of armies, were, on all ordinary occasions, entrusted with the guard of the interior of the palace. Alexius, therefore, awakened from his slumber, and the military phrase of his daughter still ringing in his ears, as she was reading a description of the great historical work, in which she had detailed the conflicts of his reign, felt somewhat unprepared for the entrance and military deportment of one of the Saxon Guard, with whom he was accustomed to associate, in general, scenes of blows, danger, and death.

* [Ancient Hindu philosophers, who led strict ascetic lives.]

After a troubled glance around, his look rested on Achilles Tatius. 'Why here,' he said, 'trusty Follower? why this soldier here at this time of night?' Here, of course, was the moment for modelling the visages *regis ad exemplum;* but, ere the Patriarch could frame his countenance into devout apprehension of danger, Achilles Tatius had spoken a word or two, which reminded Alexius' memory that the soldier had been brought there by his own special orders. 'O ay! true, good fellow,' said he, smoothing his troubled brow; 'we had forgot that passage among the cares of state.' He then spoke to the Varangian with a countenance more frank, and a heartier accent than he used to his courtiers; for, to a despotic monarch, a faithful Life-guardsman is a person of confidence, while an officer of high rank is always in some degree a subject of distrust. 'Ha!' said he, 'our worthy Anglo-Dane, how fares he?'—This unceremonious salutation surprised all but him to whom it was addressed. Hereward answered, accompanying his words with a military obeisance which partook of heartiness rather than reverence, with a loud, unsubdued voice, which startled the presence still more that the language was Saxon, which these foreigners occasionally used, '*Waes hael, Kaisar mirrig und machtigh!*'—that is, Be of good health, stout and mighty emperor. The emperor, with a smile of intelligence, to show he could speak to his Guards in their own foreign language, replied by the well-known counter signal,—'*Drink hael!*'

Immediately a page brought a silver goblet of wine. The emperor put his lips to it, though he scarce tasted the liquor, then commanded it to be handed to Hereward, and bade the soldier drink. The Saxon did not wait till he was desired a second time, but took off the contents without hesitation. A gentle smile, decorous as the presence required, passed over the assembly, at a feat which, though by no means wonderful in a hyperborean, seemed prodigious in the estimation of the moderate Greeks. Alexius himself laughed more loudly than his courtiers thought might be becoming on their part, and, mustering what few words of Varangian he possessed, which he eked out with Greek, demanded of his Life-guardsman—'Well, my bold Briton, or Edward, as men call thee, dost thou know the flavour of that wine?'

'Yes,' answered the Varangian, without change of countenance; 'I tasted it once before at Laodicea'——

Here his officer, Achilles Tatius, became sensible that his soldier approached delicate ground, and in vain endeavoured to gain his attention, in order that he might furtively convey to him a hint to be silent, or at least take heed what he said in such a presence. But the soldier, who, with proper military observance, continued to have his eye and attention fixed on the emperor, as the prince whom he was bound to answer or to serve, saw none of the hints, which Achilles at length suffered to become so broad, that Zosimus and the Protospathaire exchanged expressive glances, as calling on each other to notice the by-play of the leader of the Varangians.

In the meanwhile, the dialogue between the emperor and his soldier continued:—'How,' said Alexius, 'did this draught relish compared with the former?'

'There is fairer company here, my liege, than that of the Arabian archers,' answered Hereward with a look and bow of instinctive good-breeding. 'Nevertheless, there lacks the flavour which the heat of the sun, the dust of the combat, with the fatigue of wielding such a weapon as this' (advancing his axe) 'for eight hours together, give to a cup of rare wine.'

'Another deficiency there might be,' said Agelastes the Elephant, 'provided I am pardoned hinting at it,' he added, with a look to the throne,—'it might be the smaller size of the cup compared with that at Laodicea.'

'By Taranis,* you say true,' answered the Life-guardsman; 'at Laodicea I used my helmet.'

'Let us see the cups compared together, good friend,' said Agelastes, continuing his raillery, 'that we may be sure thou hast not swallowed the present goblet; for I thought, from the manner of the draught, there was a chance of its going down with its contents.'

'There are some things which I do not easily swallow,' answered the Varangian, in a calm and indifferent tone; 'but they must come from a younger and more active man than you.'

The company again smiled to each other, as if to hint that the philosopher, though also parcel wit by profession, had the worst of the encounter.

The emperor at the same time interfered—'Nor did I send for thee hither, good fellow, to be baited by idle taunts.'

Here Agelastes shrunk back in the circle, as a hound that has been rebuked by the huntsman for baddling—and the Princess Anna Comnena, who had indicated by her fair features a certain degree of impatience, at length spoke—'Will it then please you, my Imperial and much-beloved father, to inform those blessed with admission to the Muses' Temple, for what it is that you have ordered this soldier to be this night admitted to a place so far above his rank in life? Permit me to say we ought not to waste, in frivolous and silly jests, the time which is sacred to the welfare of the empire, as every moment of your leisure must be.'

'Our daughter speaks wisely!' said the Empress Irene, who, like most mothers who do not possess much talent themselves, and are not very capable of estimating it in others, was nevertheless a great admirer of her favourite daughter's accomplishments, and ready to draw them out on all occasions. 'Permit me to remark, that in this divine and selected palace of the Muses, dedicated to the studies of our well-beloved and highly-gifted daughter, whose pen will preserve your reputation, our most Imperial husband, till the desolation of the universe, and which enlivens and delights this society, the very flower of the wits of our sublime court;—permit me to say that we have, merely by admitting a single Life-guardsman, given our conversation the character of that which distinguishes a barrack.'

* [The supreme god of the Druids, the priests of the ancient Britons.]

Now the Emperor Alexius Comnenus had the same feeling with many an honest man in ordinary life when his wife begins a long oration, especially as the Empress Irene did not always retain the observance consistent with his awful rule and right supremacy, although especially severe in exacting it from all others, in reference to her lord. Therefore, though he had felt some pleasure in gaining a short release from the monotonous recitation of the princess's history, he now saw the necessity of resuming it, or of listening to the matrimonial eloquence of the empress. He sighed, therefore, as he said, 'I crave your pardon, good our Imperial spouse, and our daughter born in the purple chamber. I remember me, our most amiable and accomplished daughter, that last night you wished to know the particulars of the battle of Laodicea, with the heathenish Arabs, whom Heaven confound. And for certain considerations which moved ourselves to add other inquiries to our own recollection, Achilles Tatius, our most trusty Follower, was commissioned to introduce into this place one of those soldiers under his command, being such a one whose courage and presence of mind could best enable him to remark what passed around him on that remarkable and bloody day. And this I suppose to be the man brought to us for that purpose.'

'If I am permitted to speak and live,' answered the Follower, 'your Imperial Highness, with those divine princesses, whose name is to us as those of blessed saints, have in your presence the flower of my Anglo-Danes, or whatsoever unbaptized name is given to my soldiers. He is, as I may say, a barbarian of barbarians; for although in birth and breeding unfit to soil with his feet the carpet of this precinct of accomplishment and eloquence, he is so brave—so trusty—so devotedly attached—and so unhesitatingly zealous, that'——

'Enough, good Follower,' said the emperor: 'let us only know that he is cool and observant, not confused and fluttered during close battle, as we have sometimes observed in you and other great commanders—and, to speak truth, have even felt in our Imperial self on extraordinary occasions. Which difference in man's constitution is not owing to any inferiority of courage, but, in us, to a certain consciousness of the importance of our own safety to the welfare of the whole, and to a feeling of the number of duties which at once devolve on us. Speak, then, and speak quickly, Tatius; for I discern that our dearest consort, and our thrice fortunate daughter born in the Imperial chamber of purple, seem to wax somewhat impatient.'

'Hereward,' answered Tatius, 'is as composed and observant in battle, as another in a festive dance. The dust of war is the breath of his nostrils; and he will prove his worth in combat against any four others (Varangians excepted) who shall term themselves your Imperial Highness's bravest servants.'

'Follower,' said the emperor, with a displeased look and tone, 'instead of instructing these poor ignorant barbarians in the rules and civilisation of our enlightened empire, you foster, by such boastful words, the idle pride and fury of their temper, which hurries them into brawls with the legions of other foreign countries, and even breeds quarrels among themselves.'

'If my mouth may be opened in the way of most humble excuse,' said the Follower, 'I would presume to reply, that I but an hour hence talked with this poor ignorant Anglo-Dane, on the paternal care with which the Imperial Majesty of Greece regards the preservation of that concord which unites the followers of his standard, and how desirous he is to promote that harmony, more especially amongst the various nations who have the happiness to serve you, in spite of the bloodthirsty quarrels of the Franks, and other northern men, who are never free from civil broil. I think the poor youth's understanding can bear witness to this much in my behalf.' He then looked towards Hereward, who gravely inclined his head in token of assent to what his captain said. His excuse thus ratified, Achilles proceeded in his apology more firmly. 'What I have said even now was spoken without consideration; for, instead of pretending that this Hereward would face four of your Imperial Highness's servants, I ought to have said that he was willing to defy six of your Imperial Majesty's most deadly *enemies*, and permit them to choose every circumstance of time, arms, and place of combat.'

'That hath a better sound,' said the emperor; 'and in truth, for the information of my dearest daughter, who piously has undertaken to record the things which I have been the blessed means of doing for the empire, I earnestly wish that she should remember, that though the sword of Alexius hath not slept in its sheath, yet he hath never sought his own aggrandizement of fame at the price of bloodshed among his subjects.'

'I trust,' said Anna Comnena, 'that in my humble sketch of the life of the princely sire from whom I derive my existence, I have not forgot to notice his love of peace, and care for the lives of his soldiery, and abhorrence of the bloody manners of the heretic Franks, as one of his most distinguishing characteristics.'

Assuming then an attitude more commanding, as one who was about to claim the attention of the company, the princess inclined her head gently around to the audience, and, taking a roll of parchment from the fair amanuensis, which she had, in a most beautiful handwriting, engrossed to her mistress's dictation, Anna Comnena prepared to read its contents.

At this moment the eyes of the princess rested for an instant on the barbarian Hereward, to whom she deigned this greeting:—'Valiant barbarian, of whom my fancy recalls some memory, as if in a dream, thou art now to hear a work, which, if the author be put into comparison with the subject, might be likened to a portrait of Alexander, in executing which some inferior dauber has usurped the pencil of Apelles;* but which essay, however it may appear unworthy of the subject in the eyes of many, must yet command some envy in those who candidly consider its contents, and the

* [One of the most eminent of the ancient Greek painters.]

difficulty of portraying the great personage concerning whom it is written. Still, I pray thee, give thine attention to what I have now to read, since this account of the battle of Laodicea, the details thereof being principally derived from his Imperial Highness my excellent father, from the altogether valiant Protospathaire, his invincible general, together with Achilles Tatius, the faithful Follower of our victorious Emperor, may nevertheless be in some circumstances inaccurate. For it is to be thought that the high offices of those great commanders retained them at a distance from some particularly active parts of the fray, in order that they might have more cool and accurate opportunity to form a judgment upon the whole, and transmit their orders, without being disturbed by any thoughts of personal safety. Even so, brave barbarian, in the art of embroidery (marvel not that we are a proficient in that mechanical process, since it is patronized by Minerva, whose studies we affect to follow), we reserve to ourselves the superintendence of the entire web, and commit to our maidens and others the execution of particular parts. Thus, in the same manner, thou, valiant Varangian, being engaged in the very thickest of the affray before Laodicea, mayst point out to us, the unworthy historian of so renowned a war, those chances which befel where men fought hand to hand, and where the fate of war was decided by the edge of the sword. Therefore dread not, thou bravest of the axemen to whom we owe that victory, and so many others, to correct any mistake or misapprehension which we may have been led into concerning the details of that glorious event.'

'Madam,' said the Varangian, 'I shall attend with diligence to what your Highness may be pleased to read to me; although, as to presuming to blame the history of a princess born in the purple, far be such a presumption from me; still less would it become a barbaric Varangian to pass a judgment on the military conduct of the Emperor, by whom he is liberally paid, or of the commander, by whom he is well treated. Before an action, if our advice is required, it is ever faithfully tendered; but, according to my rough wit, our censure after the field is fought would be more invidious than useful. Touching the Protospathaire, if it be the duty of a general to absent himself from close action, I can safely say, or swear, were it necessary, that the invincible commander was never seen by me within a javelin's cast of aught that looked like danger.'

This speech, boldly and bluntly delivered, had a general effect on the company present. The emperor himself, and Achilles Tatius, looked like men who had got off from a danger better than they expected. The Protospathaire laboured to conceal a movement of resentment. Agelastes whispered to the Patriarch, near whom he was placed, 'The Northern battle-axe lacks neither point nor edge.'

'Hush!' said Zosimus, 'let us hear how this is to end; the princess is about to speak.'

CHAPTER IV.

We heard the Tecbir, so these Arabs call
Their shout of onset, when with loud acclaim
They challenged Heaven, as if demanding conquest.
The battle join'd, and through the barb'rous herd,
Fight, fight! and Paradise! was all their cry.
THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

THE voice of the Northern soldier, although modified by feelings of respect to the emperor, and even attachment to his captain, had more of a tone of blunt sincerity, nevertheless than was usually heard by the sacred echoes of the Imperial palace; and though the Princess Anna Comnena began to think that she had invoked the opinion of a severe judge, she was sensible, at the same time, by the deference of his manner, that his respect was of a character more real, and his applause, should she gain it, would prove more truly flattering, than the gilded assent of the whole court of her father. She gazed with some surprise and attention on Hereward, already described as a very handsome young man, and felt the natural desire to please, which is easily created in the mind towards a fine person of the other sex. His attitude was easy and bold, but neither clownish nor uncourtly. His title of a barbarian placed him at once free from the forms of civilised life, and the rules of artificial politeness. But his character for valour, and the noble self-confidence of his bearing, gave him a deeper interest than would have been acquired by a more studied and anxious address, or an excess of reverential awe.

In short, the Princess Anna Comnena, high in rank as she was, and born in the Imperial purple, which she herself deemed the first of all attributes, felt herself, nevertheless, in preparing to resume the recitation of her history, more anxious to obtain the approbation of this rude soldier, than that of all the rest of the courteous audience. She knew them well, it is true, and felt nowise solicitous about the applause which the daughter of the emperor was sure to receive with full hands from those of the Grecian court to whom she might choose to communicate the productions of her father's daughter. But she had now a judge of a new character, whose applause, if bestowed, must have something in it intrinsically real, since it could only be obtained by affecting his head or his heart.

It was perhaps under the influence of these feelings that the princess was somewhat longer than usual in finding out the passage in the roll of history at which she purposed to commence. It was also noticed that she began her recitation with a diffidence and embarrassment surprising to the noble hearers, who had often seen her in full possession of her presence of mind before what they conceived a more distinguished, and even more critical audience.

Neither were the circumstances of the Varangian such as rendered the scene indifferent to him. Anna Comnena had indeed attained her fifth lustre, and that is a period after which Grecian beauty is understood to commence its decline. How long she had passed that critical period was a secret to all but the trusted ward-

women of the purple chamber. Enough that it was affirmed by the popular tongue, and seemed to be attested by that bent towards philosophy and literature which is not supposed to be congenial to beauty in its earlier buds, to amount to one or two years more. She might be seven-and-twenty.

Still Anna Comnena was, or had very lately been, a beauty of the very first rank, and must be supposed to have still retained charms to captivate a barbarian of the North; if, indeed, he himself was not careful to maintain a heedful recollection of the immeasurable distance between them. Indeed, even this recollection might hardly have saved Hereward from the charms of this enchantress, bold, free-born, and fearless as he was, for, during that time of strange revolutions, there were many instances of successful generals sharing the couch of imperial princesses, whom perhaps they had themselves rendered widows in order to make way for their own pretensions. But, besides the influence of other recollections, which the reader may learn hereafter, Hereward, though flattered by the unusual degree of attention which the princess bestowed upon him, saw in her only the daughter of his emperor and adopted liege lord, and the wife of a noble prince, whom reason and duty alike forbade him to think of in any other light.

It was after one or two preliminary efforts that the Princess Anna began her reading, in an uncertain voice, which gained strength and fortitude as she proceeded with the following passage from a well-known part of her history of Alexius Comnenus, but which unfortunately has not been republished in the Byzantine historians. The narrative cannot, therefore, be otherwise than acceptable to the antiquarian reader; and the author hopes to receive the thanks of the learned world for the recovery of a curious fragment, which, without his exertions, must probably have passed to the gulf of total oblivion.

The Retreat of Laodicea,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE GREEK OF THE PRINCESS COMNENA'S HISTORY OF HER FATHER.

'The sun had betaken himself to his bed in the ocean, ashamed, it would seem, to see the immortal army of our most sacred Emperor Alexius surrounded by those barbarous hordes of unbelieving barbarians, who, as described in our last chapter, had occupied the various passes both in front and rear of the Romans,* secured during the preceding night by the wily barbarians. Although, therefore, a triumphant course of advance had brought us to this point, it now became a serious and doubtful question whether our victorious eagles might be able to penetrate any farther into the country of the enemy, or even to retreat with safety into their own.

'The extensive acquaintance of the Emperor with military affairs, in which he exceeds most living princes, had induced him, on the preceding evening, to ascertain, with marvellous exactitude and foresight, the precise position of the enemy. In this most necessary service he employed certain light-armed barbarians, whose habits and discipline had been originally derived from the wilds of Syria; and if I am required to speak according to the dictation of Truth, seeing she ought always to sit upon the pen of a historian, I must needs say they were infidels like their enemies; faithfully attached, however, to the Roman service, and, as I believe, true slaves of the Emperor, to whom they communicated the information required by him respecting the position of his dreaded opponent Jezdegerd. These men did not bring in their information till long after the hour when the Emperor usually betook himself to rest.

'Notwithstanding this derangement of his most sacred time, our Imperial father, who had postponed the ceremony of disrobing, so important were the necessities of the moment, continued, until deep in the night, to hold a council of his wisest chiefs, men whose depth of judgment might have saved a sinking world, and who now consulted what was to be done under the pressure of the circumstances in which they were now placed. And so great was the urgency, that all ordinary observances of the household were set aside, since I have heard from those who witnessed the fact, that the royal bed was displayed in the very room where the council assembled, and that the sacred lamp, called the Light of the Council, and which always burns when the Emperor presides in person over the deliberations of his servants, was for that night—a thing unknown in our annals—fed with unperfumed oil!'

The fair speaker here threw her fine form into an attitude which expressed holy horror, and the hearers intimated their sympathy in the exciting cause by corresponding signs of interest; as to which we need only say, that the sigh of Achilles Tatius was the most pathetic; while the groan of Agelastes the Elephant was deepest and most tremendously bestial in its sound. Hereward seemed little moved, except by a slight motion of surprise at the wonder expressed by the others. The princess, having allowed due time for the sympathy of her hearers to exhibit itself, proceeded as follows:—

'In this melancholy situation, when even the best-established and most sacred rites of the Imperial household gave way to the necessity of a hasty provision for the morrow, the opinions of the councillors were different, according to their tempers and habits; a thing, by the way, which may be remarked as likely to happen among the best and wisest on such occasions of doubt and danger.

'I do not in this place put down the names and opinions of those whose counsels were proposed and rejected, herein paying respect to the secrecy and freedom of debate justly attached to the Imperial cabinet. Enough it is to say, that some there were who advised a speedy attack upon the enemy, in the direction of our original advance. Others thought it was safer, and might be easier, to force our way to

* More properly termed the Greeks; but we follow the phraseology of the fair authoress.

the rear, and retreat by the same course which had brought us hither; nor must it be concealed, that there were persons of unsuspected fidelity, who proposed a third course, safer indeed than the others, but totally alien to the mind of our most magnanimous father. They recommended that a confidential slave, in company with a minister of the interior of our Imperial palace, should be sent to the tent of Jezdegerd, in order to ascertain upon what terms the barbarian would permit our triumphant father to retreat in safety at the head of his victorious army. On learning such opinion, our Imperial father was heard to exclaim, "Sancta Sophia!" being the nearest approach to an adjuration which he had been known to permit himself, and was apparently about to say something violent both concerning the dishonour of the advice, and the cowardice of those by whom it was preferred, when, recollecting the mutability of human things, and the misfortune of several of his Majesty's gracious predecessors, some of whom had been compelled to surrender their sacred persons to the infidels in the same region, his Imperial Majesty repressed his generous feelings, and only suffered his army councillors to understand his sentiments by a speech, in which he declared so desperate and so dishonourable a course would be the last which he would adopt, even in the last extremity of danger. Thus did the judgment of this mighty prince at once reject counsel that seemed shameful to his arms, and thereby encourage the zeal of his troops, while privately he kept this postern in reserve, which in utmost need might serve for a safe, though not altogether, in less urgent circumstances, an honourable retreat.

'When the discussion had reached this melancholy crisis, the renowned Achilles Tatius arrived, with the hopeful intelligence that he himself and some soldiers of his corps had discovered an opening on the left flank of our present encampment, by which, making, indeed, a considerable circuit, but reaching, if we marched with vigour, the town of Laodicea, we might, by falling back on our resources, be in some measure in surety from the enemy.

'So soon as this ray of hope darted on the troubled mind of our gracious father, he proceeded to make such arrangements as might secure the full benefit of the advantage. His Imperial Highness would not permit the brave Varangians, whose battle-axes he accounted the flower of his Imperial army, to take the advanced posts of assailants on the present occasion. He repressed the love of battle by which these generous foreigners have been at all times distinguished, and directed that the Syrian forces in the army, who have been before mentioned, should be assembled with as little noise as possible in the vicinity of the deserted pass, with instructions to occupy it. The good genius of the empire suggested that, as their speech, arms, and appearance resembled those of the enemy, they might be permitted unopposed to take post in the defile with their light-armed forces, and thus secure it for the passage of the rest of the army, of which he proposed that the Varangians, as immediately attached to his own sacred person, should form the vanguard. The well-known battalions, termed the Immortals,* came next, comprising the gross of the army, and forming the centre and rear. Achilles Tatius, the faithful Follower of his royal master, although mortified that he was not permitted to assume the charge of the rear, which he had proposed for himself and his valiant troops, as the post of danger at the time, cheerfully acquiesced, nevertheless, in the arrangement proposed by the Emperor, as most fit to effect the Imperial safety, and that of the army.

'The Imperial orders, as they were sent instantly abroad, were in like manner executed with the readiest punctuality, the rather that they indicated a course of safety which had been almost despaired of even by the oldest soldiers. During the dead period of time, when, as the divine Homer tells us, gods and men are alike asleep, it was found that the vigilance and prudence of a single individual had provided safety for the whole Roman army. The pinnacles of the mountain passes were scarcely touched by the earliest beams of the dawn, when these beams were also reflected from the steel-caps and spears of the Syrians, under the command of a captain named Monastras, who, with his tribe, had attached himself to the empire. The Emperor, at the head of the faithful Varangians, defiled through the passes in order to gain that degree of advance on the road to the city of Laodicea which was desired, so as to avoid coming into collision with the barbarians.

'It was a goodly sight to see the dark mass of Northern warriors, who now led the van of the army, moving slowly and steadily through the defiles of the mountains, around the insulated rocks and precipices, and surmounting the gentler acclivities, like the course of a strong and mighty river; while the loose bands of archers and javelin-men, armed after the Eastern manner, were dispersed on the steep sides of the defiles, and might be compared to light foam upon the edge of the torrent. In the midst of the squadrons of the Life-guard might be seen the proud war-horse of his Imperial Majesty, which pawed the earth indignantly, as if impatient at the delay which separated him from his august burden. The Emperor Alexius himself travelled in a litter, borne by eight strong African slaves, that he might rise perfectly refreshed if the army should be overtaken by the enemy. The valiant Achilles Tatius rode near the couch of his master, that none of those luminous ideas, by which our august sire so often decided the fate of battle, might be lost for want of instant communication to those whose duty it was to execute them. I may also say that there were close to the litter of the Emperor, three or four carriages of the same kind; one prepared for the Moon, as she may be termed, of the universe, the gracious Empress Irene. Among the others which might be mentioned, was that which contained the authoress of this history, unworthy as she may be of distinction, save

* The Ἀθανατοι, or Immortals, of the army of Constantinople, were a select body, so named in imitation of the ancient Persians. They were first embodied, according to Ducange, by Michael Ducas.

as the daughter of the eminent and sacred persons whom the narration chiefly concerns. In this manner the Imperial army pressed on through the dangerous defiles, where their march was exposed to insults from the barbarians. They were happily cleared without any opposition. When we came to the descent of the pass which looks down on the city of Laodicea, the sagacity of the Emperor commanded the van—which, though the soldiers composing the same were heavily armed, had hitherto marched extremely fast—to halt, as well that they themselves might take some repose and refreshment, as to give the rearward forces time to come up, and close various gaps which the rapid movement of those in front had occasioned in the line of march.

'The place chosen for this purpose was eminently beautiful, from the small and comparatively insignificant ridge of hills which melt irregularly down into the plains stretching between the pass which we occupied and Laodicea. The town was about one hundred stadia distant, and some of our more sanguine warriors pretended that they could already discern its towers and pinnacles, glittering in the early beams of the sun, which had not as yet risen high into the horizon. A mountain torrent, which found its source at the foot of a huge rock, that yawned to give it birth, as if struck by the rod of the prophet Moses, poured its liquid treasure down to the more level country, nourishing herbage, and even large trees, in its descent, until, at the distance of some four or five miles, the stream, at least in dry seasons, was lost amid heaps of sand and stones, which in the rainy season marked the strength and fury of its current.

'It was pleasant to see the attention of the Emperor to the comforts of the companions and guardians of his march. The trumpets from time to time gave licence to various parties of the Varangians to lay down their arms, to eat the food which was distributed to them, and quench their thirst at the pure stream, which poured its bounties down the hill, or they might be seen to extend their bulky forms upon the turf around them. The Emperor, his most serene spouse, and the princesses and ladies, were also served with breakfast, at the fountain formed by the small brook in its very birth, and which the reverent feelings of the soldiers had left unpolluted by vulgar touch, for the use of that family, emphatically said to be born in the purple. Our beloved husband was also present on this occasion, and was among the first to detect one of the disasters of the day. For although all the rest of the repast had been, by the dexterity of the officers of the Imperial mouth, so arranged, even on so awful an occasion, as to exhibit little difference from the ordinary provisions of the household, yet, when his Imperial Highness called for wine, behold, not only was the sacred liquor, dedicated to his own peculiar Imperial use, wholly exhausted or left behind, but, to use the language of Horace, not the vilest Sabine* vintage could be procured; so that his Imperial Highness was glad to accept the offer of a rude Varangian, who proffered his modicum of decocted barley, which these barbarians prefer to the juice of the grape. The Emperor, nevertheless, accepted of this coarse tribute.'

'Insert,' said the emperor, who had been hitherto either plunged in deep contemplation, or in an incipient slumber, 'insert, I say, these very words: "And with the heat of the morning, and anxiety of so rapid a march, with a numerous enemy in his rear, the Emperor was so thirsty, as never in his life to think beverage more delicious."'

In obedience to her Imperial father's orders, the princess resigned the manuscript to the beautiful slave by whom it was written, repeating to the fair scribe the commanded addition, requiring her to note it as made by the express sacred command of the emperor, and then proceeded thus:—'More I had said here respecting the favourite liquor of your Imperial Highness's faithful Varangians; but your Highness having once graced it with a word of commendation, this *ail*, as they call it, doubtless because removing all disorders, which they term "ailments," becomes a theme too lofty for the discussion of any inferior person. Suffice it to say, that thus were we all pleasantly engaged, the ladies and slaves trying to find some amusement for the Imperial ears; the soldiers, in a long line down the ravine, seen in different postures, some straggling to the watercourse, some keeping guard over the arms of their comrades, in which duty they relieved each other, while body after body of the remaining troops, under command of the Protospathaire, and particularly those called Immortals, joined the main army as they came up. Those soldiers who were already exhausted were allowed to take a short repose, after which they were sent forward, with directions to advance steadily on the road to Laodicea; while their leader was instructed, so soon as he should open a free communication with that city, to send thither a command for reinforcements and refreshments, not forgetting fitting provision of the sacred wine for the Imperial mouth. Accordingly, the Roman bands of Immortals and others had resumed their march, and held some way on their journey, it being the Imperial pleasure that the Varangians, lately the vanguard, should now form the rear of the whole army, so as to bring off in safety the Syrian light troops, by whom the hilly pass was still occupied, when we heard upon the other side of this defile, which we had traversed with so much safety, the awful sound of the *Lelies*, as the Arabs name their shout of onset, though in what language it is expressed it would be hard to say. Perchance some in this audience may enlighten my ignorance?'

'May I speak and live!' said the Acoulouthos Achilles, proud of his literary knowledge, 'the words are, *Alla illa alla, Mohamed resoul alla.** These, or something like them, contain the Arabs' profession of faith, which they always call out when they join battle; I have heard them many times.'

* [A mountainous district in the middle of Italy, inhabited anciently by the Sabines.]

* *i.e.* 'God is God—Mahomet is the prophet of God.'

'And so have I,' said the emperor; 'and, as thou didst, I warrant me I have sometimes wished myself anywhere else than within hearing.'

All the circle were alive to hear the answer of Achilles Tatius. He was too good a courtier, however, to make any imprudent reply. 'It was my duty,' he replied, 'to desire to be as near your Imperial Highness as your faithful Follower ought, wherever you might wish yourself for the time.'

Agelastes and Zosimus exchanged looks, and the Princess Anna Comnena proceeded in her recitation.

'The cause of these ominous sounds, which came in wild confusion up the rocky pass, was soon explained to us by a dozen cavaliers, to whom the task of bringing intelligence had been assigned.

'These informed us that the barbarians, whose host had been dispersed around the position in which we had encamped the preceding day, had not been enabled to get their forces together until our light troops were evacuating the post they had occupied for securing the retreat of our army. They were then drawing off from the tops of the hills into the pass itself, when, in despite of the rocky ground, they were charged furiously by Jezdegerd, at the head of a large body of his followers, which, after repeated exertions, he had at length brought to operate on the rear of the Syrians. Notwithstanding that the pass was unfavourable for cavalry, the personal exertions of the infidel chief made his followers advance with a degree of resolution unknown to the Syrians of the Roman army, who, finding themselves at a distance from their companions, formed the injurious idea that they were left there to be sacrificed, and thought of flight in various directions, rather than of a combined and resolute resistance. The state of affairs, therefore, at the farther end of the pass, was less favourable than we could wish, and those whose curiosity desired to see something which might be termed the rout of the rear of an army, beheld the Syrians pursued from the hill-tops, overwhelmed, and individually cut down and made prisoners by the bands of caitiff Mussulmans.

'His Imperial Highness looked upon the scene of battle for a few minutes, and, much commoved at what he saw, was somewhat hasty in his directions to the Varangians to resume their arms, and precipitate their march towards Laodicea; whereupon one of those Northern soldiers said boldly, though in opposition to the Imperial command, "If we attempt to go hastily down this hill, our rearguard will be confused, not only by our own hurry, but by these runaway scoundrels of Syrians, who in their headlong flight will not fail to mix themselves among our ranks. Let two hundred Varangians, who will live and die for the honour of England, abide in the very throat of this pass with me, while the rest escort the Emperor to this Laodicea, or whatever it is called. We may perish in our defence, but we shall die in our duty; and I have little doubt but we shall furnish such a meal as will stay the stomach of these yelping hounds from seeking any further banquet this day."

'My Imperial father at once discovered the importance of this advice, though it made him well-nigh weep to see with what unshrinking fidelity these poor barbarians pressed to fill up the number of those who were to undertake this desperate duty—with what kindness they took leave of their comrades, and with what jovial shouts they followed their sovereign with their eyes as he proceeded on his march down the hill, leaving them behind to resist and perish. The Imperial eyes were filled with tears; and I am not ashamed to confess that, amid the terror of the moment, the Empress, and I myself, forgot our rank in paying a similar tribute to these bold and self-devoted men.

'We left their leader carefully arraying his handful of comrades in defence of the pass, where the middle path was occupied by their centre, while their wings on either side were so disposed as to act upon the flanks of the enemy, should he rashly press upon such as appeared opposed to him in the road. We had not proceeded half-way towards the plain, when a dreadful shout arose, in which the yells of the Arabs were mingled with the deep and more regular shout which these strangers usually repeat thrice, as well when bidding hail to their commanders and princes, as when in the act of engaging in battle. Many a look was turned back by their comrades, and many a form was seen in the ranks which might have claimed the chisel of a sculptor, while the soldier hesitated whether to follow the line of his duty, which called him to march forward with his Emperor, or the impulse of courage, which prompted him to rush back to join his companions. Discipline, however, prevailed, and the main body marched on.

'An hour had elapsed, during which we heard, from time to time, the noise of battle, when a mounted Varangian presented himself at the side of the Emperor's litter. The horse was covered with foam, and had obviously, from his trappings, the fineness of his limbs, and the smallness of his joints, been the charger of some chief of the desert, which had fallen by the chance of battle into the possession of the Northern warrior. The broad axe which the Varangian bore was also stained with blood, and the paleness of death itself was upon his countenance. These marks of recent battle were held sufficient to excuse the irregularity of his salutation, while he exclaimed,—"Noble prince, the Arabs are defeated, and you may pursue your march at more leisure."

'"Where is Jezdegerd?" said the Emperor, who had many reasons for dreading this celebrated chief.

'"Jezdegerd," continued the Varangian, "is where brave men are who fall in their duty."

'"And that is"—said the Emperor, impatient to know distinctly the fate of so formidable an adversary——

'"Where I am now going," answered the faithful soldier, who dropped from his horse as he spoke, and expired at the feet of the litter-bearers.

'The Emperor called to his attendants to see that the body of this faithful retainer, to whom he destined an honourable sepulchre, was not left to the jackal or vulture; and some of his

brethren, the Anglo-Saxons, among whom he was a man of no mean repute, raised the body on their shoulders, and resumed their march with this additional encumbrance, prepared to fight for their precious burden, like the valiant Menelaus for the body of Patroclus.' *

The Princess Anna Comnena here naturally paused; for, having attained what she probably considered as the rounding of a period, she was willing to gather an idea of the feelings of her audience. Indeed, but that she had been intent upon her own manuscript, the emotions of the foreign soldier must have more early attracted her attention. In the beginning of her recitation, he had retained the same attitude which he had at first assumed, stiff and rigid as a sentinel upon duty, and apparently remembering nothing save that he was performing that duty in presence of the Imperial court. As the narrative advanced, however, he appeared to take more interest in what was read. The anxious fears expressed by the various leaders in the midnight council, he listened to with a smile of suppressed contempt, and he almost laughed at the praises bestowed upon the leader of his own corps, Achilles Tatius. Nor did even the name of the emperor, though listened to respectfully, gain that applause for which his daughter fought so hard, and used so much exaggeration.

Hitherto the Varangian's countenance indicated very slightly any internal emotions; but they appeared to take a deeper hold on his mind as she came to the description of the halt after the main army had cleared the pass; the unexpected advance of the Arabs; the retreat of the column which escorted the emperor; and the account of the distant engagement. He lost, on hearing the narration of these events, the rigid and constrained look of a soldier, who listened to the history of his emperor with the same feelings with which he would have mounted guard at his palace. His colour began to come and go; his eyes to fill and to sparkle; his limbs to become more agitated than their owner seemed to assent to; and his whole appearance was changed into that of a listener, highly interested by the recitation which he hears, and insensible, or forgetful, of whatever else is passing before him, as well as of the quality of those who are present.

As the historian proceeded, Hereward became less able to conceal his agitation; and at the moment the princess looked round, his feelings became so acute, that, forgetting where he was, he dropped his ponderous axe upon the floor, and, clasping his hands together, exclaimed—'My unfortunate brother!'

All were startled by the clang of the falling weapon, and several persons at once attempted to interfere, as called upon to explain a circumstance so unusual. Achilles Tatius made some small progress in a speech designed to apologize for the rough mode of venting his sorrows to which Hereward had given way, by assuring the eminent persons present that the poor uncultivated barbarian was actually younger brother to him who had commanded and fallen at the memorable defile. The princess said nothing, but was evidently struck and affected, and not ill-pleased, perhaps, at having given rise to feelings of interest so flattering to her as an authoress. The others, each in their character, uttered incoherent words of what was meant to be consolation; for distress which flows from a natural cause generally attracts sympathy even from the most artificial characters. The voice of Alexius silenced all these imperfect speakers: 'Hah, my brave soldier Edward!' said the emperor, 'I must have been blind that I did not sooner recognise thee, as I think there is a memorandum entered, respecting five hundred pieces of gold due from us to Edward the Varangian; we have it in our secret scroll of such liberalities for which we stand indebted to our servitors, nor shall the payment be longer deferred.'

'Not to me, if it may please you, my liege,' said the Anglo-Dane, hastily composing his countenance into its rough gravity of lineament, 'lest it should be to one who can claim no interest in your Imperial munificence. My name is Hereward; that of Edward is borne by three of my companions, all of them as likely as I to have deserved your Highness's reward for the faithful performance of their duty.'

Many a sign was made by Tatius in order to guard his soldier against the folly of declining the liberality of the emperor. Agelastes spoke more plainly: 'Young man,' he said, 'rejoice in an honour so unexpected, and answer henceforth to no other name save that of Edward, by which it hath pleased the Light of the World, as it poured a ray upon thee, to distinguish thee from other barbarians. What is to thee the font-stone, or the priest officiating thereat, shouldst thou have derived from either any epithet different from that by which it hath now pleased the Emperor to distinguish thee from the common mass of humanity, and by which proud distinction thou hast now a right to be known ever afterwards?'

'Hereward was the name of my father,' said the soldier, who had now altogether recovered his composure. 'I cannot abandon it while I honour his memory in death. Edward is the title of my comrade—I must not run the risk of usurping his interest.'

'Peace all!' interrupted the emperor. 'If we have made a mistake, we are rich enough to right it; nor shall Hereward be the poorer, if an Edward shall be found to merit this gratuity.'

'Your Highness may trust that to your affectionate consort,' answered the Empress Irene.

'His most sacred Highness,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'is so avariciously desirous to do whatever is good and gracious, that he leaves no room even for his nearest connections to display generosity or munificence. Nevertheless, I, in my degree, will testify my gratitude to this brave man; for where his exploits are mentioned in this history, I will cause to be recorded,—"This feat was done by Hereward the Anglo-Dane, whom it hath pleased his Imperial Majesty to call Edward." Keep this, good youth,' she continued, bestowing at the same

* [Described in Homer's history of the Trojan War.]

time a ring of price, 'in token that we will not forget our engagement.'

Hereward accepted the token, with a profound obeisance, and a discomposure which his station rendered not unbecoming. It was obvious to most persons present that the gratitude of the beautiful princess was expressed in a manner more acceptable to the youthful Life-guardsman, than that of Alexius Comnenus. He took the ring with great demonstration of thankfulness: 'Precious relic!' he said, as he saluted this pledge of esteem by pressing it to his lips; 'we may not remain long together, but be assured,' bending reverently to the princess, 'that death alone shall part us.'

'Proceed, our princely daughter,' said the Empress Irene; 'you have done enough to show that valour is precious to her who can confer fame, whether it be found in a Roman or a barbarian.'

The princess resumed her narrative with some slight appearance of embarrassment.

'Our movement upon Laodicea was now resumed, and continued with good hopes on the part of those engaged in the march. Yet instinctively we could not help casting our eyes to the rear, which had been so long the direction in which we feared attack. At length, to our surprise, a thick cloud of dust was visible on the descent of the hill, half way betwixt us and the place at which we had halted. Some of the troops who composed our retreating body, particularly those in the rear, began to exclaim, "The Arabs! the Arabs!" and their march assumed a more precipitate character when they believed themselves pursued by the enemy. But the Varangian Guards affirmed with one voice that the dust was raised by the remains of their own comrades, who, left in the defence of the pass, had marched off after having so valiantly maintained the station entrusted to them. They fortified their opinion by professional remarks that the cloud of dust was more concentrated than if raised by the Arab horse, and they even pretended to assert, from their knowledge of such cases, that the number of their comrades had been much diminished in the action. Some Syrian horsemen, despatched to reconnoitre the approaching body, brought intelligence corresponding with the opinion of the Varangians in every particular. The portion of the Body-guard had beaten back the Arabs, and their gallant leader had slain their chief Jezdegerd, in which service he was mortally wounded, as this history hath already mentioned. The survivors of the detachment, diminished by one half, were now on their march to join the Emperor, as fast as the encumbrance of bearing their wounded to a place of safety would permit.

'The Emperor Alexius, with one of those brilliant and benevolent ideas which mark his paternal character towards his soldiers, ordered all the litters, even that for his own most sacred use, to be instantly sent back to relieve the bold Varangians of the task of bearing the wounded. The shouts of the Varangians' gratitude may be more easily conceived than described, when they beheld the Emperor himself descend from his litter, like an ordinary cavalier, and assume his war-horse, at the same time that the most sacred Empress, as well as the authoress of this history, with other princesses born in the purple, mounted upon mules in order to proceed upon the march, while their litters were unhesitatingly assigned for the accommodation of the wounded men. This was indeed a mark as well of military sagacity as of humanity; for the relief afforded to the bearers of the wounded enabled the survivors of those who had defended the defile at the fountain, to join us sooner than would otherwise have been possible.

'It was an awful thing to see those men who had left us in the full splendour which military equipment gives to youth and strength, again appearing in diminished numbers—their armour shattered—their shields full of arrows—their offensive weapons marked with blood, and they themselves exhibiting all the signs of desperate and recent battle. Nor was it less interesting to remark the meeting of the soldiers who had been engaged with the comrades whom they had rejoined. The Emperor, at the suggestion of the trusty Acoulouthos, permitted them a few moments to leave their ranks, and learn from each other the fate of the battle.

'As the two bands mingled, it seemed a meeting where grief and joy had a contest together. The most rugged of these barbarians, —and I who saw it can bear witness to the fact,—as he welcomed with a grasp of his strong hand some comrade whom he had given up for lost, had his large blue eyes filled with tears at hearing of the loss of some one whom he had hoped might have survived. Other veterans reviewed the standards which had been in the conflict, satisfied themselves that they had all been brought back in honour and safety, and counted the fresh arrow-shots with which they had been pierced, in addition to similar marks of former battles. All were loud in the praises of the brave young leader they had lost, nor were the acclamations less general in laud of him who had succeeded to the command, who brought up the party of his deceased brother —and whom,' said the princess, in a few words, which seemed apparently interpolated for the occasion, 'I now assure of the high honour and estimation in which he is held by the author of this history—that is, I would say, by every member of the Imperial family—for his gallant services in such an important crisis.'

Having hurried over her tribute to her friend the Varangian, in which emotions mingled that are not willingly expressed before so many hearers, Anna Comnena proceeded with composure in the part of her history which was less personal.

'We had not much time to make more observations on what passed among those brave soldiers; for, a few minutes having been allowed to their feelings, the trumpet sounded the advance towards Laodicea, and we soon beheld the town, now about four miles from us, in fields which were chiefly covered with trees. Apparently the garrison had already some notice of our approach, for carts and wains were seen advancing from the gates with refreshments, which the heat of the day, the length of the march, and columns of dust, as well as the want of water, had rendered of the last necessity to

us. The soldiers joyfully mended their pace in order to meet the sooner with the supplies of which they stood so much in need. But as the cup doth not carry in all cases the liquid treasure to the lips for which it was intended, however much it may be longed for, what was our mortification to behold a cloud of Arabs issue at full gallop from the wooded plain betwixt the Roman army and the city, and throw themselves upon the waggons, slaying the drivers, and making havoc and spoil of the contents! This, we afterwards learned, was a body of the enemy, headed by Varanes, equal in military fame, among those infidels, to Jezdegerd, his slain brother. When this chieftain saw that it was probable that the Varangians would succeed in their desperate defence of the pass, he put himself at the head of a large body of cavalry; and, as these infidels are mounted on horses unmatched either in speed or wind, performed a long circuit, traversed the stony ridge of hills at a more northerly defile, and placed himself in ambuscade in the wooded plain I have mentioned, with the hope of making an unexpected assault upon the Emperor and his army, at the very time when they might be supposed to reckon upon an undisputed retreat. This surprise would certainly have taken place, and it is not easy to say what might have been the consequence, had not the unexpected appearance of the train of waggons awakened the unbridled rapacity of the Arabs, in spite of their commander's prudence, and attempts to restrain them. In this manner the proposed ambuscade was discovered.

'But Varanes, willing still to gain some advantage from the rapidity of his movements, assembled as many of his horsemen as could be collected from the spoil, and pushed forward towards the Romans, who had stopped short on their march at so unlooked-for an apparition. There was an uncertainty and wavering in our first ranks which made their hesitation known even to so poor a judge of military demeanour as myself. On the contrary, the Varangians joined in a unanimous cry of "Bills" * (that is, in their language, battle-axes) "to the front!" and the Emperor's most gracious will acceding to their valorous desire, they pressed forward from the rear to the head of the column. I can hardly say how this manœuvre was executed, but it was doubtless by the wise directions of my most serene father, distinguished for his presence of mind upon such difficult occasions. It was, no doubt, much facilitated by the good-will of the troops themselves; the Roman bands, called the Immortals, showing, as it seemed to me, no less desire to fall into the rear, than did the Varangians to occupy the places which the Immortals left vacant in front. The manœuvre was so happily executed, that before Varanes and his Arabs had arrived at the van of our troops, they found it occupied by the inflexible guard of Northern soldiers. I might have seen with my own eyes, and called upon them as sure evidences of that which chanced upon the occasion. But, to confess the truth, my eyes were little used to look upon such sights; for of Varanes's charge I only beheld, as it were, a thick cloud of dust rapidly driven forward, through which were seen the glittering points of lances, and the waving plumes of turbaned cavaliers imperfectly visible. The tecbir was so loudly uttered, that I was scarcely aware that kettledrums and brazen cymbals were sounding in concert with it. But this wild and outrageous storm was met as effectually as if encountered by a rock.

'The Varangians, unshaken by the furious charge of the Arabs, received horse and rider with a shower of blows from their massive battle-axes, which the bravest of the enemy could not face, nor the strongest endure. The guards strengthened their ranks also, by the hindmost pressing so close upon those that went before, after the manner of the ancient Macedonians, that the fine-limbed, though slight steeds of these Idumeans † could not make the least inroad upon the Northern phalanx. The bravest men, the most gallant horses, fell in the first rank. The weighty, though short, horse-javelins, flung from the rear ranks of the brave Varangians, with good aim and sturdy arm, completed the confusion of the assailants, who turned their back in affright, and fled from the field in total confusion.

'The enemy thus repulsed, we proceeded on our march, and only halted when we recovered our half-plundered waggons. Here, also, some invidious remarks were made by certain officers of the interior of the household, who had been on duty over the stores, and, having fled from their posts on the assault of the infidels, had only returned upon their being repulsed. These men, quick in malice, though slow in perilous service, reported that, on this occasion, the Varangians so far forgot their duty as to consume a part of the sacred wine reserved for the Imperial lips alone. It would be criminal to deny that this was a great and culpable oversight; nevertheless, our Imperial hero passed it over as a pardonable offence; remarking, in a jesting manner, that since he had drunk the *ail*, as they termed it, of his trusty Guard, the Varangians had acquired a right to quench the thirst and to relieve the fatigue which they had undergone that day in his defence, though they used for these purposes the sacred contents of the Imperial cellar.

'In the meantime, the cavalry of the army were despatched in pursuit of the fugitive Arabs; and, having succeeded in driving them behind the chain of hills which had so recently divided them from the Romans, the Imperial arms might justly be considered as having obtained a complete and glorious victory.

'We are now to mention the rejoicings of the citizens of Laodicea, who, having witnessed from their ramparts, with alternate fear and hope, the fluctuations of the battle, now descended to congratulate the Imperial conqueror.'

Here the fair narrator was interrupted. The principal entrance of the apartment flew open, noiselessly, indeed, but with both folding leaves

* Villehardouin says, 'Les Anglois et Danois mult bien combattoint avec leurs *haches*.'

† [Idumæa was the western part of the ancient country of Edom.]

at once, not as if to accommodate the entrance of an ordinary courtier, studying to create as little disturbance as possible, but as if there was entering a person who ranked so high as to make it indifferent how much attention was drawn to his motions. It could only be one born in the purple, or nearly allied to it, to whom such freedom was lawful; and most of the guests, knowing who were likely to appear in that Temple of the Muses, anticipated, from the degree of bustle, the arrival of Nicephorus Briennius, the son-in-law of Alexius Comnenus, the husband to the fair historian, and in the rank of Cæsar, which, however, did not at that period imply, as in early ages, the dignity of second person in the empire. The policy of Alexius had interposed more than one person of condition between the Cæsar and his original rights and rank, which had once been second to those only of the emperor himself.

CHAPTER V.

The storm increases—'tis no sunny shower,
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April,
Or such as parchèd Summer cools his lip with:
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its foaming horrors,
And where's the dike shall stop it?*

THE DELUGE, A POEM.

THE distinguished individual who entered was a noble Grecian of stately presence, whose habit was adorned with every mark of dignity, saving those which Alexius had declared sacred to the emperor's own person and that of the Sebastocrator, whom he had established as next in rank to the head of the empire. Nicephorus Briennius, who was in the bloom of youth, retained all the marks of that manly beauty which had made the match acceptable to Anna Comnena; while political considerations, and the desire of attaching a powerful house as friendly adherents of the throne, recommended the union to the emperor.

We have already hinted that the royal bride had, though in no great degree, the very doubtful advantage of years. Of her literary talents we have seen tokens. Yet it was not believed by those who best knew, that, with the aid of those claims to respect, Anna Comnena was successful in possessing the unlimited attachment of her handsome husband. To treat her with apparent neglect, her connection with the crown rendered impossible; while, on the other hand, the power of Nicephorus's family was too great to permit his being dictated to even by the emperor himself. He was possessed of talents, as it was believed, calculated both for war and peace. His advice was, therefore, listened to, and his assistance required, so that he claimed complete liberty with respect to his own time, which he sometimes used with less regular attendance upon the Temple of the Muses than the goddess of the place thought herself entitled to, or than the Empress Irene was disposed to exact on the part of her daughter. The good-humoured Alexius observed a sort of neutrality in this matter, and kept it as much as possible from becoming visible to the public, conscious that it required the whole united strength of his family to maintain his place in so agitated an empire.

He pressed his son-in-law's hand, as Nicephorus, passing his father-in-law's seat, bent his knee in token of homage. The constrained manner of the empress indicated a more cold reception of her son-in-law, while the fair muse herself scarcely deigned to signify her attention to his arrival when her handsome mate assumed the vacant seat by her side, which we have already made mention of.

There was an awkward pause, during which the Imperial son-in-law, coldly received when he expected to be welcomed, attempted to enter into some light conversation with the fair slave Astarte, who knelt behind her mistress. This was interrupted by the princess commanding her attendant to enclose the manuscript within its appropriate casket, and convey it with her own hands to the Cabinet of Apollo, the usual scene of the princess's studies, as the Temple of the Muses was that commonly dedicated to her recitations.

The emperor himself was the first to break an unpleasant silence. 'Fair son-in-law,' he said, 'though it now wears something late in the night, you will do yourself wrong if you permit our Anna to send away that volume, with which this company have been so delectably entertained that they may well say that the desert hath produced roses, and the barren rocks have poured forth milk and honey, so agreeable is the narrative of a toilsome and dangerous campaign, in the language of our daughter.'

'The Cæsar,' said the empress, 'seems to have little taste for such dainties as this family can produce. He hath of late repeatedly absented himself from this Temple of the Muses, and found, doubtless, more agreeable conversation and amusement elsewhere.'

'I trust, madam,' said Nicephorus, 'that my taste may vindicate me from the charge implied. But it is natural that our sacred father should be most delighted with the milk and honey which is produced for his own special use.'

The princess spoke in the tone of a handsome woman offended by her lover, and feeling the offence, yet not indisposed to a reconciliation.

'If,' she said, 'the deeds of Nicephorus Briennius are less frequently celebrated in that poor roll of parchment than those of my illustrious father, he must do me the justice to remember that such was his own special request; either proceeding from that modesty which is justly ascribed to him as serving to soften and adorn his other attributes, or because he with justice distrusts his wife's power to compose their eulogium.'

'We will then summon back Astarte,' said the empress, 'who cannot yet have carried her offering to the Cabinet of Apollo.'

'With your Imperial pleasure,' said Nicephorus, 'it might incense the Pythian god were a deposit to be recalled of which he alone can fitly estimate the value. I came hither to speak with the Em-

* [These lines were penned impromptu by the Author one wet afternoon in February 1831, while taking refuge in the late Mr. Cadell's house, Edinburgh.]

peror upon pressing affairs of state, and not to hold a literary conversation with a company which I must needs say is something of a miscellaneous description, since I behold an ordinary Life-guardsman in the Imperial circle.'

'By the rood, son-in-law,' said Alexius, 'you do this gallant man wrong. He is the brother of that brave Anglo-Dane who secured the victory at Laodicea by his valiant conduct and death; he himself is that Edmund — or Edward — or Hereward — to whom we are ever bound for securing the success of that victorious day. He was called into our presence, son-in-law, since it imports that you should know so much, to refresh the memory of my Follower, Achilles Tatius, as well as mine own, concerning some transactions of the day of which we had become in some degree oblivious.'

'Truly, Imperial sir,' answered Briennius, 'I grieve that, by having intruded on such important researches, I may have, in some degree, intercepted a portion of that light which is to illuminate future ages. Methinks that in a battlefield, fought under your Imperial guidance, and that of your great captains, your evidence might well supersede the testimony of such a man as this.—Let me know,' he added, turning haughtily to the Varangian, 'what particular thou canst add, that is unnoticed in the Princess's narrative?'

The Varangian replied instantly, 'Only that, when we made a halt at the fountain, the music that was there made by the ladies of the Emperor's household, and particularly by those two whom I now behold, was the most exquisite that ever reached my ears.'

'Hah! darest thou to speak so audacious an opinion?' exclaimed Nicephorus; 'is it for such as thou to suppose for a moment that the music which the wife and daughter of the Emperor might condescend to make, was intended to afford either matter of pleasure or of criticism to every plebeian barbarian who might hear them? Begone from this place! nor dare, on any pretext, again to appear before mine eyes—under allowance always of our Imperial father's pleasure.'

The Varangian bent his looks upon Achilles Tatius, as the person from whom he was to take his orders to stay or withdraw. But the emperor himself took up the subject with considerable dignity.

'Son,' he said, 'we cannot permit this. On account of some love quarrel, as it would seem, betwixt you and our daughter, you allow yourself strangely to forget our Imperial rank, and to order from our presence those whom we have pleased to call to attend us. This is neither right nor seemly, nor is it our pleasure that this same Hereward—or Edward—or whatever be his name—either leave us at this present moment, or do at any time hereafter regulate himself by any commands save our own, or those of our Follower, Achilles Tatius. And now, allowing this foolish affair, which I think was blown among us by the wind, to pass as it came, without further notice, we crave to know the grave matters of state which brought you to our presence at so late an hour.—You look again at this Varangian.—Withhold not your words, I pray you, on account of his presence; for he stands as high in our trust, and we are convinced with as good reason, as any councillor who has been sworn our domestic servant.'

'To hear is to obey,' returned the emperor's son-in-law, who saw that Alexius was somewhat moved, and knew that in such cases it was neither safe nor expedient to drive him to extremity. 'What I have to say,' continued he, 'must so soon be public news, that it little matters who hears it; and yet the West, so full of strange changes, never sent to the Eastern half of the globe tidings so alarming as those I now come to tell your Imperial Highness. Europe, to borrow an expression from this lady, who honours me by calling me husband, seems loosened from its foundations and about to precipitate itself upon Asia'——

'So I did express myself,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'and, as I trust, not altogether unforcibly, when we first heard that the wild impulse of those restless barbarians of Europe had driven a tempest as of a thousand nations upon our western frontier, with the extravagant purpose, as they pretended, of possessing themselves of Syria, and the holy places there marked as the sepulchres of prophets, the martyrdom of saints, and the great events detailed in the blessed Gospel. But that storm, by all accounts, hath burst and passed away, and we well hoped that the danger had gone with it. Devoutly shall we sorrow to find it otherwise.'

'And otherwise we must expect to find it,' said her husband. 'It is very true, as reported to us, that a huge body of men of low rank and little understanding assumed arms at the instigation of a mad hermit, and took the road from Germany to Hungary, expecting miracles to be wrought in their favour, as when Israel was guided through the wilderness by a pillar of flame and a cloud. But no showers of manna or of quails relieved their necessities, or proclaimed them the chosen people of God. No waters gushed from the rock for their refreshment. They were enraged at their sufferings, and endeavoured to obtain supplies by pillaging the country. The Hungarians, and other nations on our western frontiers, Christians, like themselves, did not hesitate to fall upon this disorderly rabble; and immense piles of bones, in wild passes and unfrequented deserts, attest the calamitous defeats which extirpated these unholy pilgrims.'

'All this,' said the emperor, 'we knew before;—but what new evil now threatens, since we have already escaped so important a one?'

'Knew before?' said the Prince Nicephorus. 'We knew nothing of our real danger before, save that a wild herd of animals, as brutal and as furious as wild bulls, threatened to bend their way to a pasture for which they had formed a fancy, and deluged the Grecian Empire, and its vicinity, in their passage, expecting that Palestine, with its streams of milk and honey, once more awaited them, as God's predestined people. But so wild and disorderly an invasion had no terrors for a civilised nation like the Romans. The brute herd was terrified by our Greek fire; it was snared and shot down by the wild nations who, while they pretend to independence, cover

our frontier as with a protecting fortification. The vile multitude has been consumed even by the very quality of the provisions thrown in their way—those wise means of resistance which were at once suggested by the paternal care of the Emperor, and by his unfailing policy. Thus wisdom has played its part, and the bark over which the tempest had poured its thunder has escaped, notwithstanding all its violence. But the second storm, by which the former is so closely followed, is of a new descent of these Western nations, more formidable than any which we or our fathers have yet seen. This consists not of the ignorant or of the fanatical—not of the base, the needy, and the improvident. Now—all that wide Europe possesses of what is wise and worthy, brave and noble, are united by the most religious vows in the same purpose.'

'And what is that purpose? Speak plainly,' said Alexius. 'The destruction of our whole Roman Empire, and the blotting out the very name of its chief from among the princes of the earth, among which it has long been predominant, can alone be an adequate motive for a confederacy such as thy speech infers.'

'No such design is avowed,' said Nicephorus; 'and so many princes, wise men, and statesmen of eminence, aim, it is pretended, at nothing else than the same extravagant purpose announced by the brute multitude who first appeared in these regions. Here, most gracious Emperor, is a scroll, in which you will find marked down a list of the various armies which, by different routes, are approaching the vicinity of the empire. Behold, Hugh of Vermandois, called from his dignity Hugh the Great, has set sail from the shores of Italy. Twenty knights have already announced their coming, sheathed in armour of steel, inlaid with gold, bearing this proud greeting:—"Let the Emperor of Greece, and his lieutenants, understand that Hugo, Earl of Vermandois, is approaching his territories. He is brother to the king of kings—the King of France,* namely—and is attended by the flower of the French nobility. He bears the blessed banner of Saint Peter, entrusted to his victorious care by the holy successor of the apostle, and warns thee of all this, that thou mayst provide a reception suitable to his rank."'

'Here are sounding words,' said the emperor; 'but the wind which whistles loudest is not always most dangerous to the vessel. We know something of this nation of France, and have heard more. They are as petulant at least as they are valiant; we will flatter their vanity till we get time and opportunity for more effectual defence. Tush! if words can pay debt, there is no fear of our exchequer becoming insolvent.—What follows here, Nicephorus?—A list, I suppose, of the followers of this great Count?'

'My liege, no!' answered Nicephorus Briennius; 'so many independent chiefs as your Imperial Highness sees in that memorial, so many independent European armies are advancing by different routes towards the East, and announce the conquest of Palestine from the infidels as their common object.'

'A dreadful enumeration,' said the emperor, as he perused the list; 'yet so far happy, that its very length assures us of the impossibility that so many princes can be seriously and consistently united in so wild a project. Thus already my eyes catch the well-known name of an old friend, our enemy—for such are the alternate chances of peace and war—Bohemond of Antioch. Is not he the son of the celebrated Robert of Apulia, so renowned among his countrymen, who raised himself to the rank of grand duke from a simple cavalier, and became sovereign of those of his warlike nation, both in Sicily and Italy? Did not the standards of the German Emperor, of the Roman Pontiff, nay, our own Imperial banners, give way before him; until, equally a wily statesman and a brave warrior, he became the terror of Europe, from being a knight whose Norman castle would have been easily garrisoned by six cross-bows and as many lances? It is a dreadful family, a race of craft as well as power. But Bohemond, the son of old Robert, will follow his father's politics. He may talk of Palestine and of the interests of Christendom, but if I can make his interests the same with mine, he is not likely to be guided by any other object. So then, with the knowledge I already possess of his wishes and projects, it may chance that Heaven sends us an ally in the guise of an enemy.—Whom have we next? Godfrey,† Duke of Bouillon—leading, I see, a most formidable band from the banks of a huge river called the Rhine. What is this person's character?'

'As we hear,' replied Nicephorus, 'this Godfrey is one of the wisest, noblest, and bravest of the leaders who have thus strangely put themselves in motion; and among a list of independent princes, as many in number as those who assembled for the siege of Troy, and followed, most of them, by subjects ten times more numerous, this Godfrey may be regarded as the Agamemnon. The princes and counts esteem him, because he is the foremost in the ranks of those whom they fantastically call Knights, and also on account of the good faith and generosity which he practises in all his transactions. The clergy give him credit for the highest zeal for the doctrines of religion, and a corresponding respect for the Church and its dignitaries. Justice, liberality, and frankness have equally attached to this Godfrey the lower class of the people. His general attention to moral obligations is a pledge to them that his religion is real; and, gifted with so much that is excellent, he is already, although inferior in rank, birth, and power to many chiefs of the Crusade, justly regarded as one of its principal leaders.'

'Pity,' said the emperor, 'that a character such as you describe this prince to be, should be under the dominion of a fanaticism scarce worthy of Peter the Hermit, or the clownish multitude which he led, or of the very ass which he rode

* Ducange pours out a whole ocean of authorities to show that the King of France was in those days styled *Rex* by way of eminence. See his notes on the *Alexiad*. Anna Comnena in her history makes Hugh of Vermandois assume to himself the titles which cou d only, in the most enthusiastic Frenchman's opinion, have been claimed by his elder brother, the reigning monarch.

† Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine—the great captain of the first Crusade, afterwards King of Jerusalem. See Gibbon,—or Mills, *passim*.

upon! which I am apt to think the wisest of the first multitude whom we beheld, seeing that it ran away towards Europe as soon as water and barley became scarce.'

'Might I be permitted here to speak, and yet live,' said Agelastes, 'I would remark that the Patriarch himself made a similar retreat so soon as blows became plenty and food scarce.'

'Thou hast hit it, Agelastes,' said the emperor; 'but the question now is, whether an honourable and important principality could not be formed out of part of the provinces of the Lesser Asia, now laid waste by the Turks. Such a principality, methinks, with its various advantages of soil, climate, industrious inhabitants, and a healthy atmosphere, were well worth the morasses of Bouillon. It might be held as a dependence upon the sacred Roman Empire, and, garrisoned, as it were, by Godfrey and his victorious Franks, would be a bulwark on that point to our just and sacred person. Ha! most holy Patriarch, would not such a prospect shake the most devout Crusader's attachment to the burning sands of Palestine?'

'Especially,' answered the Patriarch, 'if the prince for whom such a rich *theme** was changed into a feudal appanage, should be previously converted to the only true faith, as your Imperial Highness undoubtedly means.'

'Certainly—most unquestionably,' answered the emperor, with a due affectation of gravity, notwithstanding he was internally conscious how often he had been compelled, by state necessities, to admit not only Latin Christians, but Manicheans, and other heretics, nay, Mahomedan barbarians, into the number of his subjects, and that without experiencing opposition from the scruples of the Patriarch. 'Here I find,' continued the emperor, 'such a numerous list of princes and principalities in the act of approaching our boundaries, as might well rival the armies of old, who were said to have drunk up rivers, exhausted realms, and trod down forests, in their wasteful advance.' As he pronounced these words, a shade of paleness came over the Imperial brow, similar to that which had already clothed in sadness most of his councillors.

'This war of nations,' said Nicephorus, 'has also circumstances distinguishing it from every other, save that which his Imperial Highness hath waged in former times against those whom we are accustomed to call Franks. We must go forth against a people to whom the strife of combat is as the breath of their nostrils; who, rather than not be engaged in war, will do battle with their nearest neighbours, and challenge each other to mortal fight, as much in sport as we would defy a comrade to a chariot race. They are covered with an impenetrable armour of steel, defending them from blows of the lance and sword, and which the uncommon strength of their horses renders them able to support, though one of ours could as well bear Mount Olympus upon his loins. Their foot-ranks carry a missile weapon unknown to us, termed an arblast, or cross-bow. It is not drawn with the right hand, like the bow of other nations, but by placing the feet upon the weapon itself, and pulling with the whole force of the body; and it despatches arrows called bolts, of hard wood pointed with iron, which the strength of the bow can send through the strongest breastplates, and even through stone walls, where not of uncommon thickness.'

'Enough,' said the emperor; 'we have seen with our own eyes the lances of Frankish knights, and the cross-bows of their infantry. If Heaven has allotted them a degree of bravery which to other nations seems well-nigh preternatural, the divine will has given to the Greek councils that wisdom which it hath refused to barbarians; the art of achieving conquest by wisdom rather than brute force—obtaining by our skill in treaty advantages which victory itself could not have procured. If we have not the use of that dreadful weapon, which our son-in-law terms the cross-bow, Heaven, in its favour, has concealed from these Western barbarians the composition and use of the Greek fire—well so called, since by Grecian hands alone it is prepared, and by such only can its lightnings be darted upon the astonished foe.' The emperor paused, and looked around him; and although the faces of his councillors still looked blank, he boldly proceeded:—'But to return yet again to this black scroll, containing the names of those nations who approach our frontier, here occur more than one with which, methinks, old memory should make us familiar, though our recollections are distant and confused. It becomes us to know who these men are, that we may avail ourselves of those feuds and quarrels among them, which, being blown into life, may happily divert them from the prosecution of this extraordinary attempt in which they are now united. Here is, for example, one Robert, styled Duke of Normandy, who commands a goodly band of counts, with which title we are but too well acquainted; of *earls*, a word totally strange to us, but apparently some barbaric title of honour; and of knights, whose names are compounded, as we think, chiefly of the French language, but also of another jargon, which we are not ourselves competent to understand. To you, most reverend and most learned Patriarch, we may fittest apply for information on this subject.'

'The duties of my station,' replied the Patriarch Zosimus, 'have withheld my riper years from studying the history of distant realms; but the wise Agelastes, who hath read as many volumes as would fill the shelves of the famous Alexandrian library, can no doubt satisfy your Imperial Majesty's inquiries.'

Agelastes erected himself on those enduring legs which had procured him the surname of Elephant, and began a reply to the inquiries of the emperor, rather remarkable for readiness than accuracy. 'I have read,' said he, 'in that brilliant mirror which reflects the time of our fathers, the volumes of the learned Procopius, that the people separately called Normans and Angles are in truth the same race, and that Normandy, sometimes so called, is in fact a part of a district of Gaul. Beyond, and nearly opposite to it, but separated by an arm of the sea, lies a ghastly region, on which clouds and tempests for ever rest, and which is well known to its continental neighbours as the abode to which departed spirits are sent after this life. On one

* The provinces were called *Themes*.

side of the strait dwell a few fishermen, men possessed of a strange charter, and enjoying singular privileges, in consideration of their being the living ferrymen who, performing the office of the heathen Charon, carry the spirits of the departed to the island which is their residence after death. At the dead of night, these fishermen are, in rotation, summoned to perform the duty by which they seem to hold the permission to reside on this strange coast. A knock is heard at the door of his cottage who holds the turn of this singular service, sounded by no mortal hand. A whispering, as of a decaying breeze, summons the ferryman to his duty. He hastens to his bark on the sea-shore, and has no sooner launched it than he perceives its hull sink sensibly in the water, so as to express the weight of the dead with whom it is filled. No form is seen, and though voices are heard, yet the accents are undistinguishable, as of one who speaks in his sleep. Thus he traverses the strait between the continent and the island, impressed with the mysterious awe which affects the living when they are conscious of the presence of the dead. They arrive upon the opposite coast, where the cliffs of white chalk form a strange contrast with the eternal darkness of the atmosphere. They stop at a landing-place appointed, but disembark not, for the land is never trodden by earthly feet. Here the passage-boat is gradually lightened of its unearthly inmates, who wander forth in the way appointed to them, while the mariners slowly return to their own side of the strait, having performed for the time this singular service, by which they hold their fishing-huts and their possessions on that strange coast.' Here he ceased, and the emperor replied :—

'If this legend be actually told us by Procopius, most learned Agelastes, it shows that that celebrated historian came more near the heathen than the Christian belief respecting the future state. In truth, this is little more than the old fable of the infernal Styx. Procopius, we believe, lived before the decay of heathenism, and, as we would gladly disbelieve much which he hath told us respecting our ancestor and predecessor Justinian, so we will not pay him much credit in future in point of geographical knowledge.—Meanwhile, what ails thee, Achilles Tatius, and why dost thou whisper with that soldier?'

'My head,' answered Achilles Tatius, 'is at your Imperial command, prompt to pay for the unbecoming trespass of my tongue. I did but ask of this Hereward here what he knew of this matter; for I have heard my Varangians repeatedly call themselves Anglo-Danes, Normans, Britons, or some other barbaric epithet, and I am sure that one or other, or it may be all, of these barbarous sounds, at different times, serve to designate the birthplace of these exiles, too happy in being banished from the darkness of barbarism to the luminous vicinity of your Imperial presence.'

'Speak, then, Varangian, in the name of Heaven,' said the emperor, 'and let us know whether we are to look for friends or enemies in those men of Normandy who are now approaching our frontier. Speak with courage, man; and if thou apprehendest danger, remember thou servest a prince well qualified to protect thee.'

'Since I am at liberty to speak,' answered the Life-guardsman, 'although my knowledge of the Greek language, which you term the Roman, is but slight, I trust it is enough to demand of his Imperial Highness, in place of all pay, donative, or gift whatsoever, since he has been pleased to talk of designing such for me, that he would place me in the first line of battle which shall be formed against these same Normans, and their Duke Robert; and if he pleases to allow me the aid of such Varangians as, for love of me, or hatred of their ancient tyrants, may be disposed to join their arms to mine, I have little doubt so to settle our long accounts with these men, that the Grecian eagles and wolves shall do them the last office, by tearing the flesh from their bones.'

'What dreadful feud is this, my soldier,' said the emperor, 'that after so many years still drives thee to such extremities when the very name of Normandy is mentioned?'

'Your Imperial Highness shall be judge!' said the Varangian. 'My fathers, and those of most, though not all of the corps to whom I belong, are descended from a valiant race who dwelt in the north of Germany, called Anglo-Saxons. Nobody, save a priest possessed of the art of consulting ancient chronicles, can even guess how long it is since they came to the island of Britain, then distracted with civil war. They came, however, on the petition of the natives of the island, for the aid of the Angles was requested by the southern inhabitants. Provinces were granted in recompense of the aid thus liberally afforded, and the greater proportion of the island became, by degrees, the property of the Anglo-Saxons, who occupied it at first as several principalities, and latterly as one kingdom, speaking the language, and observing the laws, of most of those who now form your Imperial Body-guard of Varangians, or exiles. In process of time the Northmen became known to the people of the more southern climates. They were so called from their coming from the distant regions of the Baltic Sea—an immense ocean, sometimes frozen with ice as hard as the cliffs of Mount Caucasus. They came seeking milder regions than nature had assigned them at home; and the climate of France being delightful, and its people slow in battle, they extorted from them the grant of a large province, which was, from the name of the new settlers, called Normandy, though I have heard my father say that was not its proper appellation. They settled there under a duke, who acknowledged the superior authority of the King of France, that is to say, obeying him when it suited his convenience so to do.

'Now, it chanced many years since, while these two nations of Normans and Anglo-Saxons were quietly residing upon different sides of the salt-water channel which divides France from England, that William, Duke of Normandy, suddenly levied a large army, came over to Kent, which is on the opposite side of the channel, and there defeated, in a great battle, Harold, who was at that time King of the Anglo-Saxons. It is but grief to tell what followed. Battles have been fought in old time, that have had dreadful results, which years, nevertheless, could wash away; but at Hastings—O woe's me!—the banner of my country fell, never again to be raised up.

Oppression has driven her wheel over us. All that was valiant amongst us have left the land; and of Englishmen—for such is our proper designation—no one remains in England save as the thrall of the invaders. Many men of Danish descent, who had found their way on different occasions to England, were blended in the common calamity. All was laid desolate by the command of the victors. My father's home lies now an undistinguished ruin, amid an extensive forest, composed out of what were formerly fair fields and domestic pastures, where a manly race derived nourishment by cultivating a friendly soil. The fire has destroyed the church where sleep the fathers of my race; and I, the last of their line, am a wanderer in other climates—a fighter of the battles of others—the servant of a foreign, though a kind master; in a word, one of the banished—a Varangian.'

'Happier in that station,' said Achilles Tatius, 'than in all the barbaric simplicity which your forefathers prized so highly, since you are now under the cheering influence of that smile which is the life of the world.'

'It avails not talking of this,' said the Varangian, with a cold gesture.

'These Normans,' said the emperor, 'are then the people by whom the celebrated island of Britain is now conquered and governed?'

'It is but too true,' answered the Varangian.

'They are, then, a brave and warlike people?' said Alexius.

'It would be base and false to say otherwise of an enemy,' said Hereward. 'Wrong have they done me, and a wrong never to be atoned; but to speak falsehood of them were but a woman's vengeance. Mortal enemies as they are to me, and mingling with all my recollections as that which is hateful and odious, yet were the troops of Europe mustered, as it seems they are likely to be, no nation or tribe dared in gallantry claim the advance of the haughty Norman.'

'And this Duke Robert, who is he?'

'That,' answered the Varangian, 'I cannot so well explain. He is the son—the eldest son, as men say, of the tyrant William, who subdued England when I hardly existed, or was a child in the cradle. That William, the victor of Hastings, is now dead, we are assured by concurring testimony; but while it seems his eldest son Duke Robert has become his heir to the Duchy of Normandy, some other of his children have been so fortunate as to acquire the throne of England, unless, indeed, like the petty farm of some obscure yeoman, the fair kingdom has been divided among the tyrant's issue.'

'Concerning this,' said the emperor, 'we have heard something, which we shall try to reconcile with the soldier's narrative at leisure, holding the words of this honest Varangian as positive proof, in whatsoever he avers from his own knowledge.—And now, my grave and worthy councillors, we must close this evening's service in the Temple of the Muses, this distressing news, brought us by our dearest son-in-law the Cæsar, having induced us to prolong our worship of these learned goddesses deeper into the night than is consistent with the health of our beloved wife and daughter; while to ourselves this intelligence brings subject for grave deliberation.'

The courtiers exhausted their ingenuity in forming the most ingenious prayers, that all evil consequences should be averted which could attend this excessive vigilance.

Nicephorus and his fair bride spoke together as a pair equally desirous to close an accidental breach between them. 'Some things thou hast said, my Cæsar,' observed the lady, 'in detailing this dreadful intelligence, as elegantly turned as if the nine goddesses, to whom this temple is dedicated, had lent each her aid to the sense and expression.'

'I need none of their assistance,' answered Nicephorus, 'since I possess a muse of my own, in whose genius are included all those attributes which the heathens vainly ascribed to the nine deities of Parnassus!'

'It is well,' said the fair historian, retiring by the assistance of her husband's arm; 'but if you will load your wife with praises far beyond her merits, you must lend her your arm to support her under the weighty burden you have been pleased to impose.' The council parted when the Imperial persons had retired, and most of them sought to indemnify themselves in more free though less dignified circles, for the constraint which they had practised in the Temple of the Muses.

CHAPTER VI.

> Vain man! thou mayst esteem thy love as fair
> As fond hyperboles suffice to raise.
> She may be all that's matchless in her person,
> And all-divine in soul to match her body;
> But take this from me—thou shalt never call her
> Superior to her sex, while *one* survives,
> And I am her true votary.
>
> OLD PLAY.

ACHILLES TATIUS, with his faithful Varangian close by his shoulder, melted from the dispersing assembly silently and almost invisibly, as snow is dissolved from its Alpine abodes as the days become more genial. No lordly step, or crash of armour, betokened the retreat of the military persons. The very idea of the necessity of guards was not ostentatiously brought forward, because, so near the presence of the emperor, the emanation supposed to flit around that divinity of earthly sovereigns had credit for rendering it impassive and unassailable. Thus the oldest and most skilful courtiers, among whom our friend Agelastes was not to be forgotten, were of opinion that, although the emperor employed the ministry of the Varangians and other guards, it was rather for form's sake than from any danger of the commission of a crime of a kind so heinous, that it was the fashion to account it almost impossible. And this doctrine, of the rare occurrence of such a crime, was repeated from month to month in those very chambers, where it had oftener than once been perpetrated, and sometimes by the very persons who monthly laid schemes for carrying some dark conspiracy against the reigning emperor into positive execution.

At length the captain of the Life-guardsmen and his faithful attendant found themselves on the outside of the Blacquernal Palace. The passage which Achilles found for their exit was

closed by a postern, which a single Varangian shut behind them, drawing, at the same time, bolt and bar with an ill-omened and jarring sound. Looking back at the mass of turrets, battlements, and spires, out of which they had at length emerged, Hereward could not but feel his heart lighten to find himself once more under the deep blue of a Grecian heaven, where the planets were burning with unusual lustre. He sighed and rubbed his hands with pleasure, like a man newly restored to liberty. He even spoke to his leader, contrary to his custom unless addressed: —'Methinks the air of yonder halls, valorous Captain, carries with it a perfume, which, though it may be well termed sweet, is so suffocating, as to be more suitable to sepulchrous chambers than to the dwellings of men. Happy I am that I am free, as I trust, from its influences.'

'Be happy, then,' said Achilles Tatius, 'since thy vile, cloddish spirit feels suffocation rather than refreshment in gales which, instead of causing death, might recall the dead themselves to life. Yet this I will say for thee, Hereward, that, born a barbarian, within the narrow circle of a savage's desires and pleasures, and having no idea of life save what thou derivest from such vile and base connections, thou art, nevertheless, designed by nature for better things, and hast this day sustained a trial, in which, I fear me, not even one of mine own noble corps, frozen as they are into lumps of unfashioned barbarity, could have equalled thy bearing. And speak now in true faith, hast not thou been rewarded?'

'That will I never deny,' said the Varangian. 'The pleasure of knowing, twenty-four hours perhaps before my comrades, that the Normans are coming hither to afford us a full revenge of the bloody day of Hastings, is a lordly recompense for the task of spending some hours in hearing the lengthened chat of a lady who has written about she knows not what, and the flattering commentaries of the bystanders, who pretended to give her an account of what they did not themselves stop to witness.'

'Hereward, my good youth,' said Achilles Tatius, 'thou ravest, and I think I should do well to place thee under the custody of some person of skill. Too much hardihood, my valiant soldier, is in soberness allied to overdaring. It was only natural that thou shouldst feel a becoming pride in thy late position; yet, let it but taint thee with vanity, and the effect will be little short of madness. Why, thou hast looked boldly in the face of a princess born in the purple, before whom my own eyes, though well used to such spectacles, are never raised beyond the foldings of her veil.'

'So be it, in the name of Heaven!' replied Hereward. 'Nevertheless, handsome faces were made to look upon, and the eyes of young men to see withal.'

'If such be their final end,' said Achilles, 'never did thine, I will freely suppose, find a richer apology for the somewhat overbold licence which thou tookest in thy gaze upon the princess this evening.'

'Good leader, or Follower, whichever is your favourite title,' said the Anglo-Briton, 'drive not to extremity a plain man, who desires to hold his duty in all honour to the Imperial family. The princess, wife of the Cæsar, and born, you tell me, of a purple colour, has now inherited, notwithstanding, the features of a most lovely woman. She hath composed a history, of which I presume not to form a judgment, since I cannot understand it; she sings like an angel; and to conclude, after the fashion of the knights of this day,—though I deal not ordinarily with their language, — I would say cheerfully that I am ready to place myself in lists against any one whomsoever, who dares detract from the beauty of the Imperial Anna Comnena's person, or from the virtues of her mind. Having said this, my noble Captain, we have said all that it is competent for you to inquire into, or for me to answer. That there are handsomer women than the princess, is unquestionable; and I question it the less, that I have myself seen a person whom I think far her superior; and with that let us close the dialogue.'

'Thy beauty, thou unparalleled fool,' said Achilles, 'must, I ween, be the daughter of the large-bodied Northern boor, living next door to him upon whose farm was brought up the person of an ass, cursed with such intolerable want of judgment.'

'You may say your pleasure, Captain,' replied Hereward; 'because it is the safer for us both that thou canst not on such a topic either offend me, who hold thy judgment as light as thou canst esteem mine, or speak any derogation of a person whom you never saw, but whom, if you had seen, perchance I might not so patiently have brooked any reflections upon, even at the hands of a military superior.'

Achilles Tatius had a good deal of the penetration necessary for one in his situation. He never provoked to extremity the daring spirits whom he commanded, and never used any freedom with them beyond the extent that he knew their patience could bear. Hereward was a favourite soldier, and had, in that respect at least, a sincere liking and regard for his commander: when, therefore, the Follower, instead of resenting his petulance, good-humouredly apologized for having hurt his feelings, the momentary displeasure between them was at an end; the officer at once reassumed his superiority, and the soldier sank back with a deep sigh, given to some period which was long past, into his wonted silence and reserve. Indeed, the Follower had another and further design upon Hereward, of which he was as yet unwilling to do more than give a distant hint.

After a long pause, during which they approached the barracks, a gloomy fortified building constructed for the residence of their corps, the captain motioned his soldier to draw close up to his side, and proceeded to ask him, in a confidential tone—'Hereward, my friend, although it is scarce to be supposed that in the presence of the Imperial family thou shouldst mark any one who did not partake of their blood, or rather, as Homer has it, who did not participate of the divine *ichor*, which, in their sacred persons, supplies the place of that vulgar fluid; yet, during so long an audience, thou mightst possibly, from his uncourtly person and attire, have dis-

tinguished Agelastes, whom we courtiers call the Elephant, from his strict observation of the rule which forbids any one to sit down or rest in the Imperial presence.'

'I think,' replied the soldier, 'I marked the man you mean;—his age was some seventy and upwards,—a big burly person;—and the baldness which reached to the top of his head was well atoned for by a white beard of prodigious size, which descended in waving curls over his breast, and reached to the towel with which his loins were girded, instead of the silken sash used by other persons of rank.'

'Most accurately marked, my Varangian,' said the officer. 'What else didst thou note about this person?'

'His cloak was in its texture as coarse as that of the meanest of the people, but it was strictly clean, as if it had been the intention of the wearer to exhibit poverty, or carelessness and contempt of dress, avoiding, at the same time, every particular which implied anything negligent, sordid, or disgusting.'

'By Saint Sophia!' said the officer, 'thou astonishest me! The prophet Balaam was not more surprised when his ass turned round her head and spoke to him!—And what else didst thou note concerning this man? I see those who meet thee must beware of thy observation, as well as of thy battle-axe.'

'If it please your valour,' answered the soldier, 'we English have eyes as well as hands; but it is only when discharging our duty that we permit our tongues to dwell on what we have observed. I noted but little of this man's conversation, but from what I heard, it seemed he was not unwilling to play what we call the jester, or jack-pudding, in the conversation, a character which, considering the man's age and physiognomy, is not, I should be tempted to say, natural, but assumed for some purpose of deeper import.'

'Hereward,' answered his officer, 'thou hast spoken like an angel sent down to examine men's bosoms: that man Agelastes is a contradiction, such as earth has seldom witnessed. Possessing all that wisdom which in former times united the sages of this nation with the gods themselves, Agelastes has the same cunning as the elder Brutus,* who disguised his talents under the semblance of an idle jester. He appears to seek no office—he desires no consideration—he pays suit at court only when positively required to do so; yet what shall I say, my soldier, concerning the cause of an influence gained without apparent effort, and extending almost into the very thoughts of men, who appear to act as he would desire, without his soliciting them for that purpose? Men say strange things concerning the extent of his communications with other beings, whom our fathers worshipped with prayer and sacrifice. I am determined, however, to know the road by which he climbs so high and so easily towards the point to which all men aspire at court, and it will go hard but he shall either share his ladder with me, or I will strike its support from under him. Thee, Hereward, I have chosen to assist me in this matter, as the knights among these Frankish infidels select, when going upon an adventure, a sturdy squire, or inferior attendant, to share the dangers and the recompense; and this I am moved to, as much by the shrewdness thou hast this night manifested, as by the courage which thou mayest boast, in common with, or rather beyond, thy companions.'

'I am obliged, and I thank your valour,' replied the Varangian, more coldly perhaps than his officer expected; 'I am ready, as is my duty, to serve you in anything consistent with God and the Emperor's claims upon my service. I would only say that, as a sworn inferior soldier, I will do nothing contrary to the laws of the Empire, and, as a sincere though ignorant Christian, I will have nothing to do with the gods of the heathens, save to defy them in the name and strength of the holy saints.'

'Idiot!' said Achilles Tatius, 'dost thou think that I, already possessed of one of the first dignities of the Empire, could meditate anything contrary to the interests of Alexius Comnenus? or, what would be scarce more atrocious, that I, the chosen friend and ally of the reverend Patriarch Zosimus, should meddle with anything bearing a relation, however remote, to heresy or idolatry?'

'Truly,' answered the Varangian, 'no one would be more surprised or grieved than I should; but when we walk in a labyrinth, we must assume and announce that we have a steady and forward purpose, which is one mode at least of keeping a straight path. The people of this country have so many ways of saying the same thing, that one can hardly know at last what is their real meaning. We English, on the other hand, can only express ourselves in one set of words, but it is one out of which all the ingenuity of the world could not extract a double meaning.'

''Tis well,' said his officer; 'to-morrow we will talk more of this, for which purpose thou wilt come to my quarters a little after sunset. And hark thee, to-morrow, while the sun is in heaven, shall be thine own, either to sport thyself or to repose. Employ thy time in the latter, by my advice, since to-morrow night, like the present, may find us both watchers.'

So saying, they entered the barracks, where they parted company—the commander of the Life-guards taking his way to a splendid set of apartments which belonged to him in that capacity, and the Anglo-Saxon seeking his more humble accommodations as a subaltern officer of the same corps.

CHAPTER VII.

Such forces met not, nor so vast a camp,
When Agrican, with all his Northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphron, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowess'd knights,
Both Paynim, and the Peers of Charlemagne.
PARADISE REGAINED.

EARLY on the morning of the day following that which we have commemorated, the Im-

* [The hero who, in the legendary history of Rome, only saved his life from the tyrant, Tarquin the Proud, by feigning idiocy.]

perial Council was assembled, where the number of general officers with sounding titles disguised under a thin veil the real weakness of the Grecian Empire. The commanders were numerous, and the distinctions of their rank minute, but the soldiers were very few in comparison.

The offices formerly filled by prefects, prætors, and questors, were now held by persons who had gradually risen into the authority of those officers, and who, though designated from their domestic duties about the emperor, yet, from that very circumstance, possessed what, in that despotic court, was the most effectual source of power. A long train of officers entered the great hall of the Castle of Blacquernal, and proceeded so far together as their different grades admitted, while in each chamber through which they passed in succession, a certain number of the train whose rank permitted them to advance no farther, remained behind the others. Thus, when the interior cabinet of audience was gained, which was not until their passage through ten anterooms, five persons only found themselves in the presence of the emperor in this innermost and most sacred recess of royalty, decorated by all the splendour of the period.

The Emperor Alexius sat upon a stately throne, rich with barbaric gems and gold, and flanked on either hand, in imitation probably of Solomon's magnificence, with the form of a couchant lion in the same precious metal. Not to dwell upon other marks of splendour, a tree, whose trunk seemed also of gold, shot up behind the throne, which it overcanopied with its branches. Amid the boughs were birds of various kinds curiously wrought and enamelled, and fruit composed of precious stones seemed to glisten among the leaves. Five officers alone, the highest in the state, had the privilege of entering this sacred recess when the emperor held council. These were—the Grand Domestic, who might be termed of rank with a modern prime minister — the Logothete, or chancellor — the Protospathaire, or commander of the Guards, already mentioned—the Acolyte, or Follower, and leader of the Varangians — and the Patriarch.

The doors of this secret apartment, and the adjacent ante-chamber, were guarded by six deformed Nubian slaves, whose writhen and withered countenances formed a hideous contrast with their snow-white dresses and splendid equipment. They were mutes, a species of wretches borrowed from the despotism of the East, that they might be unable to proclaim the deeds of tyranny of which they were the unscrupulous agents. They were generally held in a kind of horror, rather than compassion, for men considered that slaves of this sort had a malignant pleasure in avenging upon others the irreparable wrongs which had severed themselves from humanity.

It was a general custom, though, like many other usages of the Greeks, it would be held childish in modern times, that, by means of machinery easily conceived, the lions, at the entrance of a stranger, were made, as it were, to rouse themselves and roar, after which a wind seemed to rustle the foliage of the tree, the birds hopped from branch to branch, pecked the fruit, and appeared to fill the chamber with their carolling. This display had alarmed many an ignorant foreign ambassador, and even the Grecian councillors themselves were expected to display the same sensations of fear, succeeded by surprise, when they heard the roar of the lions, followed by the concert of the birds, although perhaps it was for the fiftieth time. On this occasion, as a proof of the urgency of the present meeting of the council, these ceremonies were entirely omitted.

The speech of the emperor himself seemed to supply by its commencement the bellowing of the lions, while it ended in a strain more resembling the warbling of the birds.

In his first sentences he treated of the audacity and unheard-of boldness of the millions of Franks, who, under the pretence of wresting Palestine from the infidels, had ventured to invade the sacred territories of the empire. He threatened them with such chastisement as his innumerable forces and officers would, he affirmed, find it easy to inflict. To all this the audience, and especially the military officers, gave symptoms of ready assent.

Alexius, however, did not long persist in the warlike intentions which he at first avowed. The Franks, he at length seemed to reflect, were, in profession, Christians. They might possibly be serious in their pretext of the Crusade, in which case their motives claimed a degree of indulgence, and although erring, a certain portion of respect. Their numbers also were great, and their valour could not be despised by those who had seen them fight at Durazzo,* and elsewhere. They might also, by the permission of Supreme Providence, be, in the long-run, the instruments of advantage to the most sacred empire, though they approached it with so little ceremony. He had, therefore, mingling the virtues of prudence, humanity, and generosity with that valour which must always burn in the heart of an emperor, formed a plan, which he was about to submit to their consideration, for present execution; and, in the first place, he requested of the Grand Domestic to let him know what forces he might count upon on the western side of the Bosphorus.

'Innumerable are the forces of the empire as the stars in heaven, or the sand on the sea-shore,' answered the Grand Domestic.

'That is a goodly answer,' said the emperor, 'provided there were strangers present at this conference; but since we hold consultation in private, it is necessary that I know precisely to what number that army amounts which I have to rely upon. Reserve your eloquence till some fitter time, and let me know what you, at this present moment, mean by the word *innumerable?*'

The Grand Domestic paused, and hesitated for a short space; but as he became aware that the moment was one in which the emperor could not be trifled with (for Alexius Comnenus was at times dangerous), he answered thus, but not without hesitation:—'Imperial master and lord,

* For the battle of Durazzo, Oct. 1081, in which Alexius was defeated with great slaughter by Robert Guiscard, and escaped only by the swiftness of his horse, see Gibbon, chap. lvi.

none better knows that such an answer cannot be hastily made, if it is at the same time to be correct in its results. The number of the Imperial host betwixt this city and the western frontier of the empire, deducing those absent upon furlough, cannot be counted upon as amounting to more than twenty-five thousand men, or thirty thousand at most.'

Alexius struck his forehead with his hand; and the councillors, seeing him give way to such violent expressions of grief and surprise, began to enter into discussions, which they would otherwise have reserved for a fitter place and time.

'By the trust your Highness reposes in me,' said the Logothete, 'there has been drawn from your Highness's coffers, during the last year, gold enough to pay double the number of the armed warriors whom the Grand Domestic now mentions.'

'Your Imperial Highness,' retorted the impeached minister, with no small animation, 'will at once remember the stationary garrisons, in addition to the moveable troops, for which this figure-caster makes no allowance.'

'Peace, both of you!' said Alexius, composing himself hastily; 'our actual numbers are in truth less than we counted on, but let us not by wrangling augment the difficulties of the time. Let those troops be dispersed in valleys, in passes, behind ridges of hills, and in difficult ground, where a little art being used in the position, can make few men supply the appearance of numbers, between this city and the western frontier of the Empire. While this disposal is made, we will continue to adjust with these Crusaders, as they call themselves, the terms on which we will consent to let them pass through our dominions; nor are we without hope of negotiating with them, so as to gain great advantage to our kingdom. We will insist that they pass through our country only by armies of perhaps fifty thousand at once, whom we will successively transport into Asia, so that no greater number shall, by assembling beneath our walls, ever endanger the safety of the metropolis of the world.

'On their way towards the banks of the Bosphorus, we will supply them with provisions, if they march peaceably, and in order; and if any straggle from their standards, or insult the country by marauding, we suppose our valiant peasants will not hesitate to repress their excesses, and that without our giving positive orders, since we would not willingly be charged with anything like a breach of engagement. We suppose, also, that the Scythians, Arabs, Syrians, and other mercenaries in our service, will not suffer our subjects to be overpowered in their own just defence; as, besides that there is no justice in stripping our own country of provisions in order to feed strangers, we will not be surprised, nor unpardonably displeased to learn, that of the ostensible quantity of flour, some sacks should be found filled with chalk, or lime, or some such substance. It is, indeed, truly wonderful what the stomach of a Frank will digest comfortably. Their guides, also, whom you shall choose with reference to such duty, will take care to conduct the Crusaders by difficult and circuitous routes; which will be doing them a real service, by inuring them to the hardships of the country and climate, which they would otherwise have to face without seasoning.

'In the meantime, in your intercourse with their chiefs, whom they call counts, each of whom thinks himself as great as an emperor, you will take care to give no offence to their natural presumption, and omit no opportunity of informing them of the wealth and bounty of our government. Sums of money may be even given to persons of note, and largesses of less avail to those under them. You, our Logothete, will take good order for this, and you, our Grand Domestic, will take care that such soldiers as may cut off detached parties of the Franks shall be presented, if possible, in savage dress, and under the show of infidels. In commending these injunctions to your care, I purpose that, the Crusaders having found the value of our friendship, and also in some sort the danger of our enmity, those whom we shall safely transport to Asia shall be, however unwieldy, still a smaller and more compact body, whom we may deal with in all Christian prudence. Thus, by using fair words to one, threats to another, gold to the avaricious, power to the ambitious, and reasons to those that are capable of listening to them, we doubt not but to prevail upon those Franks, met as they are from a thousand points, and enemies of each other, to acknowledge us as their common superior, rather than choose a leader among themselves, when they are made aware of the great fact, that every village in Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba, is the original property of the sacred Roman Empire, and that whatever Christian goes to war for their recovery, must go as our subject, and hold any conquest which he may make as our vassal. Vice and virtue, sense and folly, ambition and disinterested devotion, will alike recommend to the survivors of these singular-minded men, to become the feudatories of the Empire, not its foe, and the shield, not the enemy, of your paternal Emperor.'

There was a general inclination of the head among the courtiers, with the Eastern exclamation of—'Long live the Emperor!'

When the murmur of this applausive exclamation had subsided, Alexius proceeded:—'Once more I say, that my faithful Grand Domestic, and those who act under him, will take care to commit the execution of such part of these orders as may seem aggressive, to troops of foreign appearance and language, which, I grieve to say, are more numerous in our Imperial army than our natural-born and orthodox subjects.'

The Patriarch here interposed his opinion.—'There is a consolation,' he said, 'in the thought that the genuine Romans in the Imperial army are but few, since a trade so bloody as war is most fitly prosecuted by those whose doctrines, as well as their doings, on earth, merit eternal condemnation in the next world.'

'Reverend Patriarch,' said the emperor, 'we would not willingly hold, with the wild infidels, that Paradise is to be gained by the sabre; nevertheless, we would hope that a Roman dying in battle for his religion and his Emperor

may find as good hope of acceptation, after the mortal pang is over, as a man who dies in peace, and with unblooded hand.'

'It is enough for me to say,' resumed the Patriarch, 'that the Church's doctrine is not so indulgent: she is herself peaceful, and her promises of favour are for those who have been men of peace. Yet think not I bar the gates of heaven against a soldier, as such, if believing all the doctrines of our Church, and complying with all our observances; far less would I condemn your Imperial Majesty's wise precautions, both for diminishing the power and thinning the ranks of those Latin heretics, who come hither to despoil us, and plunder perhaps both church and temple, under the vain pretext that Heaven would permit them, stained with so many heresies, to reconquer that Holy Land, which true orthodox Christians, your Majesty's sacred predecessors, have not been enabled to retain from the infidel. And well I trust that no settlement made under the Latins will be permitted by your Majesty to establish itself, in which the Cross shall not be elevated with limbs of the same length, instead of that irregular and most damnable error which prolongs, in Western Churches, the nether limb of that most holy emblem.'

'Reverend Patriarch,' answered the emperor, 'do not deem that we think lightly of your weighty scruples; but the question is now, not in what manner we may convert these Latin heretics to the true faith, but how we may avoid being overrun by their myriads, which resemble those of the locusts by which their approach was preceded and intimated.'

'Your Majesty,' said the Patriarch, 'will act with your usual wisdom; for my part, I have only stated my doubts that I may save my own soul alive.'

'Our construction,' said the emperor, 'does your sentiments no wrong, most reverend Patriarch—And you,' addressing himself to the other councillors, 'will attend to these separate charges given out for directing the execution of the commands which have been generally intimated to you. They are written out in the sacred ink, and our sacred subscription is duly marked with the fitting tinge of green and purple. Let them, therefore, be strictly obeyed. Ourselves will assume the command of such of the Immortal bands as remain in the city, and join to them the cohorts of our faithful Varangians. At the head of these troops, we will await the arrival of these strangers under the walls of the city, and, avoiding combat while our policy can postpone it, we will be ready, in case of the worst, to take whatsoever chance it shall please the Almighty to send us.'

Here the council broke up, and the different chiefs began to exert themselves in the execution of their various instructions, civil and military, secret or public, favourable or hostile to the Crusaders. The peculiar genius of the Grecian people was seen upon this occasion. Their loud and boastful talking corresponded with the ideas which the emperor wished to enforce upon the Crusaders concerning the extent of his power and resources. Nor is it to be disguised that the wily selfishness of most of those in the service of Alexius endeavoured to find some indirect way of applying the Imperial instruction, so as might best suit their own private ends.

Meantime the news had gone abroad in Constantinople, of the arrival of the huge miscellaneous army of the West upon the limits of the Grecian Empire, and of their purpose to pass to Palestine. A thousand reports magnified, if that was possible, an event so wonderful. Some said that their ultimate view was the conquest of Arabia, the destruction of the Prophet's tomb, and the conversion of his green banner into a horse-cloth for the King of France's brother. Others supposed that the ruin and sack of Constantinople was the real object of the war. A third class thought it was in order to compel the Patriarch to submit himself to the Pope, adopt the Latin form of the Cross, and put an end to the schism.

The Varangians enjoyed an addition to this wonderful news, seasoned as it everywhere was with something peculiarly suited to the prejudices of the hearers. It was gathered originally from what our friend Hereward, who was one of their inferior officers, called sergeants or constables, had suffered to transpire of what he had heard the preceding evening. Considering that the fact must be soon matter of notoriety, he had no hesitation to give his comrades to understand that a Norman army was coming hither under Duke Robert, the son of the far-famed William the Conqueror, and with hostile intentions, he concluded, against them in particular. Like all other men in peculiar circumstances, the Varangians adopted an explanation applicable to their own condition. These Normans, who hated the Saxon nation, and had done so much to dishonour and oppress them, were now following them, they supposed, to the foreign capital where they had found refuge, with the purpose of making war on the bountiful prince who protected their sad remnant. Under this belief, many a deep oath was sworn in Norse and Anglo-Saxon, that their keen battle-axes should avenge the slaughter of Hastings; and many a pledge, both in wine and ale, was quaffed who should most deeply resent, and most effectually revenge, the wrongs which the Anglo-Saxons of England had received at the hand of their oppressors.

Hereward, the author of this intelligence, began soon to be sorry that he had ever suffered it to escape him, so closely was he cross-examined concerning its precise import, by the inquiries of his comrades, from whom he thought himself obliged to keep concealed the adventures of the preceding evening, and the place in which he had gained his information.

About noon, when he was effectually tired with returning the same answer to the same questions, and evading similar others which were repeatedly put to him, the sound of trumpets announced the presence of the Acolyte, Achilles Tatius, who came immediately, it was industriously whispered, from the sacred Interior, with news of the immediate approach of war.

The Varangians, and the Roman bands called Immortal, it was said, were to form a camp under the city, in order to be prompt to defend it at the shortest notice. This put the whole barracks

into commotion, each man making the necessary provision for the approaching campaign. The noise was chiefly that of joyful bustle and acclamation; and it was so general, that Hereward, whose rank permitted him to commit to a page or esquire the task of preparing his equipments, took the opportunity to leave the barracks, in order to seek some distant place apart from his comrades, and enjoy his solitary reflections upon the singular connection into which he had been drawn, and his direct communication with the Imperial family.

Passing through the narrow streets, then deserted on account of the heat of the sun, he reached at length one of those broad terraces, which, descending as it were by steps upon the margin of the Bosphorus, formed one of the most splendid walks in the universe, and still, it is believed, preserved as a public promenade for the pleasure of the Turks, as formerly for that of the Christians. These graduated terraces were planted with many trees, among which the cypress, as usual, was most generally cultivated. Here bands of the inhabitants were to be seen: some passing to and fro, with business and anxiety in their faces; some standing still in groups, as if discussing the strange and weighty tidings of the day; and some, with the indolent carelessness of an Eastern climate, eating their noontide refreshment in the shade, and spending their time as if their sole object was to make much of the day as it passed, and let the cares of to-morrow answer for themselves.

While the Varangian, afraid of meeting some acquaintance in this concourse, which would have been inconsistent with the desire of seclusion which had brought him thither, descended or passed from one terrace to another, all marked him with looks of curiosity and inquiry, considering him to be one who, from his arms and connection with the court, must necessarily know more than others concerning the singular invasion by numerous enemies, and from various quarters, which was the news of the day.

None, however, had the hardihood to address the soldier of the Guard, though all looked at him with uncommon interest. He walked from the lighter to the darker alleys, from the more closed to the more open terraces, without interruption from any one, yet not without a feeling that he must not consider himself as alone.

The desire that he felt to be solitary rendered him at last somewhat watchful, so that he became sensible that he was dogged by a black slave, a personage not so unfrequent in the streets of Constantinople as to excite any particular notice. His attention, however, being at length fixed on this individual, he began to be desirous to escape his observation; and the change of place which he had at first adopted to avoid society in general, he had now recourse to, in order to rid himself of this distant, though apparently watchful attendant. Still, however, though he by change of place had lost sight of the negro for a few minutes, it was not long ere he again discovered him at a distance too far for a companion, but near enough to serve all the purposes of a spy. Displeased at this, the Varangian turned short in his walk, and, choosing a spot where none was in sight but the object of his resentment, walked suddenly up to him, and demanded wherefore, and by whose orders, he presumed to dog his footsteps. The negro answered in a jargon as bad as that in which he was addressed, though of a different kind, 'that he had orders to remark whither he went.'

'Orders from whom?' said the Varangian.

'From my master and yours,' answered the negro boldly.

'Thou infidel villain!' exclaimed the angry soldier, 'when was it that we became fellow-servants, and who is it that thou darest to call my master?'

'One who is master of the world,' said the slave, 'since he commands his own passions.'

'I shall scarce command mine,' said the Varangian, 'if thou repliest to my earnest questions with thine affected quirks of philosophy. Once more, what dost thou want with me? and why hast thou the boldness to watch me?'

'I have told thee already,' said the slave, 'that I do my master's commands.'

'But I must know who thy master is,' said Hereward.

'He must tell thee that himself,' replied the negro; 'he trusts not a poor slave like me with the purpose of the errands on which he sends me.'

'He has left thee a tongue, however,' said the Varangian, 'which some of thy countrymen would, I think, be glad to possess. Do not provoke me to abridge it by refusing me the information which I have a right to demand.'

The black meditated, as it seemed from the grin on his face, further evasions, when Hereward cut them short by raising the staff of his battle-axe. 'Put me not,' he said, 'to dishonour myself by striking thee with this weapon, calculated for a use so much more noble.'

'I may not do so, valiant sir,' said the negro, laying aside an impudent, half-gibing tone which he had hitherto made use of, and betraying personal fear in his manner. 'If you beat the poor slave to death, you cannot learn what his master hath forbid him to tell. A short walk will save your honour the stain, and yourself the trouble, of beating what cannot resist, and me the pain of enduring what I can neither retaliate nor avoid.'

'Lead on then,' said the Varangian. 'Be assured thou shalt not fool me by thy fair words, and I will know the person who is impudent enough to assume the right of watching my motions.'

The black walked on with a species of leer peculiar to his physiognomy, which might be construed as expressive either of malice or of mere humour. The Varangian followed him with some suspicion, for it happened that he had had little intercourse with the unhappy race of Africa, and had not totally overcome the feeling of surprise with which he had at first regarded them, when he arrived a stranger from the North. So often did this man look back upon him during their walk, and with so penetrating and observing a cast of countenance, that Hereward felt irresistibly renewed in his mind the English prejudices, which assigned to the demons the sable colour and distorted cast of

visage of his conductor. The scene into which he was guided strengthened an association which was not of itself unlikely to occur to the ignorant and martial islander.

The negro led the way from the splendid terraced walks which we have described, to a path descending to the sea-shore, when a place appeared, which, far from being trimmed, like other parts of the coast, into walks of embankments, seemed, on the contrary, abandoned to neglect, and was covered with the mouldering ruins of antiquity, where these had not been overgrown by the luxuriant vegetation of the climate. These fragments of building, occupying a sort of recess of the bay, were hidden by steep banks on each side; and although in fact they formed part of the city, yet they were not seen from any part of it, and, embosomed in the manner we have described, did not in turn command any view of the churches, palaces, towers, and fortifications, amongst which they lay. The sight of this solitary, and apparently deserted spot, encumbered with ruins, and overgrown with cypress and other trees, situated as it was in the midst of a populous city, had something in it impressive and awful to the imagination. The ruins were of an ancient date, and in the style of a foreign people. The gigantic remains of a portico, the mutilated fragments of statues of great size, but executed in a taste and attitude so narrow and barbaric as to seem perfectly the reverse of the Grecian, and the half-defaced hieroglyphics which could be traced on some part of the decayed sculpture, corroborated the popular account of their origin, which we shall briefly detail.

According to tradition, this had been a temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Cybele, built while the Roman Empire was yet heathen, and while Constantinople was still called by the name of Byzantium. It is well known that the superstition of the Egyptians—vulgarly gross in its literal meaning as well as in its mystical interpretation, and peculiarly the foundation of many wild doctrines—was disowned by the principles of general toleration, and the system of polytheism received by Rome, and was excluded by repeated laws from the respect paid by the empire to almost every other religion, however extravagant or absurd. Nevertheless, these Egyptian rites had charms for the curious and the superstitious, and had, after long opposition, obtained a footing in the empire.

Still, although tolerated, the Egyptian priests were rather considered as sorcerers than as pontiffs, and their whole ritual had a nearer relation to magic, in popular estimation, than to any regular system of devotion.

Stained with these accusations, even among the heathen themselves, the worship of Egypt was held in more mortal abhorrence by the Christians than the other and more rational kinds of heathen devotion; that is, if any at all had a right to be termed so. The brutal worship of Apis and Cybele was regarded, not only as a pretext for obscene and profligate pleasures, but as having a direct tendency to open and encourage a dangerous commerce with evil spirits, who were supposed to take upon themselves, at these unhallowed altars, the names and characters of these foul deities. Not only, therefore, the temple of Cybele, with its gigantic portico, its huge and inelegant statues, and its fantastic hieroglyphics, was thrown down and defaced when the empire was converted to the Christian faith, but the very ground on which it stood was considered as polluted and unhallowed; and no emperor having yet occupied the site with a Christian church, the place still remained neglected and deserted as we have described it.

The Varangian Hereward was perfectly acquainted with the evil reputation of the place; and when the negro seemed disposed to advance into the interior of the ruins, he hesitated, and addressed his guide thus:—'Hark thee, my black friend, these huge fantastic images, some having dogs' heads, some cows' heads, and some no heads at all, are not held reverently in popular estimation. Your own colour also, my comrade, is greatly too like that of Satan himself, to render you an unsuspicious companion amid ruins, in which the false spirit, it is said, daily walks his rounds. Midnight and noon are the times, it is rumoured, of his appearance. I will go no farther with you, unless you assign me a fit reason for so doing.'

'In making so childish a proposal,' said the negro, 'you take from me, in effect, all desire to guide you to my master. I thought I spoke to a man of invincible courage, and of that good sense upon which courage is best founded. But your valour only emboldens you to beat a black slave, who has neither strength nor title to resist you; and your courage is not enough to enable you to look without trembling on the dark side of a wall, even when the sun is in the heavens.'

'Thou art insolent,' said Hereward, raising his axe.

'And thou art foolish,' said the negro, 'to attempt to prove thy manhood and thy wisdom by the very mode which gives reason for calling them both in question. I have already said there can be little valour in beating a wretch like me; and no man, surely, who wishes to discover his way, would begin by chasing away his guide.'

'I follow thee,' said Hereward, stung with the insinuation of cowardice; 'but if thou leadest me into a snare, thy free talk shall not save thy bones, if a thousand of thy complexion, from earth or hell, were standing ready to back thee.'

'Thou objectest sorely to my complexion,' said the negro; 'how knowest thou that it is, in fact, a thing to be counted and acted upon as matter of reality? Thine own eyes daily apprise thee that the colour of the sky nightly changes from bright to black, yet thou knowest that this is by no means owing to any habitual colour of the heavens themselves. The same change that takes place in the hue of the heavens has existence in the tinge of the deep sea—How canst thou tell but what the difference of my colour from thine own may be owing to some deceptious change of a similar nature—not real in itself, but only creating an apparent reality?'

'Thou mayst have painted thyself, no doubt,' answered the Varangian, upon reflection, 'and

thy blackness, therefore, may be only apparent; but I think thy old friend himself could hardly have presented these grinning lips, with the white teeth and flattened nose, so much to the life, unless that peculiarity of Nubian physiognomy, as they call it, had accurately and really an existence; and to save thee some trouble, my dark friend, I will tell thee that, though thou speakest to an uneducated Varangian, I am not entirely unskilled in the Grecian art of making subtle words pass upon the hearers instead of reason.'

'Ay?' said the negro doubtfully, and somewhat surprised; 'and may the slave Diogenes—for so my master has christened me—inquire into the means by which you reached knowledge so unusual?'

'It is soon told,' replied Hereward. 'My countryman Witikind, being a constable of our bands, retired from active service, and spent the end of a long life in this city of Constantinople. Being past all toils of battle, either those of reality, as you word it, or the pomp and fatigue of the exercising ground, the poor old man, in despair of something to pass his time, attended the lectures of the philosophers.'

'And what did he learn there?' said the negro; 'for a barbarian, grown grey under the helmet, was not, as I think, a very hopeful student in our schools.'

'As much, though, I should think, as a menial slave, which I understand to be thy condition,' replied the soldier. 'But I have understood from him, that the masters of this idle science make it their business to substitute, in their argumentations, mere words instead of ideas; and as they never agree upon the precise meaning of the former, their disputes can never arrive at a fair or settled conclusion, since they do not agree in the language in which they express them. Their theories, as they call them, are built on the sand, and the wind and tide shall prevail against them.'

'Say so to my master,' answered the black, in a serious tone.

'I will,' said the Varangian; 'and he shall know me as an ignorant soldier, having but few ideas, and those only concerning my religion and my military duty. But out of these opinions I will neither be beaten by a battery of sophisms, nor cheated by the arts or the terrors of the friends of heathenism, either in this world or the next.'

'You may speak your mind to him, then, yourself,' said Diogenes. He stepped to a side as if to make way for the Varangian, to whom he motioned to go forward.

Hereward advanced accordingly, by a half-worn and almost imperceptible path leading through the long rough grass, and, turning round a half-demolished shrine, which exhibited the remains of Apis, the bovine deity,* he came immediately in front of the philosopher Agelastes, who, sitting among the ruins, reposed his limbs on the grass.

* [The god Apis was worshipped in the form of a bull.]

CHAPTER VIII.

Through the vain webs which puzzle sophists' skill,
Plain sense and honest meaning work their way;
So sink the varying clouds upon the hill,
When the clear dawning brightens into day.
DOCTOR WATTS.

THE old man rose from the ground with alacrity as Hereward approached. 'My bold Varangian,' he said, 'thou who valuest men and things not according to the false estimate ascribed to them in this world, but to their real importance and actual value, thou art welcome, whatever has brought thee hither—thou art welcome to a place where it is held the best business of philosophy to strip man of his borrowed ornaments, and reduce him to the just value of his own attributes of body and mind, singly considered.'

'You are a courtier, sir,' said the Saxon, 'and, as a permitted companion of the Emperor's Highness, you must be aware that there are twenty times more ceremonies than such a man as I can be acquainted with for regulating the different ranks in society; while a plain man like myself may be well excused from pushing himself into the company of those above him, where he does not exactly know how he should comport himself.'

'True,' said the philosopher; 'but a man like yourself, noble Hereward, merits more consideration, in the eyes of a real philosopher, than a thousand of those mere insects, whom the smiles of a court call into life, and whom its frowns reduce to annihilation.'

'You are yourself, grave sir, a follower of the court,' said Hereward.

'And a most punctilious one,' said Agelastes. 'There is not, I trust, a subject in the empire who knows better the ten thousand punctilios exigible from those of different ranks, and due to different authorities. The man is yet to be born who has seen me take advantage of any more commodious posture than that of standing in presence of the royal family. But though I use those false scales in society, and so far conform to its errors, my real judgment is of a more grave character, and more worthy of man, as said to be formed in the image of his Creator.'

'There can be small occasion,' said the Varangian, 'to exercise your judgment in any respect upon me, nor am I desirous that any one should think of me otherwise than I am; —a poor exile, namely, who endeavours to fix his faith upon Heaven, and to perform his duty to the world he lives in, and to the prince in whose service he is engaged.—And now, grave sir, permit me to ask, whether this meeting is by your desire, and for what is its purpose? An African slave, whom I met in the public walks, and who calls himself Diogenes, tells me that you desired to speak with me; he hath somewhat the humour of the old scoffer, and so he may have lied. If so, I will even forgive him the beating which I owe his assurance, and make my excuse at the same time for having broken in upon your retirement, which I am totally unfit to share.'

'Diogenes has not played you false,' answered Agelastes; 'he has his humours, as you remarked even now, and with these some qualities also that put him upon a level with those of fairer complexion and better features.'

'And for what,' said the Varangian, 'have you so employed him? Can your wisdom possibly entertain a wish to converse with me?'

'I am an observer of nature and of humanity,' answered the philosopher; 'is it not natural that I should tire of those beings who are formed entirely upon artifice, and long to see something more fresh from the hand of nature?'

'You see not that in me,' said the Varangian; 'the rigour of military discipline, the camp—the centurion—the armour—frame a man's sentiments and limbs to them, as the sea-crab is framed to its shell. See one of us, and you see us all.'

'Permit me to doubt that,' said Agelastes, 'and to suppose that in Hereward the son of Waltheoff I see an extraordinary man, although he himself may be ignorant, owing to his modesty, of the rarity of his own good qualities.'

'The son of Waltheoff!' answered the Varangian, somewhat startled. 'Do you know my father's name?'

'Be not surprised,' answered the philosopher, 'at my possessing so simple a piece of information. It has cost me but little trouble to attain it, yet I would gladly hope that the labour I have taken in that matter may convince you of my real desire to call you friend.'

'It was indeed an unusual compliment,' said Hereward, 'that a man of your knowledge and station should be at the trouble to inquire, among the Varangian cohorts, concerning the descent of one of their constables. I scarcely think that my commander, the Acolyte himself, would think such knowledge worthy of being collected or preserved.'

'Greater men than he,' said Agelastes, 'certainly would not——You know one in high office who thinks the names of his most faithful soldiers of less moment than those of his hunting dogs or his hawks, and would willingly save himself the trouble of calling them otherwise than by a whistle.'

'I may not hear this,' answered the Varangian.

'I would not offend you,' said the philosopher, 'I would not even shake your good opinion of the person I allude to; yet it surprises me that such should be entertained by one of your great qualities.'

'A truce with this, grave sir, which is in fact trifling in a person of your character and appearance,' answered the Anglo-Saxon. 'I am like the rocks of my country; the fierce winds cannot shake me, the soft rains cannot melt me; flattery and loud words are alike lost upon me.'

'And it is even for that inflexibility of mind,' replied Agelastes, 'that steady contempt of everything that approaches thee, save in the light of a duty, that I demand, almost like a beggar, that personal acquaintance, which thou refusest like a churl.'

'Pardon me,' said Hereward, 'if I doubt this. Whatever stories you may have picked up concerning me, not unexaggerated probably—since the Greeks do not keep the privilege of boasting so entirely to themselves but the Varangians have learned a little of it—you can have heard nothing of me which can authorize your using your present language, excepting in jest.'

'You mistake, my son,' said Agelastes; 'believe me not a person to mix in the idle talk respecting you, with your comrades at the ale-cup. Such as I am, I can strike on this broken image of Anubis'*—(here he touched a gigantic fragment of a statue by his side)—'and bid the spirit who long prompted the oracle descend, and once more reanimate the trembling mass. We that are initiated enjoy high privileges—we stamp upon those ruined vaults, and the echo which dwells there answers to our demand. Do not think that, although I crave thy friendship, I need therefore supplicate thee for information either respecting thyself or others.'

'Your words are wonderful,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'but by such promising words I have heard that many souls have been seduced from the path of heaven. My grandsire Kenelm was wont to say that the fair words of the heathen philosophy were more hurtful to the Christian faith than the menaces of the heathen tyrants.'

'I knew him,' said Agelastes. 'What avails it whether it was in the body or in the spirit?—He was converted from the faith of Woden by a noble monk, and died a priest at the shrine of Saint Augustin.'†

'True,' said Hereward; 'all this is certain—and I am the rather bound to remember his words now that he is dead and gone. When I hardly knew his meaning, he bade me beware of the doctrine which causeth to err, which is taught by false prophets who attest their doctrine by unreal miracles.'

'This,' said Agelastes, 'is mere superstition. Thy grandsire was a good and excellent man, but narrow-minded, like other priests; and, deceived by their example, he wished but to open a small wicket in the gate of truth, and admit the world only on that limited scale. Seest thou, Hereward, thy grandsire and most men of religion would fain narrow our intellect to the consideration of such parts of the immaterial world as are essential to our moral guidance here, and our final salvation hereafter; but it is not the less true, that man has liberty, provided he has wisdom and courage, to form intimacies with beings more powerful than himself, who can defy the bounds of space by which he is circumscribed, and overcome, by their metaphysical powers, difficulties which to the timid and unlearned may appear wild and impossible.'

'You talk of a folly,' answered Hereward, 'at which childhood gapes and manhood smiles.'

'On the contrary,' said the sage, 'I talk of a longing wish which every man feels at the bottom of his heart, to hold communication with beings more powerful than himself, and who are not naturally accessible to our organs. Believe me, Hereward, so ardent and universal

* [An Egyptian deity represented with the head of a jackal or a dog.]

† At Canterbury.

an aspiration had not existed in our bosoms, had there not also been means, if steadily and wisely sought, of attaining its accomplishment. I will appeal to thine own heart, and prove to thee, even by a single word, that what I say is truth. Thy thoughts are even now upon a being long absent or dead, and with the name of BERTHA a thousand emotions rush to thy heart, which in thy ignorance thou hadst esteemed furled up for ever, like spoils of the dead hung above a tombstone!—Thou startest and changest thy colour—I joy to see by these signs that the firmness and indomitable courage which men ascribe to thee have left the avenues of the heart as free as ever to kindly and to generous affections, while they have barred them against those of fear, uncertainty, and all the caitiff tribe of meaner sensations. I have proffered to esteem thee, and I have no hesitation in proving it. I will tell thee, if thou desirest to know it, the fate of that very Bertha, whose memory thou hast cherished in thy breast in spite of thee, amidst the toil of the day and the repose of the night, in the battle and in the truce, when sporting with thy companions in fields of exercise, or attempting to prosecute the study of Greek learning, in which if thou wouldst advance, I can teach it by a short road.'

While Agelastes thus spoke, the Varangian in some degree recovered his composure, and made answer, though his voice was somewhat tremulous—

'Who thou art, I know not—what thou wouldst with me, I cannot tell—by what means thou hast gathered intelligence of such consequence to me, and of so little to another, I have no conception—But this I know, that by intention or accident thou hast pronounced a name which agitates my heart to its deepest recesses; yet am I a Christian and Varangian, and neither to my God nor to my adopted prince will I willingly stagger in my faith. What is to be wrought by ideals or by false deities must be a treason to the real divinity. Nor is it less certain that thou hast let glance some arrows, though the rules of thy allegiance strictly forbid it, at the Emperor himself. Henceforward, therefore, I refuse to communicate with thee, be it for weal or woe. I am the Emperor's waged soldier, and although I affect not the nice precisions of respect and obedience, which are exacted in so many various cases, and by so many various rules, yet I am his defence, and my battle-axe is his body-guard.'

'No one doubts it,' said the philosopher. 'But art not thou also bound to a nearer dependence upon the great Acolyte, Achilles Tatius?'

'No. He is my general, according to the rules of our service,' answered the Varangian; 'to me he has always shown himself a kind and good-natured man, and, his dues of rank apart, I may say has deported himself as a friend rather than a commander. He is, however, my master's servant as well as I am; nor do I hold the difference of great amount, which the word of a man can give or take away at pleasure.'

'It is nobly spoken,' said Agelastes; 'and you yourself are surely entitled to stand erect before one whom you supersede in courage and in the art of war.'

'Pardon me,' returned the Briton, 'if I decline the attributed compliment, as what in no respect belongs tome. The Emperor chooses his own officers, in respect of their power of serving him as he desires to be served. In this it is likely I might fail; I have said already, I owe my Emperor my obedience, my duty, and my service, nor does it seem to me necessary to carry our explanation further.'

'Singular man!' said Agelastes; 'is there nothing that can move thee, but things that are foreign to thyself? The name of thy Emperor and thy commander are no spell upon thee, and even that of the object thou hast loved'——

Here the Varangian interrupted him.'

'I have thought,' he said, 'upon the words thou hast spoken—thou hast found the means to shake my heart-strings, but not to unsettle my principles. I will hold no converse with thee on a matter in which thou canst not have interest. —Necromancers, it is said, perform their spells by means of the epithets of the Holiest; no marvel, then, should they use the names of the purest of his creation to serve their unhallowed purposes. I will none of such truckling, disgraceful to the dead perhaps as to the living. Whatever has been thy purpose, old man—for think not thy strange words have passed unnoticed—be thou assured I bear that in my heart which defies alike the seduction of men and of fiends.'

With this the soldier turned and left the ruined temple, after a slight inclination of his head to the philosopher.

Agelastes, after the departure of the soldier, remained alone, apparently absorbed in meditation, until he was suddenly disturbed by the entrance into the ruins of Achilles Tatius. The leader of the Varangians spoke not until he had time to form some result from the philosopher's features. He then said, 'Thou remainest, sage Agelastes, confident in the purpose of which we have lately spoken together?'

'I do,' said Agelastes, with gravity and firmness.

'But,' replied Achilles Tatius, 'thou hast not gained to our side that proselyte, whose coolness and courage would serve us better in our hour of need than the service of a thousand cold-hearted slaves?'

'I have not succeeded,' answered the philosopher.

'And thou dost not blush to own it?' said the Imperial officer in reply. 'Thou, the wisest of those who yet pretend to Grecian wisdom, the most powerful of those who still assert the skill, by words, signs, names, periapts, and spells, to exceed the sphere to which thy faculties belong, hast been foiled in thy trade of persuasion, like an infant worsted in debate with its domestic tutor? Out upon thee, that thou canst not sustain in argument the character which thou wouldst so fain assume to thyself!'

'Peace!' said the Grecian. 'I have as yet gained nothing, it is true, over this obstinate and inflexible man; but, Achilles Tatius, neither have I lost. We both stand where yesterday we did, with this advantage on my side, that I have suggested to him such an object of interest as he shall never be able to expel from his mind, until

he hath had recourse to me to obtain further knowledge concerning it.—And now let this singular person remain for a time unmentioned; yet trust me, though flattery, avarice, and ambition may fail to gain him, a bait nevertheless remains, that shall make him as completely our own as any that is bound within our mystic and inviolable contract. Tell me, then, how go on the affairs of the empire? Does this tide of Latin warriors, so strangely set aflowing, still rush on to the banks of the Bosphorus? and does Alexius still entertain hopes to diminish and divide the strength of numbers, which he could in vain hope to defy?'

'Something further of intelligence has been gained, even within a very few hours,' answered Achilles Tatius. 'Bohemond came to the city with some six or eight light horse, and in a species of disguise. Considering how often he had been the Emperor's enemy, his project was a perilous one. But when is it that these Franks draw back on account of danger? The Emperor perceived at once that the Count was come to see what he might obtain, by presenting himself as the very first object of his liberality, and by offering his assistance as mediator with Godfrey of Bouillon and the other princes of the Crusade.'

'It is a species of policy,' answered the sage, 'for which he would receive full credit from the Emperor.'

Achilles Tatius proceeded:—'Count Bohemond was discovered to the Imperial court as if it were by mere accident, and he was welcomed with marks of favour and splendour which had never been even mentioned as being fit for any one of the Frankish race. There was no word of ancient enmity or of former wars, no mention of Bohemond as the ancient usurper of Antioch, and the encroacher upon the empire. But thanks to Heaven were returned on all sides, which had sent a faithful allyto the Imperial assistance at a moment of such imminent peril.'

'And what said Bohemond?' inquired the philosopher.

'Little or nothing,' said the captain of the Varangians, 'until, as I learned from the domestic slave Narses, a large sum of gold had been abandoned to him. Considerable districts were afterwards agreed to be ceded to him, and other advantages granted, on condition he should stand on this occasion the steady friend of the empire and its master. Such was the Emperor's munificence towards the greedy barbarian, that a chamber in the palace was, by chance, as it were, left exposed to his view, containing large quantities of manufactured silks, of jewellers' work, of gold and silver, and other articles of great value. When the rapacious Frank could not forbear some expressions of admiration, he was assured that the contents of the treasure-chamber were his own, provided he valued them as showing forth the warmth and sincerity of his Imperial ally towards his friends; and these precious articles were accordingly conveyed to the tent of the Norman leader. By such measures the Emperor must make himself master of Bohemond, both body and soul, for the Franks themselves say it is strange to see a man of undaunted bravery and towering ambition so infected, nevertheless, with avarice, which they term a mean and unnatural vice.'

'Bohemond,' said Agelastes, 'is then the Emperor's for life and death—always, that is, till the recollection of the royal munificence be effaced by a greater gratuity. Alexius, proud as he naturally is of his management with this important chieftain, will no doubt expect to prevail by his counsels on most of the other Crusaders, and even on Godfrey of Bouillon himself, to take an oath of submission and fidelity to the Emperor, which, were it not for the sacred nature of their warfare, the meanest gentleman among them would not submit to, were it to be lord of a province. There, then, we rest. A few days must determine what we have to do. An earlier discovery would be destruction.'

'We meet not then to-night?' said the Acolyte.

'No,' replied the sage; 'unless we are summoned to that foolish stage-play or recitation; and then we meet as playthings in the hand of a silly woman, the spoiled child of a weak-minded parent.'

Tatius then took his leave of the philosopher, and, as if fearful of being seen in each other's company, they left their solitary place of meeting by different routes. The Varangian Hereward received, shortly after, a summons from his superior, who acquainted him that he should not, as formerly intimated, require his attendance that evening.

Achilles then paused—and added,—'Thou hast something on thy lips thou wouldst say to me, which nevertheless hesitates to break forth.'

'It is only this,' answered the soldier:—'I have had an interview with the man called Agelastes, and he seems something so different from what he appeared when we last spoke to him, that I cannot forbear mentioning to you what I have seen. He is not an insignificant trifler, whose object it is to raise a laugh at his own expense, or that of any other. He is a deep-thinking and far-reaching man, who, for some reason or other, is desirous of forming friends, and drawing a party to himself. Your own wisdom will teach you to beware of him.'

'Thou art an honest fellow, my poor Hereward,' said Achilles Tatius, with an affectation of good-natured contempt. 'Such men as Agelastes do often frame their severest jests in the shape of formal gravity—they will pretend to possess the most unbounded power over elements and elemental spirits—they will make themselves masters of the names and anecdotes best known to those whom they make their sport; and any one who shall listen to them shall, in the words of the divine Homer, only expose himself to a flood of inextinguishable laughter. I have often known him select one of the rawest and most ignorant persons in presence, and to him, for the amusement of the rest, he has pretended to cause the absent to appear, the distant to draw near, and the dead themselves to burst the cerements of the grave. Take care, Hereward, that his arts make not a stain on the credit of one of my bravest Varangians.'

'There is no danger,' answered Hereward. 'I shall not be fond of being often with this man. If he jests upon one subject which he hath

mentioned to me, I shall be but too likely to teach him seriousness after a rough manner. And if he is serious in his pretensions in such mystical matters, we should, according to the faith of my grandfather Kenelm, do insult to the deceased, whose name is taken in the mouth of a soothsayer, or impious enchanter. I will not, therefore, again go near this Agelastes, be he wizard or be he impostor.'

'You apprehend me not,' said the Acolyte hastily; 'you mistake my meaning. He is a man from whom, if he pleases to converse with such as you, you may derive much knowledge; keeping out of the reach of those pretended secret arts, which he will only use to turn thee into ridicule.' With these words, which he himself would perhaps have felt it difficult to reconcile, the leader and his follower parted.

CHAPTER IX.

Between the foaming jaws of the white torrent
The skilful artist draws a sudden mound;
By level long he subdivides their strength,
Stealing the waters from their rocky bed,
First to diminish what he means to conquer;
Then for the residue he forms a road,
Easy to keep, and painful to desert,
And guiding to the end the planner aim'd at.
THE ENGINEER.

It would have been easy for Alexius, by a course of avowed suspicion, or any false step in the manner of receiving this tumultuary invasion of the European nations, to have blown into a flame the numerous but smothered grievances under which they laboured; and a similar catastrophe would not have been less certain, had he at once abandoned all thoughts of resistance, and placed his hope of safety in surrendering to the multitudes of the West whatsoever they accounted worth taking. The Emperor chose a middle course; and unquestionably, in the weakness of the Greek Empire, it was the only one which would have given him at once safety, and a great degree of consequence in the eyes of the Frank invaders and those of his own subjects. The means with which he acted were of various kinds, and, rather from policy than inclination, were often stained with falsehood or meanness; therefore it follows that the measures of the emperor resembled those of the snake, who twines himself through the grass, with the purpose of stinging insidiously those whom he fears to approach with the step of the bold and generous lion. We are not, however, writing the history of the Crusades, and what we have already said of the emperor's precautions on the first appearance of Godfrey of Bouillon and his associates, may suffice for the elucidation of our story.

About four weeks had now passed over, marked by quarrels and reconcilements between the Crusaders and the Grecians of the empire. The former were, as Alexius's policy dictated, occasionally and individually received with extreme honour, and their leaders loaded with respect and favour; while, from time to time, such bodies of them as sought distant or circuitous routes to the capital, were intercepted and cut to pieces by light-armed troops, who easily passed upon their ignorant opponents for Turks, Scythians, or other infidels, and sometimes were actually such, but in the service of the Grecian monarch. Often, too, it happened that, while the more powerful chiefs of the Crusade were feasted by the emperor and his ministers with the richest delicacies, and their thirst slaked with iced wines, their followers were left at a distance, where, intentionally supplied with adulterated flour, tainted provisions, and bad water, they contracted diseases, and died in great numbers, without having once seen a foot of the Holy Land, for the recovery of which they had abandoned their peace, their competence, and their native country. These aggressions did not pass without complaint. Many of the crusading chiefs impugned the fidelity of their allies, exposed the losses sustained by their armies as evils voluntarily inflicted on them by the Greeks, and on more than one occasion the two nations stood opposed to each other on such terms that a general war seemed to be inevitable.

Alexius, however, though obliged to have recourse to every finesse, still kept his ground, and made peace with the most powerful chiefs, under one pretence or other. The actual losses of the Crusaders by the sword he imputed to their own aggressions — their misguidance to accident and to wilfulness—the effects produced on them by the adulterated provisions, to the vehemence of their own appetite for raw fruits and unripened wines. In short, there was no disaster of any kind whatsoever which could possibly befall the unhappy pilgrims, but the emperor stood prepared to prove that it was the natural consequence of their own violence, wilfulness of conduct, or hostile precipitancy.

The chiefs, who were not ignorant of their strength, would not, it was likely, have tamely suffered injuries from a power so inferior to their own, were it not that they had formed extravagant ideas of the wealth of the Eastern Empire, which Alexius seemed willing to share with them, with an excess of bounty as new to the leaders as the rich productions of the East were tempting to their followers.

The French nobles would perhaps have been the most difficult to be brought into order when differences arose; but an accident, which the emperor might have termed providential, reduced the high-spirited Count of Vermandois to the situation of a suppliant, when he expected to hold that of a dictator. A fierce tempest surprised his fleet after he set sail from Italy, and he was finally driven on the coast of Greece. Many ships were destroyed, and those troops who got ashore were so much distressed, that they were obliged to surrender themselves to the lieutenants of Alexius. So that the Count of Vermandois, so haughty in his bearing when he first embarked, was sent to the court of Constantinople, not as a prince, but as a prisoner. In this case the emperor instantly set the soldiers at liberty, and loaded them with presents.*

Grateful, therefore, for attentions in which

* See Mills' *History of the Crusades*, vol. i. p. 96.

Alexius was unremitting, Count Hugh was by gratitude, as well as interest, inclined to join the opinion of those who, for other reasons, desired the subsistence of peace betwixt the Crusaders and the empire of Greece. A better principle determined the celebrated Godfrey, Raymond of Thoulouse, and some others, in whom devotion was something more than a mere burst of fanaticism. These princes considered with what scandal their whole journey must be stained, if the first of their exploits should be a war upon the Grecian Empire, which might justly be called the barrier of Christendom. If it was weak, and at the same time rich—if at the same time it invited rapine, and was unable to protect itself against it—it was the more their interest and duty, as Christian soldiers, to protect a Christian State, whose existence was of so much consequence to the common cause, even when it could not defend itself. It was the wish of these frank-hearted men to receive the emperor's professions of friendship with such sincere returns of amity—to return his kindness with so much usury, as to convince him that their purpose towards him was in every respect fair and honourable, and that it would be his interest to abstain from every injurious treatment which might induce or compel them to alter their measures towards him.

It was with this accommodating spirit towards Alexius, which for many different and complicated reasons, had now animated most of the Crusaders, that the chiefs consented to a measure which, in other circumstances, they would probably have refused, as undue to the Greeks, and dishonourable to themselves. This was the famous resolution that, before crossing the Bosphorus to go in quest of that Palestine which they had vowed to regain, each chief of Crusaders would acknowledge individually the Grecian Emperor, originally lord paramount of all these regions, as their liege lord and suzerain.

The Emperor Alexius, with trembling joy, beheld the Crusaders approach a conclusion to which he had hoped to bribe them rather by interested means than by reasoning, although much might be said why provinces reconquered from the Turks or Saracens should, if recovered from the infidel, become again a part of the Grecian Empire, from which they had been rent without any pretence save that of violence.

Though fearful, and almost despairing of being able to manage the rude and discordant army of haughty chiefs, who were wholly independent of each other, Alexius failed not, with eagerness and dexterity, to seize upon the admission of Godfrey and his compeers, that the emperor was entitled to the allegiance of all who should war on Palestine, and natural lord paramount of all the conquests which should be made in the course of the expedition. He was resolved to make this ceremony so public, and to interest men's minds in it by such a display of the Imperial pomp and munificence, that it should not either pass unknown, or be readily forgotten.

An extensive terrace, one of the numerous spaces which extend along the coast of the Propontis,* was chosen for the site of the magnificent ceremony. Here was placed an elevated and august throne, calculated for the use of the emperor alone. On this occasion, by suffering no other seats within view of the pageant, the Greeks endeavoured to secure a point of ceremony peculiarly dear to their vanity—namely, that none of that presence, save the emperor himself, should be seated. Around the throne of Alexius Comnenus were placed in order but standing, the various dignitaries of his splendid court, in their different ranks, from the Protosebastos and the Cæsar, to the Patriarch, splendid in his ecclesiastical robes, and to Agelastes, who, in his simple habit, gave also the necessary attendance. Behind and around the splendid display of the emperor's court were drawn many dark circles of the exiled Anglo-Saxons. These, by their own desire, were not, on that memorable day, accoutred in the silver corselets which were the fashion of an idle court, but sheathed in mail and plate. They desired, they said, to be known as warriors to warriors. This was the more readily granted, as there was no knowing what trifle might infringe a truce between parties so inflammable as were now assembled.

Beyond the Varangians, in much greater numbers, were drawn up the bands of Grecians, or Romans, then known by the title of Immortals, which had been borrowed by the Romans originally from the empire of Persia. The stately forms, lofty crests, and splendid apparel of these Guards would have given the foreign princes present a higher idea of their military prowess, had there not occurred in their ranks a frequent indication of loquacity and of motion, forming a strong contrast to the steady composure and death-like silence with which the well-trained Varangians stood in the parade, like statues made of iron.

The reader must then conceive this throne in all the pomp of Oriental greatness, surrounded by the foreign and Roman troops of the empire, and closed on the rear by clouds of light horse, who shifted their places repeatedly, so as to convey an idea of their multitude, without affording the exact means of estimating it. Through the dust which they raised by these evolutions might be seen banners and standards, among which could be discovered by glances the celebrated LABARUM,† the pledge of conquest to the Imperial banners, but whose sacred efficacy had somewhat failed of late days. The rude soldiers of the West, who viewed the Grecian army, maintained that the standards which were exhibited in front of their line were at least sufficient for the array of ten times the number of soldiers.

Far on the right, the appearance of a very large body of European cavalry, drawn up on the sea-shore, intimated the presence of the Crusaders. So great was the desire to follow the example of the chief princes, dukes, and counts, in making the proposed fealty, that the number of independent knights and nobles who were to perform this service seemed very great when collected together for that purpose; for every Crusader who possessed a tower, and led six

* [The ancient name of the Sea of Marmora.]

† Note C. Labarum.

lances, would have thought himself abridged of his dignity if he had not been called to acknowledge the Grecian emperor, and hold the lands he should conquer of his throne, as well as Godfrey of Bouillon, or Hugh the Great, Count of Vermandois. And yet, with strange inconsistency, though they pressed to fulfil the homage, as that which was paid by greater persons than themselves, they seemed, at the very same time, desirous to find some mode of intimating that the homage which they rendered they felt as an idle degradation, and in fact held the whole show as a mere piece of mockery.

The order of the procession had been thus settled:—The Crusaders, or, as the Grecians called them, the *Counts*,—that being the most common title among them,—were to advance from the left of their body, and, passing the emperor one by one, were apprised that, in passing, each was to render to him, in as few words as possible, the homage which had been previously agreed on. Godfrey of Bouillon, his brother Baldwin, Bohemond of Antioch, and several other Crusaders of eminence, were the first to perform the ceremony, alighting when their own part was performed, and remaining in attendance by the emperor's chair, to prevent, by the awe of their presence, any of their numerous associates from being guilty of petulance or presumption during the solemnity. Other Crusaders of less degree retained their station near the emperor, when they had once gained it, out of mere curiosity, or to show that they were as much at liberty to do so as the greater commanders who assumed that privilege.

Thus two great bodies of troops, Grecian and European, paused at some distance from each other on the banks of the Bosphorus canal, differing in language, arms, and appearance. The small troops of horse which from time to time issued forth from these bodies, resembled the flashes of lightning passing from one thundercloud to another, which communicate to each other by such emissaries their overcharged contents. After some halt on the margin of the Bosphorus, the Franks who had performed homage straggled irregularly forward to a quay on the shore, where innumerable galleys and smaller vessels, provided for the purpose, lay with sails and oars prepared to waft the warlike pilgrims across the passage, and place them on that Asia which they longed so passionately to visit, and from which but few of them were likely to return. The gay appearance of the vessels which were to receive them, the readiness with which they were supplied with refreshments, the narrowness of the strait they had to cross, the near approach of that active service which they had vowed and longed to discharge, put the warriors into gay spirits, and songs and music bore chorus to the departing oars.

While such was the temper of the Crusaders, the Grecian emperor did his best through the whole ceremonial to impress on the armed multitude the highest ideas of his own grandeur, and the importance of the occasion which had brought them together. This was readily admitted by the higher chiefs; some because their vanity had been propitiated,—some because their avarice had been gratified,—some because their ambition had been inflamed,—and a few, a very few, because to remain friends with Alexius was the most probable means of advancing the purposes of their expedition. Accordingly, the great lords, from these various motives, practised a humility which perhaps they were far from feeling, and carefully abstained from all which might seem like irreverence at the solemn festival of the Grecians. But there were very many of a different temper.

Of the great number of counts, lords, and knights, under whose variety of banners the Crusaders were led to the walls of Constantinople, many were too insignificant to be bribed to this distasteful measure of homage; and these, though they felt it dangerous to oppose resistance, yet mixed their submission with taunts, ridicule, and such contraventions of decorum as plainly intimated that they entertained resentment and scorn at the step they were about to take, and esteemed it as proclaiming themselves vassals to a prince heretic in his faith, limited in the exercise of his boasted power, their enemy when he dared to show himself such, and the friend of those only among their number who were able to compel him to be so; and who, though to them an obsequious ally, was to the others, when occasion offered, an insidious and murderous enemy.

The nobles of Frankish origin and descent were chiefly remarkable for their presumptuous contempt of every other nation engaged in the Crusade, as well as for their dauntless bravery, and for the scorn with which they regarded the power and authority of the Greek Empire. It was a common saying among them, that if the skies should fall, the French Crusaders alone were able to hold them up with their lances. The same bold and arrogant disposition showed itself in occasional quarrels with their unwilling hosts, in which the Greeks, notwithstanding all their art, were often worsted; so that Alexius was determined, at all events, to get rid of these intractable and fiery allies, by ferrying them over the Bosphorus with all manner of diligence. To do this with safety, he availed himself of the presence of the Count of Vermandois, Godfrey of Bouillon, and other chiefs of great influence, to keep in order the lesser Frankish knights, who were so numerous and unruly.*

Struggling with his feelings of offended pride, tempered by a prudent degree of apprehension, the emperor endeavoured to receive with complacence a homage tendered in mockery. An incident shortly took place of a character highly descriptive of the nations brought together in so extraordinary a manner, and with such different feelings and sentiments. Several bands of French had passed, in a sort of procession, the throne of the emperor, and rendered, with some appearance of gravity, the usual homage. On this occasion they bent their knees to Alexius, placed their hands within his, and in that posture paid the ceremonies of feudal fealty. But when it came to the turn of Bohemond of Antioch, already mentioned, to render this fealty, the emperor, desirous to show every

* See Mills, vol. i. chap. iii.

species of honour to this wily person, his former enemy, and now apparently his ally, advanced two or three paces towards the sea-side, where the boats lay as if in readiness for his use.

The distance to which the emperor moved was very small, and it was assumed as a piece of deference to Bohemond; but it became the means of exposing Alexius himself to a cutting affront, which his guards and subjects felt deeply, as an intentional humiliation. A half-score of horsemen, attendants of the Frankish count who was next to perform the homage, with their lord at their head, set off at full gallop from the right flank of the French squadrons, and, arriving before the throne, which was yet empty, they at once halted. The rider at the head of the band was a strong Herculean figure, with a decided and stern countenance, though extremely handsome, looking out from thick black curls. His head was surmounted with a barret cap, while his hands, limbs, and feet were covered with garments of chamois leather, over which he in general wore the ponderous and complete armour of his country. This, however, he had laid aside for personal convenience, though in doing so he evinced a total neglect of the ceremonial which marked so important a meeting. He waited not a moment for the emperor's return, nor regarded the impropriety of obliging Alexius to hurry his steps back to his throne, but sprang from his gigantic horse, and threw the reins loose, which were instantly seized by one of the attendant pages. Without a moment's hesitation the Frank seated himself in the vacant throne of the emperor, and, extending his half-armed and robust figure on the golden cushions which were destined for Alexius, he indolently began to caress a large wolf-hound which had followed him, and which, feeling itself as much at ease as its master, reposed its grim form on the carpets of silk and gold damask, which tapestried the Imperial footstool. The very hound stretched itself with a bold, ferocious insolence, and seemed to regard no one with respect, save the stern knight whom it called master.

The emperor, turning back from the short space which, as a special mark of favour, he had accompanied Bohemond, beheld with astonishment his seat occupied by this insolent Frank. The bands of the half-savage Varangians who were stationed around would not have hesitated an instant in avenging the insult, by prostrating the violator of their master's throne even in this act of his contempt, had they not been restrained by Achilles Tatius and other officers, who were uncertain what the emperor would do, and somewhat timorous of taking a resolution for themselves.

Meanwhile the unceremonious knight spoke aloud, in a speech which, though provincial, might be understood by all to whom the French language was known, while even those who understood it not gathered its interpretation from his tone and manner. 'What churl is this,' he said, 'who has remained sitting stationary like a block of wood, or the fragment of a rock, when so many noble knights, the flower of chivalry and muster of gallantry, stand uncovered around, among the thrice-conquered Varangians?'

A deep, clear accent replied, as if from the bottom of the earth, so like it was to the accents of some being from the other world,—'If the Normans desire battle of the Varangians, they will meet them in the lists man to man, without the poor boast of insulting the Emperor of Greece, who is well known to fight only by the battle-axes of his Guard.'

The astonishment was so great when this answer was heard, as to affect even the knight, whose insult upon the emperor had occasioned it; and amid the efforts of Achilles to retain his soldiers within the bounds of subordination and silence, a loud murmur seemed to intimate that they would not long remain so. Bohemond returned through the press with a celerity which did not so well suit the dignity of Alexius, and, catching the Crusader by the arm, he, something between fair means and a gentle degree of force, obliged him to leave the chair of the emperor, in which he had placed himself so boldly.

'How is it,' said Bohemond, 'noble Count of Paris? Is there one of this great assembly who can see with patience that your name, so widely renowned for valour, is now to be quoted in an idle brawl with hirelings, whose utmost boast it is to bear a mercenary battle-axe in the ranks of the Emperor's Guards? For shame—for shame—do not, for the discredit of Norman chivalry, let it be so!'

'I know not,' said the Crusader, rising reluctantly—'I am not nice in choosing the degree of my adversary, when he bears himself like one who is willing and forward in battle. I am good-natured, I tell thee, Count Bohemond; and Turk or Tartar, or wandering Anglo-Saxon, who only escapes from the chain of the Normans to become the slave of the Greek, is equally welcome to whet his blade clean against my armour, if he desires to achieve such an honourable office.'

The emperor had heard what passed—had heard it with indignation, mixed with fear; for he imagined the whole scheme of his policy was about to be overturned at once by a premeditated plan of personal affront, and probably an assault upon his person. He was about to call to arms, when, casting his eyes on the right flank of the Crusaders, he saw that all remained quiet after the Frank baron had transferred himself from thence. He therefore instantly resolved to let the insult pass, as one of the rough pleasantries of the Franks, since the advance of more troops did not give any symptom of an actual onset.

Resolving on his line of conduct with the quickness of thought, he glided back to his canopy, and stood beside his throne, of which, however, he chose not instantly to take possession, lest he should give the insolent stranger some ground for renewing and persisting in a competition for it.

'What bold Vavasour† is this,' said he to Count Baldwin, 'whom, as is apparent from his dignity, I ought to have received seated upon my throne, and who thinks proper thus to vindicate his rank?'

* [A baron of intermediate feudal rank, acknowledging some other noble as his superior, and being himself the superior of others.]

'He is reckoned one of the bravest men in our host,' answered Baldwin, 'though the brave are as numerous there as the sands of the sea. He will himself tell you his name and rank.'

Alexius looked at the Vavasour. He saw nothing in his large, well-formed features, lighted by a wild touch of enthusiasm which spoke in his quick eye, that intimated premeditated insult, and was induced to suppose that what had occurred, so contrary to the form and ceremonial of the Grecian court, was neither an intentional affront nor designed as the means of introducing a quarrel. He therefore spoke with comparative ease, when he addessed the stranger thus:—'We know not by what dignified name to salute you; but we are aware, from Count Baldwin's information, that we are honoured in having in our presence one of the bravest knights whom a sense of the wrongs done to the Holy Land has brought thus far on his way to Palestine, to free it from its bondage.'

'If you mean to ask my name,' answered the European knight, 'any one of these pilgrims can readily satisfy you, and more gracefully than I can myself; since we use to say in our country, that many a fierce quarrel is prevented from being fought out by an untimely disclosure of names, when men, who might have fought with the fear of God before their eyes, must, when their names are manifested, recognise each other as spiritual allies, by baptism, gossipred, or some such irresistible bond of friendship; whereas, had they fought first and told their names afterwards, they could have had some assurance of each other's valour, and have been able to view their relationship as an honour to both.'

'Still,' said the emperor, 'methinks I would know if you, who, in this extraordinary press of knights, seem to assert a precedence to yourself, claim the dignity due to a king or prince?'

'How speak you that?' said the Frank, with a brow somewhat overclouded; 'do you feel that I have not left you unjostled by my advance to these squadrons of yours?'

Alexius hastened to answer that he felt no particular desire to connect the count with an affront or offence; observing, that in the extreme necessity of the empire, it was no time for him, who was at the helm, to engage in idle or unnecessary quarrels.

The Frankish knight heard him, and answered dryly—'Since such are your sentiments, I wonder that you have ever resided long enough within the hearing of the French language to learn to speak it as you do. I would have thought some of the sentiments of the chivalry of the nation, since you are neither a monk nor a woman, would, at the same time with the words of the dialect, have found their way into your heart.'

'Hush, Sir Count,' said Bohemond, who remained by the emperor to avert the threatening quarrel. 'It is surely requisite to answer the emperor with civility; and those who are impatient for warfare will have infidels enough to wage it with. He only demanded your name and lineage, which you of all men can have least objection to disclose.'

'I know not if it will interest this prince, or Emperor as you term him,' answered the Frank count; 'but all the account I can give of myself is this:—In the midst of one of the vast forests which occupy the centre of France, my native country, there stands a chapel, sunk so low into the ground, that it seems as if it were become decrepit by its own great age. The image of the Holy Virgin who presides over its altar is called by all men Our Lady of the Broken Lances, and is accounted through the whole kingdom the most celebrated for military adventures. Four beaten roads, each leading from an opposite point in the compass, meet before the principal door of the chapel; and ever and anon, as a good knight arrives at this place, he passes in to the performance of his devotions in the chapel, having first sounded his horn three times, till ash and oak tree quiver and ring. Having then kneeled down to his devotions, he seldom arises from the mass of her of the Broken Lances, but there is attending on his leisure some adventurous knight ready to satisfy the new comer's desire of battle. This station have I held for a month and more against all comers, and all gave me fair thanks for the knightly manner of quitting myself towards them, except one, who had the evil hap to fall from his horse, and did break his neck; and another, who was struck through the body, so that the lance came out behind his back about a cloth-yard, all dripping with blood. Allowing for such accidents, which cannot easily be avoided, my opponents parted with me with fair acknowledgment of the grace I had done them.'

'I conceive, Sir Knight,' said the emperor, 'that a form like yours, animated by the courage you display, is likely to find few equals even among your adventurous countrymen; far less among men who are taught that to cast away their lives in a senseless quarrel among themselves, is to throw away, like a boy, the gift of Providence.'

'You are welcome to your opinion,' said the Frank, somewhat contemptuously; 'yet I assure you, if you doubt that our gallant strife was unmixed with sullenness and anger, and that we hunt not the hart or the boar with merrier hearts in the evening, than we discharge our task of chivalry by the morn had arisen, before the portal of the old chapel, you do us foul injustice.'

'With the Turks you will not enjoy this amiable exchange of courtesies,' answered Alexius. 'Wherefore I would advise you neither to stray far into the van nor into the rear, but to abide by the standard where the best infidels make their efforts, and the best knights are required to repel them.'

'By Our Lady of the Broken Lances,' said the Crusader, 'I would not that the Turks were more courteous than they are Christian, and am well pleased that unbeliever and heathen hound are a proper description for the best of them, as being traitor alike to their God and to the laws of chivalry; and devoutly do I trust that I shall meet with them in the front rank of our army, beside our standard, or elsewhere, and have an open field to do my devoir against them, both as the enemies of Our Lady and the holy saints, and as, by their evil customs, more expressly my own. Meanwhile you have time to seat yourself and receive my homage, and I will be bound to you for despatching this foolish cere-

mony with as little waste and delay of time as the occasion will permit.'

The emperor hastily seated himself, and received into his the sinewy hands of the Crusader, who made the acknowledgment of his homage, and was then guided off by Count Baldwin, who walked with the stranger to the ships, and then, apparently well pleased at seeing him in the course of going on board, returned back to the side of the emperor.

'What is the name,' said the emperor, 'of that singular and assuming man?'

'It is Robert, Count of Paris,' answered Baldwin, 'accounted one of the bravest peers who stand around the throne of France.'

After a moment's recollection, Alexius Comnenus issued orders that the ceremonial of the day should be discontinued, afraid, perhaps, lest the rough and careless humour of the strangers should produce some new quarrel. The Crusaders were led, nothing loth, back to palaces in which they had already been hospitably received, and readily resumed the interrupted feast, from which they had been called to pay their homage. The trumpets of the various leaders blew the recall of the few troops of an ordinary character who were attendant, together with the host of knights and leaders, who, pleased with the indulgences provided for them, and obscurely foreseeing that the passage of the Bosphorus would be the commencement of their actual suffering, rejoiced in being called to the hither side.

It was not probably intended; but the hero, as he might be styled, of the tumultuous day, Count Robert of Paris, who was already on his road to embarkation on the strait, was disturbed in his purpose by the sound of recall which was echoed around; nor could Bohemond, Godfrey, or any who took upon him to explain the signal, alter his resolution of returning to Constantinople. He laughed to scorn the threatened displeasure of the emperor, and seemed to think there would be a peculiar pleasure in braving Alexius at his own board, or, at least, that nothing could be more indifferent than whether he gave offence or not.

To Godfrey of Bouillon, to whom he showed some respect, he was still far from paying deference; and that sagacious prince, having used every argument which might shake his purpose of returning to the Imperial city, to the very point of making it a quarrel with him in person, at length abandoned him to his own discretion, and pointed him out to the Count of Thoulouse, as he passed, as a wild knight-errant, incapable of being influenced by anything save his own wayward fancy. 'He brings not five hundred men to the Crusade,' said Godfrey; 'and I dare be sworn that even in this, the very outset of the undertaking, he knows not where these five hundred men are, and how their wants are provided for. There is an eternal trumpet in his ear sounding to assault, nor has he room or time to hear a milder or more rational signal. See how he strolls along yonder, the very emblem of an idle schoolboy, broke out of the school-bounds upon a holiday, half animated by curiosity and half by love of mischief.'

'And,' said Raymond, Count of Thoulouse, 'with resolution sufficient to support the desperate purpose of the whole army of devoted Crusaders. And yet so passionate a Rodomont* is Count Robert, that he would rather risk the success of the whole expedition than omit an opportunity of meeting a worthy antagonist *en champ-clos*, or lose, as he terms it, a chance of worshipping Our Lady of the Broken Lances.† Who are yon with whom he has now met, and who are apparently walking, or rather strolling, in the same way with him, back to Constantinople?'

'An armed knight, brilliantly equipped—yet of something less than knightly stature,' answered Godfrey. 'It is, I suppose, the celebrated lady who won Robert's heart in the lists of battle, by bravery and valour equal to his own; and the pilgrim form in the long vestments may be their daughter or niece.'

'A singular spectacle, worthy knight,' said the Count of Thoulouse, 'do our days present to us, to which we have had nothing similar since Gaita,‡ wife of Robert Guiscard, first took upon her to distinguish herself by manly deeds of emprise, and rival her husband, as well in the front of battle as at the dancing-room or banquet.'

'Such is the custom of this pair, most noble knight,' answered another Crusader, who had joined them; 'and Heaven pity the poor man who has no power to keep domestic peace by an appeal to the stronger hand!'

'Well,' replied Raymond, 'if it be rather a mortifying reflection that the lady of our love is far past the bloom of youth, it is a consolation that she is too old-fashioned to beat us, when we return back with no more of youth or manhood than a long Crusade has left. But come, follow on the road to Constantinople, and in the rear of this most doughty knight.'

CHAPTER X.

> Those were wild times—the antipodes of ours:
> Ladies were there, who oftener saw themselves
> In the broad lustre of a foeman's shield
> Than in a mirror, and who rather sought
> To match themselves in battle, than in dalliance
> To meet a lover's onset.—But though Nature
> Was outraged thus, she was not overcome.
>
> FEUDAL TIMES.

BRENHILDA, Countess of Paris, was one of those stalwart dames who willingly hazarded themselves in the front of battle, which, during the First Crusade, was as common as it was possible for a very unnatural custom to be, and, in fact, gave the real instances of the Marphisas and Bradamantes,§ whom the writers of romance delighted to paint, assigning them sometimes the advantage of invulnerable armour, or a spear whose thrust did not admit of being resisted, in order to soften the improbability of the weaker sex being frequently victorious over the male part of the creation.

* [A bashful but brave hero in the Saracen army, who figures in the Italian epic poems *Orlando Inamorato* by Boiardo, and *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto.]

† See Note E. Lalain. ‡ Note D. Gaita, the Amazon.

§ [Both these Amazons figure in the *Orlando Furioso*.]

But the spell of Brenhilda was of a more simple nature, and rested chiefly in her great beauty.

From a girl she despised the pursuits of her sex; and they who ventured to become suitors for the hand of the young Lady of Aspramonte, to which warlike fief she had succeeded, and which perhaps encouraged her in her fancy, received for answer that they must first merit it by their good behaviour in the lists. The father of Brenhilda was dead; her mother was of a gentle temper, and easily kept under management by the young lady herself.

Brenhilda's numerous suitors readily agreed to terms which were too much according to the manners of the age to be disputed. A tournament was held at the Castle of Aspramonte, in which one-half of the gallant assembly rolled headlong before their successful rivals, and withdrew from the lists mortified and disappointed. The successful party among the suitors were expected to be summoned to joust among themselves. But they were surprised at being made acquainted with the lady's further will. She aspired to wear armour herself, to wield a lance, and back a steed, and prayed the knights that they would permit a lady, whom they professed to honour so highly, to mingle in their games of chivalry. The young knights courteously received their young mistress in the lists, and smiled at the idea of her holding them triumphantly against so many gallant champions of the other sex. But the vassals and old servants of the count, her father, smiled to each other, and intimated a different result than the gallants anticipated. The knights who encountered the fair Brenhilda were one by one stretched on the sand; nor was it to be denied that the situation of tilting with one of the handsomest women of the time was an extremely embarrassing one. Each youth was bent to withhold his charge in full volley, to cause his steed to swerve at the full shock, or in some other way to flinch from doing the utmost which was necessary to gain the victory, lest, in so gaining it, he might cause irreparable injury to the beautiful opponent he tilted with. But the Lady of Aspramonte was not one who could be conquered by less than the exertion of the whole strength and talents of the victor. The defeated suitors departed from the lists the more mortified at their discomfiture, because Robert of Paris arrived at sunset, and, understanding what was going forward, sent his name to the barriers, as that of a knight who would willingly forego the reward of the tournament, in case he had the fortune to gain it, declaring that neither lands nor ladies' charms were what he came thither to seek. Brenhilda, piqued and mortified, chose a new lance, mounted her best steed, and advanced into the lists as one determined to avenge upon the new assailant's brow the slight of her charms which he seemed to express. But whether her displeasure had somewhat interfered with her usual skill, or whether she had, like others of her sex, felt a partiality towards one whose heart was not particularly set upon gaining hers —or whether, as is often said on such occasions, her fated hour was come, so it was that Count Robert tilted with his usual address and good fortune. Brenhilda of Aspramonte was unhorsed and unhelmed, and stretched on the earth, and the beautiful face, which faded from very red to deadly pale before the eyes of the victor, produced its natural effect in raising the value of his conquest. He would, in conformity with his resolution, have left the castle after having mortified the vanity of the lady; but her mother opportunely interposed; and when she had satisfied herself that no serious injury had been sustained by the young heiress, she returned her thanks to the stranger knight who had taught her daughter a lesson, which, she trusted, she would not easily forget. Thus tempted to do what he secretly wished, Count Robert gave ear to those sentiments which naturally whispered to him to be in no hurry to withdraw.

He was of the blood of Charlemagne, and, what was still of more consequence in the young lady's eyes, one of the most renowned of Norman knights in that jousting day. After a residence of ten days in the Castle of Aspramonte, the bride and bridegroom set out, for such was Count Robert's will, with a competent train, to Our Lady of the Broken Lances, where it pleased him to be wedded. Two knights, who were waiting to do battle, as was the custom of the place, were rather disappointed at the nature of the cavalcade, which seemed to interrupt their purpose. But greatly were they surprised when they received a cartel from the betrothed couple, offering to substitute their own persons in the room of other antagonists, and congratulating themselves in commencing their married life in a manner so consistent with that which they had hitherto led. They were victorious as usual; and the only persons having occasion to rue the complaisance of the count and his bride were the two strangers, one of whom broke an arm in the rencontre, and the other dislocated a collar-bone.

Count Robert's course of knight-errantry did not seem to be in the least intermitted by his marriage; on the contrary, when he was called upon to support his renown, his wife was often known also in military exploits, nor was she inferior to him in thirst after fame. They both assumed the Cross at the same time, that being then the predominating folly in Europe.

The Countess Brenhilda was now above six-and-twenty years old, with as much beauty as can well fall to the share of an Amazon. A figure of the largest feminine size was surmounted by a noble countenance, to which even repeated warlike toils had not given more than a sunny hue, relieved by the dazzling whiteness of such parts of her face as were not usually displayed.

As Alexius gave orders that his retinue should return to Constantinople, he spoke in private to the Follower, Achilles Tatius. The satrap answered with a submissive bend of the head, and separated with a few attendants from the main body of the emperor's train. The principal road to the city was, of course, filled with the troops and with the numerous crowds of spectators, all of whom were inconvenienced in some degree by the dust and heat of the weather.

Count Robert of Paris had embarked his horses on board of ship, and all his retinue, except an old squire or valet of his own, and an attendant of his wife. He felt himself more incommoded

in this crowd than he desired, especially as his wife shared it with him, and began to look among the scattered trees which fringed the shores, down almost to the tide-mark, to see if he could discern any by-path which might carry them more circuitously but more pleasantly to the city, and afford them, at the same time, what was their principal object in the East, strange sights, or adventures of chivalry. A broad and beaten path seemed to promise them all the enjoyment which shade could give in a warm climate. The ground through which it wound its way was beautifully broken by the appearance of temples, churches, and kiosks, and here and there a fountain distributed its silver produce, like a benevolent individual, who, self-denying to himself, is liberal to all others who are in necessity. The distant sound of the martial music still regaled their way; and, at the same time, as it detained the populace on the high-road, prevented the strangers from becoming incommoded with fellow-travellers.

Rejoicing in the abated heat of the day—wondering, at the same time, at the various kinds of architecture, the strange features of the landscape, or accidental touches of manners, exhibited by those who met or passed them upon their journey, they strolled easily onwards. One figure particularly caught the attention of the Countess Brenhilda. This was an old man of great stature, engaged, apparently, so deeply with the roll of parchment which he held in his hand, that he paid no attention to the objects which were passing around him. Deep thought appeared to reign on his brow, and his eye was of that piercing kind which seems designed to search and winnow the frivolous from the edifying part of human discussion, and limit its inquiry to the last. Raising his eyes slowly from the parchment on which he had been gazing, the look of Agelastes—for it was the sage himself—encountered those of Count Robert and his lady, and, addressing them with the kindly epithet of 'my children,' he asked if they had missed their road, or whether there was anything in which he could do them any pleasure.

'We are strangers, father,' was the answer, 'from a distant country, and belonging to the army which has passed hither upon pilgrimage; one object brings us here in common, we hope, with all that host. We desire to pay our devotions where the great ransom was paid for us, and to free, by our good swords, enslaved Palestine from the usurpation and tyranny of the infidel. When we have said this, we have announced our highest human motive. Yet Robert of Paris and his Countess would not willingly set their foot on a land, save what should resound its echo. They have not been accustomed to move in silence upon the face of the earth, and they would purchase an eternal life of fame, though it were at the price of mortal existence.'

'You seek, then, to barter safety for fame,' said Agelastes, 'though you may, perchance, throw death into the scale by which you hope to gain it?'

'Assuredly,' said Count Robert; 'nor is there one wearing such a belt as this, to whom such a thought is stranger.'

'And as I understand,' said Agelastes, 'your lady shares with your honourable self in these valorous resolutions?—Can this be?'

'You may undervalue my female courage, father, if such is your will,' said the countess; 'but I speak in presence of a witness who can attest the truth, when I say that a man of half your years had not doubted the truth with impunity.'

'Nay, Heaven protect me from the lightning of your eyes,' said Agelastes, 'whether in anger or in scorn. I bear an ægis about myself against what I should else have feared. But age, with its incapacities, brings also its apologies. Perhaps, indeed, it is one like me whom you seek to find, and in that case I should be happy to render to you such services as it is my duty to offer to all worthy knights.'

'I have already said,' replied Count Robert, 'that after the accomplishment of my vow'—he looked upwards and crossed himself—'there is nothing on earth to which I am more bound than to celebrate my name in arms as becomes a valiant cavalier. When men die obscurely, they die for ever. Had my ancestor Charles never left the paltry banks of the Saale, he had not now been much better known than any vine-dresser who wielded his pruning-hook in the same territories. But he bore him like a brave man, and his name is deathless in the memory of the worthy.'

'Young man,' said the old Grecian, 'although it is but seldom that such as you, whom I was made to serve and to value, visit this country, it is not the less true that I am well qualified to serve you in the matter which you have so much at heart. My acquaintance with nature has been so perfect and so long, that, during its continuance, she has disappeared, and another world has been spread before me, in which she has but little to do. Thus the curious stores which I have assembled are beyond the researches of other men, and not to be laid before those whose deeds of valour are to be bounded by the ordinary probabilities of everyday nature. No romancer of your romantic country ever devised such extraordinary adventures out of his own imagination, and to feed the idle wonder of those who sat listening around, as those which I know, not of idle invention, but of real positive existence, with the means of achieving and accomplishing the conditions of each adventure.'

'If such be your real profession,' said the French count, 'you have met one of those whom you chiefly search for; nor will my Countess and I stir farther upon our road until you have pointed out to us some one of those adventures which it is the business of errant-knights to be industrious in seeking out.'

So saying, he sat down by the side of the old man; and his lady, with a degree of reverence which had something in it almost diverting, followed his example.

'We have fallen right, Brenhilda,' said Count Robert; 'our guardian angel has watched his charge carefully. Here have we come among an ignorant set of pedants, chattering their absurd language, and holding more important the least look that a cowardly Emperor can give,

than the best blow that a good knight can deal. Believe me, I was well-nigh thinking that we had done ill to take the Cross—God forgive such an impious doubt! Yet here, when we were even despairing to find the road to fame, we have met with one of those excellent men whom the knights of yore were wont to find sitting by springs, by crosses, and by altars, ready to direct the wandering knight where fame was to be found. Disturb him not, my Brenhilda,' said the count, 'but let him recall to himself his stories of the ancient time, and thou shalt see he will enrich us with the treasures of his information.'

'If,' replied Agelastes, after some pause, 'I have waited for a longer term than human life is granted to most men, I shall still be overpaid by dedicating what remains of existence to the service of a pair so devoted to chivalry. What first occurs to me is a story of our Greek country, so famous in adventures, and which I shall briefly detail to you:—

'Afar hence, in our renowned Grecian Archipelago, amid storms and whirlpools, rocks which, changing their character, appear to precipitate themselves against each other, and billows that are never in a pacific state, lies the rich island of Zulichium, inhabited, notwithstanding its wealth, by a very few natives, who live only upon the sea-coast. The inland part of the island is one immense mountain, or pile of mountains, amongst which those who dare approach near enough may, we are assured, discern the moss-grown and antiquated towers and pinnacles of a stately but ruinous castle, the habitation of the sovereign of the island, in which she has been enchanted for a great many years.

'A bold knight, who came upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, made a vow to deliver this unhappy victim of pain and sorcery; feeling, with justice, vehemently offended, that the fiends of darkness should exercise any authority near the Holy Land, which might be termed the very fountain of light. Two of the oldest inhabitants of the island undertook to guide him as near to the main gate as they durst, nor did they approach it more closely than the length of a bow-shot. Here, then, abandoned to himself, the brave Frank set forth upon his enterprise, with a stout heart, and Heaven alone to friend. The fabric which he approached showed, by its gigantic size, and splendour of outline, the power and wealth of the potentate who had erected it. The brazen gates unfolded themselves as if with hope and pleasure; and aërial voices swept around the spires and turrets, congratulating the genius of the place, it might be, upon the expected approach of its deliverer.

'The knight passed on, not unmoved with wonder, though untainted by fear; and the Gothic splendours which he saw were of a kind highly to exalt his idea of the beauty of the mistress for whom a prison-house had been so richly decorated. Guards there were in Eastern dress and arms, upon bulwark and buttress, in readiness, it appeared, to bend their bows; but the warriors were motionless and silent, and took no more notice of the armed step of the knight than if a monk or hermit had approached their guarded post. They were living, and yet, as to all power and sense, they might be considered among the dead. If there was truth in the old tradition, the sun had shone and the rain had fallen upon them for more than four hundred changing seasons, without their being sensible of the genial warmth of the one or the coldness of the other. Like the Israelites in the desert, their shoes had not decayed, nor their vestments waxed old. As time left them, so and without alteration was he again to find them.' The philosopher began now to recall what he had heard of the cause of their enchantment.

'The sage to whom this potent charm is imputed, was one of the Magi who followed the tenets of Zoroaster.* He had come to the court of this youthful princess, who received him with every attention which gratified vanity could dictate, so that in a short time her awe of this grave personage was lost in the sense of ascendency which her beauty gave her over him. It was no difficult matter—in fact it happens every day—for the beautiful woman to lull the wise man into what is not inaptly called a fool's paradise. The sage was induced to attempt feats of youth which his years rendered ridiculous; he could command the elements, but the common course of nature was beyond his power. When, therefore, he exerted his magic strength, the mountains bent and the seas receded; but when the philosopher attempted to lead forth the Princess of Zulichium in the youthful dance, youths and maidens turned their heads aside lest they should make too manifest the ludicrous ideas with which they were impressed.

'Unhappily, as the aged, even the wisest of them, will forget themselves, so the young naturally enter into an alliance to spy out, ridicule, and enjoy their foibles. Many were the glances which the princess sent among her retinue, intimating the nature of the amusement which she received from the attentions of her formidable lover. In process of time she lost her caution, and a glance was detected, expressing to the old man the ridicule and contempt in which he had been all along held by the object of his affections. Earth has no passion so bitter as love converted to hatred; and while the sage bitterly regretted what he had done, he did not the less resent the light-hearted folly of the princess by whom he had been duped.

'If, however, he was angry, he possessed the art to conceal it. Not a word, not a look, expressed the bitter disappointment which he had received. A shade of melancholy, or rather gloom, upon his brow alone intimated the coming storm. The princess became somewhat alarmed; she was, besides, extremely good-natured, nor had her intentions of leading the old man into what would render him ridiculous, been so accurately planned with *malice prepense*, as they were the effect of accident and chance. She saw the pain which he suffered, and thought to end it by going up to him, when about to retire, and kindly wishing him good-night.

'"You say well, daughter," said the sage,

* [The founder of the fire-worship of the ancient Persians, the Magi being the priests of that religion.]

"good-night—but who, of the numbers who hear me, shall say good-morning?"

'The speech drew little attention, although two or three persons, to whom the character of the sage was known, fled from the island that very night, and by their report made known the circumstances attending the first infliction of this extraordinary spell on those who remained within the castle. A sleep like that of death fell upon them, and was not removed. Most of the inhabitants left the island; the few who remained were cautious how they approached the castle, and watched until some bold adventurer should bring that happy awakening which the speech of the sorcerer seemed in some degree to intimate.

'Never seemed there a fairer opportunity for that awakening to take place than when the proud step of Artavan de Hautlieu was placed upon those enchanted courts. On the left lay the palace and donjon-keep; but the right, more attractive, seemed to invite to the apartment of the women. At a side door, reclined on a couch, two guards of the harem, with their naked swords grasped in their hands, and features fiendishly contorted between sleep and dissolution, seemed to menace death to any who should venture to approach. This threat deterred not Artavan de Hautlieu. He approached the entrance, when the doors, like those of the great entrance to the castle, made themselves instantly accessible to him. A guard-room of the same effeminate soldiers received him, nor could the strictest examination have discovered to him whether it was sleep or death which arrested the eyes that seemed to look upon and prohibit his advance. Unheeding the presence of these ghastly sentinels, Artavan pressed forward into an inner apartment, where female slaves of the most distinguished beauty were visible, in the attitude of those who had already assumed their dress for the night. There was much in this scene which might have arrested so young a pilgrim as Artavan of Hautlieu; but his heart was fixed on achieving the freedom of the beautiful princess, nor did he suffer himself to be withdrawn from that object by any inferior consideration. He passed on, therefore, to a little ivory door, which, after a moment's pause, as if in maidenly hesitation, gave way like the rest, and yielded access to the sleeping apartment of the princess herself. A soft light, resembling that of evening, penetrated into a chamber where everything seemed contrived to exalt the luxury of slumber. The heaps of cushions, which formed a stately bed, seemed rather to be touched than impressed by the form of a nymph of fifteen, the renowned Princess of Zulichium.'

'Without interrupting you, good father,' said the Countess Brenhilda, 'it seems to me that we can comprehend the picture of a woman asleep without much dilating upon it, and that such a subject is little recommended either by our age or by yours.'

'Pardon me, noble lady,' answered Agelastes, 'the most approved part of my story has ever been this passage, and while I now suppress it in obedience to your command, bear notice, I pray you, that I sacrifice the most beautiful part of the tale.'

'Brenhilda,' added the count, 'I am surprised you think of interrupting a story which has hitherto proceeded with so much fire; the telling of a few words more or less will surely have a much greater influence upon the sense of the narrative, than such an addition can possibly possess over our sentiments of action.'

'As you will,' said his lady, throwing herself carelessly back upon the seat; 'but methinks the worthy father protracts this discourse till it becomes of a nature more trifling than interesting.'

'Brenhilda,' said the count, 'this is the first time I have remarked in you a woman's weakness.'

'I may as well say, Count Robert, that it is the first time,' answered Brenhilda, 'that you have shown to me the inconstancy of your sex.'

'Gods and goddesses!' said the philosopher, 'was ever known a quarrel more absurdly founded! The Countess is jealous of one whom her husband probably never will see, nor is there any prospect that the Princess of Zulichium will be hereafter better known to the modern world than if the curtain hung before her tomb.'

'Proceed,' said Count Robert of Paris; 'if Sir Artavan of Hautlieu has not accomplished the enfranchisement of the Princess of Zulichium, I make a vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances'——

'Remember,' said his lady, interfering, 'that you are already under a vow to free the Sepulchre of God; and to that, methinks, all lighter engagements might give place.'

'Well, lady—well,' said Count Robert, but half satisfied with this interference, 'I will not engage myself, you may be assured, on any adventure which may claim precedence of the enterprise of the Holy Sepulchre, to which we are all bound.'

'Alas!' said Agelastes, 'the distance of Zulichium from the speediest route to the Sepulchre is so small that'——

'Worthy father,' said the countess, 'we will, if it pleases you, hear your tale to an end, and then determine what we will do. We Norman ladies, descendants of the old Germans, claim a voice with our lords in the council which precedes the battle; nor has our assistance in the conflict been deemed altogether useless.'

The tone in which this was spoken conveyed an awkward innuendo to the philosopher, who began to foresee that the guidance of the Norman knight would be more difficult than he had foreseen while his consort remained by his side. He took up, therefore, his oratory on somewhat a lower key than before, and avoided those warm descriptions which had given such offence to the Countess Brenhilda.

'Sir Artavan de Hautlieu, says the story, considered in what way he should accost the sleeping damsel, when it occurred to him in what manner the charm would be most likely to be reversed. I am in your judgment, fair lady, if he judged wrong in resolving that the method of his address should be a kiss upon the lips.' The colour of Brenhilda was somewhat heightened, but she did not deem the observation worthy of notice.

'Never had so innocent an action,' continued

the philosopher, 'an effect more horrible. The delightful light of a summer evening was instantly changed into a strange lurid hue, which, infected with sulphur, seemed to breathe suffocation through the apartment. The rich hangings and splendid furniture of the chamber, the very walls themselves, were changed into huge stones, tossed together at random, like the inside of a wild beast's den, nor was the den without an inhabitant. The beautiful and innocent lips to which Artavan de Hautlieu had approached his own, were now changed into the hideous and bizarre form and bestial aspect of a fiery dragon. A moment she hovered upon the wing, and it is said, had Sir Artavan found courage to repeat his salute three times, he would then have remained master of all the wealth, and of the disenchanted princess. But the opportunity was lost, and the dragon, or the creature who seemed such, sailed out at a side window upon its broad pennons, uttering loud wails of disappointment.'

Here ended the story of Agelastes. 'The princess,' he said, 'is still supposed to abide her doom in the island of Zulichium, and several knights have undertaken the adventure; but I know not whether it was the fear of saluting the sleeping maiden, or that of approaching the dragon into which she was transformed, but so it is, the spell remains unachieved. I know the way, and if you say the word, you may be to-morrow on the road to the castle of enchantment.'

The countess heard this proposal with the deepest anxiety, for she knew that she might, by opposition, determine her husband irrevocably upon following out the enterprise. She stood, therefore, with a timid and bashful look, strange in a person whose bearing was generally so dauntless, and prudently left it to the uninfluenced mind of Count Robert to form the resolution which should best please him.

'Brenhilda,' he said, taking her hand, 'fame and honour are dear to thy husband as ever they were to knight who buckled a brand upon his side. Thou hast done, perhaps, I may say, for me what I might in vain have looked for from ladies of thy condition; and therefore thou mayst well expect a casting voice in such points of deliberation.—Why dost thou wander by the side of a foreign and unhealthy shore, instead of the banks of the lovely Seine?—Why dost thou wear a dress unusual to thy sex?—Why dost thou seek death, and think it little in comparison of shame?—Why?—but that the Count of Paris may have a bride worthy of him.—Dost thou think that this affection is thrown away? No, by the saints! Thy knight repays it as he best ought, and sacrifices to thee every thought which thy affection may less than entirely approve!'

Poor Brenhilda, confused as she was by the various emotions with which she was agitated, now in vain endeavoured to maintain the heroic deportment which her character as an Amazon required from her. She attempted to assume the proud and lofty look which was properly her own, but, failing in the effort, she threw herself into the count's arms, hung round his neck, and wept like a village maiden, whose true love is pressed for the wars. Her husband, a little ashamed, while he was much moved by this burst of affection in one to whose character it seemed an unusual attribute, was at the same time pleased and proud that he could have awakened an affection so genuine and so gentle in a soul so high-spirited and so unbending.

'Not thus,' he said, 'my Brenhilda! I would not have it thus, either for thine own sake or for mine. Do not let this wise old man suppose that thy heart is made of the malleable stuff which forms that of other maidens; and apologize to him, as may well become thee, for having prevented my undertaking the adventure of Zulichium, which he recommends.'

It was not easy for Brenhilda to recover herself, after having afforded so notable an instance how nature can vindicate her rights, with whatever rigour she may have been disciplined and tyrannized over. With a look of ineffable affection, she disjoined herself from her husband, still keeping hold of his hand, and, turning to the old man with a countenance in which the half-effaced tears were succeeded by smiles of pleasure and of modesty, she spoke to Agelastes as she would to a person whom she respected, and towards whom she had some offence to atone. 'Father,' she said respectfully, 'be not angry with me that I should have been an obstacle to one of the best knights that ever spurred steed undertaking the enterprise of thine enchanted princess; but the truth is, that in our land, where knighthood and religion agree in permitting only one lady love and one lady wife, we do not quite so willingly see our husbands run into danger — especially of that kind where lonely ladies are the parties relieved —and—and kisses are the ransom paid. I have as much confidence in my Robert's fidelity as a lady can have in a loving knight, but still'——

'Lovely lady,' said Agelastes, who, notwithstanding his highly artificial character, could not help being moved by the simple and sincere affection of the handsome young pair, 'you have done no evil. The state of the princess is no worse than it was, and there cannot be a doubt that the knight fated to relieve her will appear at the destined period.'

The countess smiled sadly, and shook her head. 'You do not know,' she said, 'how powerful is the aid of which I have unhappily deprived this unfortunate lady, by a jealousy which I now feel to have been alike paltry and unworthy; and such is my regret, that I could find in my heart to retract my opposition to Count Robert's undertaking this adventure.' She looked at her husband with some anxiety, as one that had made an offer she would not willingly see accepted, and did not recover her courage until he said decidedly, 'Brenhilda, that may not be.'

'And why, then, may not Brenhilda herself take the adventure,' continued the countess, 'since she can neither fear the charms of the princess nor the terrors of the dragon?'

'Lady,' said Agelastes, 'the princess must be awakened by the kiss of love, and not by that of friendship.'

'A sufficient reason,' said the countess, smiling, 'why a lady may not wish her lord to go forth upon an adventure of which the conditions are so regulated.'

'Noble minstrel, or herald, or by whatever name this country calls you,' said Count Robert, 'accept a small remuneration for an hour pleasantly

spent, though spent, unhappily, in vain. I should make some apology for the meanness of my offering, but French knights, you may have occasion to know, are more full of fame than of wealth.'

'Not for that, noble sir,' replied Agelastes, 'would I refuse your munificence; a besant from your worthy hand, or that of your noble-minded lady, were centupled in its value by the eminence of the persons from whom it came. I would hang it round my neck by a string of pearls, and when I came into the presence of knights and of ladies, I would proclaim that this addition to my achievement of armorial distinction was bestowed by the renowned Count Robert of Paris and his unequalled lady.' The knight and the countess looked on each other, and the lady, taking from her finger a ring of pure gold, prayed the old man to accept of it as a mark of her esteem and her husband's. 'With one other condition,' said the philosopher, 'which I trust you will not find altogether unsatisfactory. I have, on the way to the city by the most pleasant road, a small kiosk, or hermitage, where I sometimes receive my friends, who, I venture to say, are among the most respectable personages of this empire. Two or three of these will probably honour my residence to-day, and partake of the provision it affords. Could I add to these the company of the noble Count and Countess of Paris, I should deem my poor habitation honoured for ever.'

'How say you, my noble wife?' said the count. 'The company of a minstrel befits the highest birth, honours the highest rank, and adds to the greatest achievements; and the invitation does us too much credit to be rejected.'

'It grows somewhat late,' said the countess; 'but we came not here to shun a sinking sun or a darkening sky, and I feel it my duty, as well as my satisfaction, to place at the command of the good father every pleasure which it is in my power to offer to him, for having been the means of your neglecting his advice.'

'The path is so short,' said Agelastes, 'that we had better keep our present mode of travelling, if the lady should not want the assistance of horses.'

'No horses on my account,' said the Lady Brenhilda. 'My waiting-woman Agatha has what necessaries I may require; and for the rest, no knight ever travelled so little embarrassed with baggage as my husband.'

Agelastes therefore led the way through the deepening wood, which was freshened by the cooler breath of evening, and his guests accompanied him.

CHAPTER XI.

Without, a ruin—broken, tangled, cumbrous;
Within, it was a little paradise,
Where Taste had made her dwelling. Statuary,
First-born of human art, moulded her images,
And bade men mark and worship.

ANONYMOUS.

THE Count of Paris and his lady attended the old man, whose advanced age, his excellence in the use of the French language, which he spoke to admiration,—above all, his skill in applying it to poetical and romantic subjects, which was essential to what was then termed history and *belles lettres*,—drew from the noble hearers a degree of applause, which, as Agelastes had seldom been vain enough to consider as his due, so, on the part of the Knight of Paris and his lady, had it been but rarely conferred.

They had walked for some time by a path which sometimes seemed to hide itself among the woods that came down to the shore of the Propontis, sometimes emerged from concealment, and skirted the open margin of the strait, while, at every turn, it seemed guided by the desire to select a choice and contrast of beauty. Variety of scenes and manners enlivened, from their novelty, the landscape to the pilgrims. By the sea-shore nymphs were seen dancing and shepherds piping, or beating the tambourine to their steps, as represented in some groups of ancient statuary. The very faces had a singular resemblance to the antique. If old, their long robes, their attitudes, and magnificent heads presented the ideas which distinguish prophets and saints; while, on the other hand, the features of the young recalled the expressive countenances of the heroes of antiquity, and the charms of those lovely females by whom their deeds were inspired.

But the race of the Greeks was no longer to be seen, even in its native country, unmixed, or in absolute purity; on the contrary, they saw groups of persons with features which argued a different descent.

In a retiring bosom of the shore, which was traversed by the path, the rocks, receding from the beach, rounded off a spacious portion of level sand, and, in some degree, enclosed it. A party of heathen Scythians whom they beheld, presented the deformed features of the demons they were said to worship—flat noses with expanded nostrils, which seemed to admit the sight to their very brain; faces which extended rather in breadth than length, with strange unintellectual eyes placed in the extremity; figures short and dwarfish, yet garnished with legs and arms of astonishing sinewy strength, disproportioned to their bodies. As the travellers passed, the savages held a species of tournament, as the count termed it. In this they exercised themselves by darting at each other long reeds, or canes, balanced for the purpose, which, in this rude sport, they threw with such force, as not unfrequently to strike each other from their steeds, and otherwise to cause serious damage. Some of the combatants being, for the time, out of the play, devoured with greedy looks the beauty of the countess, and eyed her in such a manner, that she said to Count Robert,—'I have never known fear, my husband, nor is it for me to acknowledge it now; but if disgust be an ingredient of it, these misformed brutes are qualified to inspire it.'

'What ho, Sir Knight!' exclaimed one of the infidels, 'your wife, or your lady love, has committed a fault against the privileges of the Imperial Scythians, and not small will be the penalty she has incurred. You may go your way as fast as you will out of this place, which is, for the present, our hippodrome, or atmeidan, call it which you will, as you prize the Roman or the Saracen language; but for your wife, if the

sacrament has united you, believe my word, that she parts not so soon or so easy.'

'Seoundrel heathen,' said the Christian knight, 'dost thou hold that language to a peer of France?'

Agelastes here interposed, and, using the sounding language of a Grecian courtier, reminded the Scythians (mercenary soldiers, as they seemed, of the empire) that all violence against the European pilgrims was, by the Imperial orders, strictly prohibited under pain of death.

'I know better,' said the exulting savage, shaking one or two javelins with broad steel heads, and wings of the eagle's feather, which last were dabbled in blood. 'Ask the wings of my javelin,' he said, 'in whose heart's blood these feathers have been dyed. They shall reply to you, that if Alexius Comnenus be the friend of the European pilgrims, it is only while he looks upon them; and we are too exemplary soldiers to serve our Emperor otherwise than he wishes to be served.'

'Peace, Toxartis,' said the philosopher; 'thou beliest thine Emperor.'

'Peace thou!' said Toxartis, 'or I will do a deed that misbecomes a soldier, and rid the world of a prating old man.'

So saying, he put forth his hand to take hold of the countess's veil. With the readiness which frequent use had given to the warlike lady, she withdrew herself from the heathen's grasp, and with her trenchant sword dealt him so sufficient a blow, that Toxartis lay lifeless on the plain. The count leapt on the fallen leader's steed, and, crying his war-cry, 'Son of Charlemagne, to the rescue!' he rode amid the rout of heathen cavaliers with a battle-axe, which he found at the saddlebow of the deceased chieftain, and, wielding it with remorseless dexterity, he soon slew or wounded, or compelled to flight, the objects of his resentment; nor was there any of them who abode an instant to support the boast which they had made.

'The despicable churls!' said the countess to Agelastes; 'it irks me that a drop of such coward blood should stain the hands of a noble knight. They call their exercise a tournament, although in their whole exertions every blow is aimed behind the back, and not one has the courage to throw his windlestraw while he perceives that of another pointed against himself.'

'Such is their custom,' said Agelastes; 'not perhaps so much from cowardice as from habit, in exercising before his Imperial Majesty. I have seen that Toxartis literally turn his back upon the mark when he bent his bow in full career, and when in the act of galloping the farthest from his object, he pierced it through the very centre with a broad arrow.'

'A force of such soldiers,' said Count Robert, who had now rejoined his friends, 'could not, methinks, be very formidable, where there was but an ounce of genuine courage in the assailants.'

'Meantime let us pass on to my kiosk,' said Agelastes, 'lest the fugitives find friends to encourage them in thoughts of revenge.'

'Such friends,' said Count Robert, 'methinks the insolent heathens ought not to find in any land which calls itself Christian; and if I survive the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre, I shall make it my first business to inquire by what right your Emperor retains in his service a band of Paynim and unmannerly cut-throats, who dare offer injury upon the highway, which ought to be sacred to the peace of God and the king, and to noble ladies and inoffensive pilgrims. It is one of a list of many questions which, my vow accomplished, I will not fail to put to him; ay, and expecting an answer, as they say, prompt and categorical.'

'You shall gain no answer from me, though,' said Agelastes to himself. 'Your demands, Sir Knight, are over-peremptory, and imposed under too rigid conditions, to be replied to by those who can evade them.'

He changed the conversation accordingly with easy dexterity; and they had not proceeded much farther before they reached a spot, the natural beauties of which called forth the admiration of his foreign companions. A copious brook gushing out of the woodland descended to the sea with no small noise and tumult; and, as if disdaining a quieter course, which it might have gained by a little circuit to the right, it took the readiest road to the ocean, plunging over the face of a lofty and barren precipice which overhung the sea-shore, and from thence led its little tribute, with as much noise as if it had the stream of a full river to boast of, to the waters of the Hellespont.

The rock, we have said, was bare, unless in so far as it was clothed with the foaming waters of the cataract; but the banks on each side were covered with plane-trees, walnut-trees, cypresses, and other kinds of large timber proper to the East. The fall of water, always agreeable in a warm climate, and generally produced by artificial means, was here natural, and had been chosen, something like the Sibyl's temple at Tivoli,* for the seat of a goddess to whom the invention of polytheism had assigned a sovereignty over the department around. The shrine was small and circular, like many of the lesser temples of the rustic deities, and enclosed by the wall of an outer court. After its desecration, it had probably been converted into a luxurious summer retreat by Agelastes, or some Epicurean philosopher. As the building, itself of a light, airy, and fantastic character, was dimly seen through the branches and foliage on the edge of the rock, so the mode by which it was accessible was not at first apparent amongst the mist of the cascade. A pathway, a good deal hidden by vegetation, ascended by a gentle acclivity, and, prolonged by the architect by means of a few broad and easy marble steps, making part of the original approach, conducted the passenger to a small but exquisitely lovely velvet lawn in front of the turret or temple we have described, the back part of which building overhung the cataract.

* [At Tibur, the modern Tivoli, on the river Anis in Italy, there was a beautiful waterfall, near which stood a temple, commonly called the 'temple of the Sibyl,' an ancient Roman prophetess.]

CHAPTER XII.

The parties met. The wily, wordy Greek,
Weighing each word, and canvassing each syllable;
Evading, arguing, equivocating.
And the stern Frank came with his two-hand sword,
Watching to see which way the balance sways,
That he may throw it in, and turn the scales.
PALESTINE.

AT a signal made by Agelastes, the door of this romantic retreat was opened by Diogenes, the negro slave to whom our readers have been already introduced; nor did it escape the wily old man, that the count and his lady testified some wonder at his form and lineaments, being the first African, perhaps, whom they had ever seen so closely. The philosopher lost not the opportunity of making an impression on their minds, by a display of the superiority of his knowledge.

'This poor being,' he observed, 'is of the race of Ham, the undutiful son of Noah; for his transgressions against his parent he was banished to the sands of Africa, and was condemned to be the father of a race doomed to be the slaves of the issue of his more dutiful brethren.'

The knight and his lady gazed on the wonderful appearance before them, and did not, it may be believed, think of doubting the information which was so much of a piece with their prejudices, while their opinion of their host was greatly augmented by the supposed extent of his knowledge.

'It gives pleasure to a man of humanity,' continued Agelastes, 'when, in old age, or sickness, we must employ the services of others, which is at other times scarce lawful, to choose his assistants out of a race of beings, hewers of wood and drawers of water—from their birth upwards destined to slavery; and to whom, therefore, by employing them as slaves, we render no injury, but carry into effect, in a slight degree, the intentions of the Great Being who made us all.'

'Are there many of a race,' said the countess, 'so singularly unhappy in their destination? I have hitherto thought the stories of black men as idle as those which minstrels tell of fairies and ghosts.'

'Do not believe so,' said the philosopher; 'the race is numerous as the sands of the sea, neither are they altogether unhappy in discharging the duties which their fate has allotted them. Those who are of worse character suffer even in this life the penance due to their guilt; they become the slaves of the cruel and tyrannical, are beaten, starved, and mutilated. To those whose moral characters are better, better masters are provided, who share with their slaves, as with their children, food and raiment, and the other good things which they themselves enjoy. To some, Heaven allots the favour of kings and of conquerors, and to a few, but those the chief favourites of the species, hath been assigned a place in the mansions of philosophy, where, by availing themselves of the lights which their masters can afford, they gain a prospect into that world which is the residence of true happiness.'

'Methinks I understand you,' replied the countess; 'and if so, I ought rather to envy our sable friend here than to pity him, for having been allotted in the partition of his kind to the possession of his present master, from whom, doubtless, he has acquired the desirable knowledge which you mention.'

'He learns, at least,' said Agelastes modestly, 'what I can teach, and, above all, to be contented with his situation.—Diogenes, my good child,' said he, changing his address to the slave, 'thou seest I have company—What does the poor hermit's larder afford, with which he may regale his honoured guests?'

Hitherto they had advanced no farther than a sort of outer room, or hall of entrance, fitted up with no more expense than might have suited one who desired, at some outlay, and more taste, to avail himself of the ancient building for a sequestered and private retirement. The chairs and couches were covered with Eastern wove mats, and were of the simplest and most primitive form. But, on touching a spring, an interior apartment was displayed, which had considerable pretension to splendour and magnificence.

The furniture and hangings of this apartment were of straw-coloured silk, wrought on the looms of Persia, and crossed with embroidery, which produced a rich, yet simple effect. The ceiling was carved in arabesque, and the four corners of the apartment were formed into recesses for statuary, which had been produced in a better age of the art than that which existed at the period of our story. In one nook, a shepherd seemed to withdraw himself, as if ashamed to produce his scantily-covered person, while he was willing to afford the audience the music of the reed which he held in his hand. Three damsels, resembling the Graces in the beautiful proportions of their limbs, and the slender clothing which they wore, lurked in different attitudes, each in her own niche, and seemed but to await the first sound of the music, to bound forth from thence and join in the frolic dance. The subject was beautiful, yet somewhat light to ornament the study of such a sage as Agelastes represented himself to be.

He seemed to be sensible that this might attract observation.—'These figures,' he said, 'executed at the period of the highest excellence of Grecian art, were considered of old as the choral nymphs assembled to adore the goddess of the place, waiting but the music to join in the worship of the temple. And, in truth, the wisest may be interested in seeing how near to animation the genius of these wonderful men could bring the inflexible marble. Allow but for the absence of the divine afflatus, or breath of animation, and an unenlightened heathen might suppose the miracle of Prometheus* was about to be realized. 'But we,' said he, looking upwards, 'are taught to form a better judgment between what man can do and the productions of the Deity.'

Some subjects of natural history were painted on the walls, and the philosopher fixed the attention of his guests upon the half-reasoning

* [Prometheus, according to one ancient Greek legend, created men out of earth and water.]

elephant, of which he mentioned several anecdotes, which they listened to with great eagerness.'

A distant strain was here heard, as if of music in the woods, penetrating by fits through the hoarse roar of the cascade, which, as it sunk immediately below the windows, filled the apartment with its deep voice.

'Apparently,' said Agelastes, 'the friends whom I expected are approaching, and bring with them the means of enchanting another sense. It is well they do so, since wisdom tells us that we best honour the Deity by enjoying the gifts he has provided us.'

These words called the attention of the philosopher's Frankish guests to the preparations exhibited in this tasteful saloon. These were made for an entertainment in the manner of the ancient Romans; and couches which were laid beside a table ready decked, announced that the male guests, at least, were to assist at the banquet in the usual recumbent posture of the ancients; while seats, placed among the couches, seemed to say that females were expected, who would observe the Grecian customs, in eating seated. The preparations for good cheer were such as, though limited in extent, could scarce be excelled in quality, either by the splendid dishes which decked Trimalchio's banquet* of former days, or the lighter delicacies of Grecian cookery, or the succulent and highly-spiced messes indulged in by the nations of the East, to whichever they happened to give the preference; and it was with an air of some vanity that Agelastes asked his guests to share a poor pilgrim's meal.

'We care little for dainties,' said the count; 'nor does our present course of life as pilgrims, bound by a vow, allow us much choice on such subjects. Whatever is food for soldiers suffices the Countess and myself; for, with our will, we would at every hour be ready for battle, and the less time we use in preparing for the field it is even so much the better. Sit, then, Brenhilda, since the good man will have it so, and let us lose no time in refreshment, lest we waste that which should be otherwise employed.'

'A moment's forgiveness,' said Agelastes, 'until the arrival of my other friends, whose music you may now hear is close at hand, and who will not long, I may safely promise, divide you from your meal.'

'For that,' said the count, 'there is no haste; and since you seem to account it a part of civil manners, Brenhilda and I can with ease postpone our repast, unless you will permit us, what I own would be more pleasing, to take a morsel of bread and a cup of water presently; and, thus refreshed, to leave the space clear for your more curious and more familiar guests.'

'The saints above forbid!' said Agelastes; 'guests so honoured never before pressed these cushions, nor could do so, if the sacred family of the Imperial Alexius himself even now stood at the gate.'

He had hardly uttered these words, when the full-blown peal of a trumpet, louder in a tenfold degree than the strains of music they had before heard, was now sounded in the front of the temple, piercing through the murmur of the waterfall, as a Damascus blade penetrates the armour, and assailing the ears of the hearers as the sword pierces the flesh of him who wears the harness.

'You seem surprised or alarmed, father,' said Count Robert. 'Is there danger near, and do you distrust our protection?'

'No,' said Agelastes, 'that would give me confidence in any extremity; but these sounds excite awe, not fear. They tell me that some of the Imperial family are about to be my guests. Yet fear nothing, my noble friends—they, whose look is life, are ready to shower their favours with profusion upon strangers so worthy of honour as they will see here. Meantime my brow must touch my threshold, in order duly to welcome them.' So saying, he hurried to the outer door of the building.

'Each land has its customs,' said the count, as he followed his host, with his wife hanging on his arm; 'but, Brenhilda, as they are so various, it is little wonder that they appear unseemly to each other. Here, however, in deference to my entertainer, I stoop my crest, in the manner which seems to be required.' So saying, he followed Agelastes into the anteroom, where a new scene awaited them.

* [Described in the *Satiræ* of the Roman writer Petronius.]

CHAPTER XIII.

Omne solum forti, patria est.
OVID'S FASTI.

AGELASTES gained his threshold before Count Robert of Paris and his lady. He had, therefore, time to make his prostrations before a huge animal, then unknown to the Western world, but now universally distinguished as the elephant. On its back was a pavilion or palanquin, within which were enclosed the august persons of the Empress Irene and her daughter, Anna Comnena. Nicephorus Briennius attended the princesses in the command of a gallant body of light horse, whose splendid armour would have given more pleasure to the Crusader, if it had possessed less an air of useless wealth and effeminate magnificence. But the effect which it produced in its appearance was as brilliant as could well be conceived. The officers alone of this *corps de garde* followed Nicephorus to the platform, prostrated themselves while the ladies of the Imperial house descended, and rose up again under a cloud of waving plumes and flashing lances, when they stood secure upon the platform in front of the building. Here the somewhat aged, but commanding form of the empress, and the still juvenile beauties of the fair historian, were seen to great advantage. In the front of a deep background of spears and waving crests stood the sounder of the sacred trumpet, conspicuous by his size and the richness of his apparel; he kept his post on a rock above the stone staircase, and, by an occasional note of his instrument, intimated to the squadrons beneath that they should stay their progress and attend the motions of the empress and the wife of the Cæsar.

The fair form of the Countess Brenhilda, and the fantastic appearance of her half-masculine garb, attracted the attention of the ladies of Alexius' family, but was too extraordinary to command their admiration. Agelastes became sensible there was a necessity that he should introduce his guests to each other, if he desired they should meet on satisfactory terms. 'May I speak,' he said, 'and live? The armed strangers whom you find now with me are worthy companions of those myriads, whom zeal for the suffering inhabitants of Palestine has brought from the western extremity of Europe, at once to enjoy the countenance of Alexius Comnenus, and to aid him, since it pleases him to accept their assistance, in expelling the Paynims from the bounds of the sacred empire, and garrison these regions in their stead, as vassals of his Imperial Majesty.'

'We are pleased,' said the empress, 'worthy Agelastes, that you should be kind to those who are disposed to be so reverent to the Emperor. And we are rather disposed to talk with them ourselves, that our daughter (whom Apollo hath gifted with the choice talent of recording what she sees) may become acquainted with one of those female warriors of the West, of whom we have heard so much by common fame, and yet know so little with certainty.'

'Madam,' said the count, 'I can but rudely express to you what I have to find fault with in the explanation which this old man hath given of our purpose in coming hither. Certain it is we neither owe Alexius fealty, nor had we the purpose of paying him any, when we took the vow upon ourselves which brought us against Asia. We came, because we understood that the Holy Land had been torn from the Greek Emperor by the pagans, Saracens, Turks, and other infidels, from whom we are come to win it back. The wisest and most prudent among us have judged it necessary to acknowledge the Emperor's authority, since there was no such safe way of passing to the discharge of our vow, as that of acknowledging fealty to him, as the best mode of preventing quarrels among Christian States. We, though independent of any earthly king, do not pretend to be greater men than they, and therefore have condescended to pay the same homage.'

The empress coloured several times with indignation in the course of this speech, which, in more passages than one, was at variance with those Imperial maxims of the Grecian court, which held its dignity so high, and plainly intimated a tone of opinion which was depreciating to the emperor's power. But the Empress Irene had received instructions from her Imperial spouse to beware how she gave, or even took, any ground of quarrel with the Crusaders, who, though coming in the appearance of subjects, were, nevertheless, too punctilious and ready to take fire, to render them safe discussers of delicate differences. She made a graceful reverence accordingly, as if she had scarce understood what the Count of Paris had explained so bluntly.

At this moment the appearance of the principal persons on either hand attracted, in a wonderful degree, the attention of the other party, and there seemed to exist among them a general desire of further acquaintance, and, at the same time, a manifest difficulty in expressing such a wish.

Agelastes—to begin with the master of the house—had risen from the ground, indeed, but without venturing to assume an upright posture; he remained before the Imperial ladies with his body and head still bent, his hand interposed between his eyes and their faces, like a man that would shade his eyesight from the level sun, and awaited in silence the commands of those to whom he seemed to think it disrespectful to propose the slightest action, save by testifying in general that his house and his slaves were at their unlimited command. The Countess of Paris, on the other hand, and her warlike husband, were the peculiar objects of curiosity to Irene and her accomplished daughter, Anna Comnena; and it occurred to both these Imperial ladies that they had never seen finer specimens of human strength and beauty; but, by a natural instinct, they preferred the manly bearing of the husband to that of the wife, which seemed to her own sex rather too haughty and too masculine to be altogether pleasing.

Count Robert and his lady had also their own object of attention in the newly-arrived group, and, to speak truth, it was nothing else than the peculiarities of the monstrous animal which they now saw, for the first time, employed as a beast of burden in the service of the fair Irene and her daughter. The dignity and splendour of the elder princess, the grace and vivacity of the younger, were alike lost in Brenhilda's earnest inquiries into the history of the elephant, and the use which it made of its trunk, tusks, and huge ears, upon different occasions.

Another person, who took a less direct opportunity to gaze on Brenhilda, with a deep degree of interest, was the Cæsar, Nicephorus. This prince kept his eye as steadily upon the Frankish countess as he could well do, without attracting the attention, and exciting perhaps the suspicions, of his wife and mother-in-law; he therefore endeavoured to restore speech to an interview which would have been awkward without it. 'It is possible,' he said, 'beautiful Countess, that, this being your first visit to the Queen of the world, you have never hitherto seen the singularly curious animal called the elephant.'

'Pardon me,' said the Countess, 'I have been treated by this learned gentleman to a sight and some account of that wonderful creature.'

By all who heard this observation, the Lady Brenhilda was supposed to have made a satirical thrust at the philosopher himself, who, in the Imperial court, usually went by the name of the Elephant.

'No one could describe the beast more accurately than Agelastes,' said the princess, with a smile of intelligence, which went round her attendants.

'He knows its docility, its sensibility, and its fidelity,' said the philosopher, in a subdued tone.

'True, good Agelastes,' said the princess; 'we should not criticise the animal which kneels to take us up.—Come, lady of a foreign land,' she continued, turning to the Frank count, and especially his countess—'and you her gallant lord! When you return to your native country,

you shall say you have seen the Imperial family partake of their food, and in so far acknowledge themselves to be of the same clay with other mortals, sharing their poorest wants, and relieving them in the same manner.'

'That, gentle lady, I can well believe,' said Count Robert; 'my curiosity would be more indulged by seeing this strange animal at his food.'

'You will see the elephant more conveniently at his mess within doors,' answered the princess, looking at Agelastes.

'Lady,' said Brenhilda, 'I would not willingly refuse an invitation given in courtesy, but the sun has waxed low unnoticed, and we must return to the city.'

'Be not afraid,' said the fair historian; 'you shall have the advantage of our Imperial escort to protect you in your return.'

'Fear?—afraid?—escort?—protect?—These are words I know not. Know, lady, that my husband, the noble Count of Paris, is my sufficient escort; and even were he not with me, Brenhilda de Aspramonte fears nothing, and can defend herself.'

'Fair daughter,' said Agelastes, 'if I may be permitted to speak, you mistake the gracious intentions of the princess, who expresses herself as to a lady of her own land. What she desires is to learn from you some of the most marked habits and manners of the Franks, of which you are so beautiful an example; and, in return for such information, the illustrious princess would be glad to procure your entrance to those spacious collections, where animals from all corners of the habitable world have been assembled at the command of our Emperor Alexius, as if to satisfy the wisdom of those sages to whom all creation is known, from the deer so small in size that it is exceeded by an ordinary rat, to that huge and singular inhabitant of Africa that can browse on the tops of trees that are forty feet high, while the length of its hind-legs does not exceed the half of that wondrous height.'

'It is enough,' said the countess, with some eagerness; but Agelastes had got a point of discussion after his own mind.

'There is also,' he said, 'that huge lizard, which, resembling in shape the harmless inhabitant of the moors of other countries, is in Egypt a monster thirty feet in length, clothed in impenetrable scales, and moaning over his prey when he catches it, with the hope and purpose of drawing others within his danger, by mimicking the lamentations of humanity.'

'Say no more, father!' exclaimed the lady. 'My Robert, we will go—will we not, where such objects are to be seen?'

'There is also,' said Agelastes, who saw that he would gain his point by addressing himself to the curiosity of the strangers, 'the huge animal, wearing on its back an invulnerable vestment, having on its nose a horn, and sometimes two, the folds of whose hide are of the most immense thickness, and which never knight was able to wound.'

'We will go, Robert—will we not?' reiterated the countess.

'Ay,' replied the count, 'and teach these Easterns how to judge of a knight's sword, by a single blow of my trusty Tranchefer.'

'And who knows,' said Brenhilda, 'since this is a land of enchantment, but what some person, who is languishing in a foreign shape, may have their enchantment unexpectedly dissolved by a stroke of the good weapon?'

'Say no more, father!' exclaimed the count. 'We will attend this princess, since such she is, were her whole escort bent to oppose our passage, instead of being by her command to be our guard. For know, all who hear me, thus much of the nature of the Franks, that when you tell us of danger and difficulties, you give us the same desire to travel the road where they lie, as other men have in seeking either pleasure or profit in the paths in which such are to be found.'

As the count pronounced these words, he struck his hand upon his Tranchefer, as an illustration of the manner in which he purposed upon occasion to make good his way. The courtly circle startled somewhat at the clash of steel, and the fiery look of the chivalrous Count Robert. The empress indulged her alarm by retreating into the inner apartment of the pavilion.

With a grace which was rarely deigned to any but those in close alliance with the Imperial family, Anna Comnena took the arm of the noble count. 'I see,' she said, 'that the Imperial mother has honoured the house of the learned Agelastes by leading the way; therefore, to teach you Grecian breeding must fall to my share.' Saying this, she conducted him to the inner apartment.

'Fear not for your wife,' she said, as she noticed the Frank look round; 'our husband, like ourselves, has pleasure in showing attention to the stranger, and will lead the Countess to our board. It is not the custom of the Imperial family to eat in company with strangers; but we thank Heaven for having instructed us in that civility, which can know no degradation in dispensing with ordinary rules to do honour to strangers of such merit as yours. I know it will be my mother's request that you will take your places without ceremony; and also, although the grace be somewhat particular, I am sure that it will have my Imperial father's approbation.'

'Be it as your ladyship lists,' said Count Robert. 'There are few men to whom I would yield place at the board, if they had not gone before me in the battlefield. To a lady, especially so fair a one, I willingly yield my place, and bend my knee, whenever I have the good hap to meet her.'

The Princess Anna, instead of feeling herself awkward in the discharge of the extraordinary, and, as she might have thought it, degrading office of ushering a barbarian chief to the banquet, felt, on the contrary, flattered at having bent to her purpose a heart so obstinate as that of Count Robert, and elated, perhaps, with a certain degree of satisfied pride while under his momentary protection.

The Empress Irene had already seated herself at the head of the table. She looked with some astonishment when her daughter and son-in-law, taking their seats at her right and left hand, invited the Count and Countess of Paris, the former to recline, the latter to sit, at the board, in the places next to themselves; but she had

received the strictest orders from her husband to be deferential in every respect to the strangers, and did not think it right, therefore, to interpose any ceremonious scruples.

The countess took her seat, as indicated, beside the Cæsar; and the count, instead of reclining in the mode of the Grecian men, also seated himself in the European fashion by the princess.

'I will not lie prostrate,' said he, laughing, 'except in consideration of a blow weighty enough to compel me to do so; nor then either, if I am able to start up and return it.'

The service of the table then began, and, to say truth, it appeared to be an important part of the business of the day. The officers who attended to perform their several duties of deckers of the table, sewers of the banquet, removers and tasters to the Imperial family, thronged into the banqueting-room, and seemed to vie with each other in calling upon Agelastes for spices, condiments, sauces, and wines of various kinds, the variety and multiplicity of their demands being apparently devised *ex proposito*, for stirring the patience of the philosopher. But Agelastes, who had anticipated most of their requests, however unusual, supplied them completely, or in the greatest part, by the ready agency of his active slave Diogenes, to whom, at the same time, he contrived to transfer all blame for the absence of such articles as he was unable to provide.

'Be Homer my witness, the accomplished Virgil, and the curious felicity of Horace, that, trifling and unworthy as this banquet was, my note of directions to this thrice unhappy slave gave the instructions to procure every ingredient necessary to convey to each dish its proper gusto. —Ill-omened carrion that thou art, wherefore placedst thou the pickled cucumber so far apart from the boar's head? and why are these superb congers unprovided with a requisite quantity of fennel? The divorce betwixt the shell-fish and the Chian wine, in a presence like this, is worthy of the divorce of thine own soul from thy body; or, to say the least, of a lifelong residence in the *pistrinum*.' While thus the philosopher proceeded with threats, curses, and menaces against his slave, the stranger might have an opportunity of comparing the little torrent of his domestic eloquence, which the manners of the times did not consider as ill-bred, with the louder and deeper share of adulation towards his guests. They mingled like the oil with the vinegar and pickles which Diogenes mixed for the sauce. Thus the count and countess had an opportunity to estimate the happiness and the felicity reserved for those slaves, whom the omnipotent Jupiter, in the plenitude of compassion for their state, and in guerdon of their good morals, had dedicated to the service of a philosopher. The share they themselves took in the banquet was finished with a degree of speed which gave surprise not only to their host, but also to the Imperial guests.

The count helped himself carelessly out of a dish which stood near him, and, partaking of a draught of wine, without inquiring whether it was of the vintage which the Greeks held it matter of conscience to mingle with that species of food, he declared himself satisfied; nor could the obliging entreaties of his neighbour, Anna Comnena, induce him to partake of other messes represented as being either delicacies or curiosities. His spouse ate still more moderately of the food which seemed most simply cooked, and stood nearest her at the board, and partook of a cup of crystal water, which she slightly tinged with wine, at the persevering entreaty of the Cæsar. They then relinquished the further business of the banquet, and, leaning back upon their seats, occupied themselves in watching the liberal credit done to the feast by the rest of the guests present.

A modern synod of gourmands would hardly have equalled the Imperial family of Greece seated at a philosophical banquet, whether in the critical knowledge displayed of the science of eating in all its branches, or in the practical cost and patience with which they exercised it. The ladies, indeed, did not eat much of any one dish, but they tasted of almost all that were presented to them, and their name was legion. Yet, after a short time, in Homeric phrase, the rage of thirst and hunger was assuaged, or, more probably, the Princess Anna Comnena was tired of being an object of some inattention to the guest who sat next her, and who, joining his high military character to his very handsome presence, was a person by whom few ladies would willingly be neglected. There is no new guise, says our father Chaucer, but what resembles an old one; and the address of Anna Comnena to the Frankish count might resemble that of a modern lady of fashion, in her attempts to engage in conversation the *exquisite* who sits by her side in an apparently absent fit. 'We have piped unto you,' said the princess, 'and you have not danced! We have sung to you the jovial chorus of *Evoe, evoe*, and you will neither worship Comus nor Bacchus! Are we then to judge you a follower of the Muses, in whose service, as well as in that of Phœbus, we ourselves pretend to be enlisted?'

'Fair lady,' replied the Frank, 'be not offended at my stating once for all, in plain terms, that I am a Christian man, spitting at and bidding defiance to Apollo, Bacchus, Comus, and all other heathen deities whatsoever.'

'O cruel interpretation of my unwary words!' said the princess; 'I did but mention the gods of music, poetry, and eloquence, worshipped by our divine philosophers, and whose names are still used to distinguish the arts and sciences over which they presided — and the Count interprets it seriously into a breach of the second commandment! Our Lady preserve me, we must take care how we speak, when our words are so sharply interpreted.'

The count laughed as the princess spoke. 'I had no offensive meaning, madam,' he said, 'nor would I wish to interpret your words otherwise than as being most innocent and praiseworthy. I shall suppose that your speech contained all that was fair and blameless. You are, I have understood, one of those who, like our worthy host, express in composition the history and feats of the warlike time in which you live, and give to the posterity which shall succeed us the knowledge of the brave deeds which have been achieved in our day. I respect the task to which

you have dedicated yourself, and know not how a lady could lay after ages under an obligation to her in the same degree, unless, like my wife Brenhilda, she were herself to be the actress of deeds which she recorded. And, by the way, she now looks towards her neighbour at the table, as if she were about to rise and leave him; her inclinations are towards Constantinople, and, with your ladyship's permission, I cannot allow her to go thither alone.'

'That you shall neither of you do,' said Anna Comnena; 'since we all go to the capital directly, and for the purpose of seeing those wonders of nature, of which numerous examples have been collected by the splendour of my Imperial father.—If my husband seems to have given offence to the Countess, do not suppose that it was intentionally dealt to her; on the contrary, you will find the good man, when you are better acquainted with him, to be one of those simple persons who manage so unhappily what they mean for civilities, that those to whom they are addressed receive them frequently in another sense.'

The Countess of Paris, however, refused again to sit down to the table from which she had risen, so that Agelastes and his Imperial guests saw themselves under the necessity either to permit the strangers to depart, which they seemed unwilling to do, or to detain them by force, to attempt which might not perhaps have been either safe or pleasant; or, lastly, to have waived the etiquette of rank and set out along with them, at the same time managing their dignity so as to take the initiatory step, though the departure took place upon the motion of their wilful guests. Much tumult there was—bustling, disputing, and shouting—among the troops and officers, who were thus moved from their repast two hours at least sooner than had been experienced upon similar occasions in the memory of the oldest among them. A different arrangement of the Imperial party likewise seemed to take place by mutual consent.

Nicephorus Briennius ascended the seat upon the elephant, and remained there placed beside his august mother-in-law. Agelastes, on a sober-minded palfrey, which permitted him to prolong his philosophical harangues at his own pleasure, rode beside the Countess Brenhilda, whom he made the principal object of his oratory. The fair historian, though she usually travelled in a litter, preferred upon this occasion a spirited horse, which enabled her to keep pace with Count Robert of Paris, on whose imagination, if not his feelings, she seemed to have it in view to work a marked impression. The conversation of the empress with her son-in-law requires no special detail. It was a tissue of criticisms upon the manners and behaviour of the Franks, and a hearty wish that they might be soon transported from the realms of Greece, never more to return. Such was at least the tone of the empress, nor did the Cæsar find it convenient to express any more tolerant opinion of the strangers. On the other hand, Agelastes made a long circuit ere he ventured to approach the subject which he wished to introduce. He spoke of the menagerie of the emperor as a most superb collection of natural history; he extolled different persons at court for having encouraged Alexius Comnenus in this wise and philosophical amusement. But, finally, the praise of all others was abandoned that the philosopher might dwell upon that of Nicephorus Briennius, to whom the cabinet or collection of Constantinople was indebted, he said, for the principal treasures it contained.

'I am glad it is so,' said the haughty countess, without lowering her voice or affecting any change of manner; 'I am glad that he understands some things better worth understanding than whispering with stranger young women. Credit me, if he gives much licence to his tongue among such women of my country as these stirring times may bring hither, some one or other of them will fling him into the cataract which dashes below.'

'Pardon me, fair lady,' said Agelastes; 'no female heart could meditate an action so atrocious against so fine a form as that of the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius.'

'Put it not on that issue, father,' said the offended countess; 'for, by my patroness saint, Our Lady of the Broken Lances, had it not been for regard to these two ladies, who seemed to intend some respect to my husband and myself, that same Nicephorus should have been as perfectly a Lord of the Broken Bones as any Cæsar who has borne the title since the great Julius!'

The philosopher, upon this explicit information, began to entertain some personal fear for himself, and hastened, by diverting the conversation, which he did with great dexterity, to the story of Hero and Leander,* to put the affront received out of the head of this unscrupulous Amazon.

Meantime Count Robert of Paris was engrossed, as it may be termed, by the fair Anna Comnena. She spoke on all subjects, on some better, doubtless, others worse, but on none did she suspect herself of any deficiency; while the good count wished heartily within himself that his companion had been safely in bed with the enchanted Princess of Zulichium. She performed, right or wrong, the part of a panegyrist of the Normans, until at length the count, tired of hearing her prate of she knew not exactly what, broke in as follows:—

'Lady,' he said, 'notwithstanding I and my followers are sometimes so named, yet we are not Normans, who come hither as a numerous and separate body of pilgrims, under the command of their Duke Robert, a valiant, though extravagant, thoughtless, and weak man. I say nothing against the fame of these Normans. They conquered, in our fathers' days, a kingdom far stronger than their own, which men call England; I see that you entertain some of the natives of which country in your pay, under the name of Varangians. Although defeated, as I said, by the Normans, they are, nevertheless, a brave race; nor would we think ourselves much dishonoured by mixing in battle with

* [The well-known story of how Leander swam across the Hellespont every night to visit his beloved Hero, guided by the light of a lamp she placed on a high tower, and how, the lamp having been extinguished one stormy night, Leander perished in the waves.]

them. Still we are the valiant Franks, who had their dwelling on the eastern banks of the Rhine and of the Saale, who were converted to the Christian faith by the celebrated Clovis, and are sufficient, by our numbers and courage, to reconquer the Holy Land, should all Europe besides stand neutral in the contest.'

There are few things more painful to the vanity of a person like the princess, than the being detected in an egregious error, at the moment she is taking credit to herself for being peculiarly accurately informed.

'A false slave, who knew not what he was saying, I suppose,' said the princess, 'imposed upon me the belief that the Varangians were the natural enemies of the Normans. I see him marching there by the side of Achilles Tatius, the leader of his corps.—Call him hither, you officers!—Yonder tall man, I mean, with the battle-axe upon his shoulder.'

Hereward, distinguished by his post at the head of the squadron, was summoned from thence to the presence of the princess, where he made his military obeisance with a cast of sternness in his aspect, as his glance lighted upon the proud look of the Frenchman who rode beside Anna Comnena.

'Did I not understand thee, fellow,' said Anna Comnena, 'to have informed me, nearly a month ago, that the Normans and the Franks were the same people, and enemies to the race from which you spring?'

'The Normans are our mortal enemies, lady,' answered Hereward, 'by whom we were driven from our native land. The Franks are subjects of the same lord paramount with the Normans, and therefore they neither love the Varangians, nor are beloved by them.'

'Good fellow,' said the French count, 'you do the Franks wrong, and ascribe to the Varangians, although not unnaturally, an undue degree of importance, when you suppose that a race which has ceased to exist as an independent nation for more than a generation, can be either an object of interest or resentment to such as we are.'

'I am no stranger,' said the Varangian, 'to the pride of your heart, or the precedence which you assume over those who have been less fortunate in war than yourselves. It is God who casteth down and who buildeth up, nor is there in the world a prospect to which the Varangians would look forward with more pleasure, than that a hundred of their number should meet in a fair field, either with the oppressive Normans, or their modern compatriots, the vain Frenchmen, and let God be the judge which is most worthy of victory.'

'You take an insolent advantage of the chance,' said the Count of Paris, 'which gives you an unlooked-for opportunity to brave a nobleman.'

'It is my sorrow and shame,' said the Varangian, 'that that opportunity is not complete; and that there is a chain around me which forbids me to say, "Slay me or I'll kill thee before we part from this spot!"'

'Why, thou foolish and hot-brained churl,' replied the count, 'what right hast thou to the honour of dying by my blade? Thou art mad, or hast drained the ale-cup so deeply that thou knowest not what thou thinkest or sayest.'

'Thou liest,' said the Varangian, 'though such a reproach be the utmost scandal of thy race.'

The Frenchman motioned his hand quicker than light to his sword, but instantly withdrew it, and said with dignity, 'Thou canst not offend me.'

'But thou,' said the exile, 'hast offended me in a matter which can only be atoned by thy manhood.'

'Where and how?' answered the count; 'although it is needless to ask the question, which thou canst not answer rationally.'

'Thou hast this day,' answered the Varangian, 'put a mortal affront upon a great prince, whom thy master calls his ally, and by whom thou hast been received with every rite of hospitality. Him thou hast affronted as one peasant at a merrymaking would do shame to another, and this dishonour thou hast done to him in the very face of his own chiefs and princes, and the nobles from every court of Europe.'

'It was thy master's part to resent my conduct,' said the Frenchman, 'if in reality he so much felt it as an affront.'

'But that,' said Hereward, 'did not consist with the manners of his country to do. Besides that, we trusty Varangians esteem ourselves bound by our oath as much to defend our Emperor, while the service lasts, on every inch of his honour as on every foot of his territory; I therefore tell thee, Sir Knight, Sir Count, or whatever thou callest thyself, there is mortal quarrel between thee and the Varangian Guard, ever and until thou hast fought it out in fair and manly battle, body to body, with one of the said Imperial Varangians, when duty and opportunity shall permit;—and so God schaw the right!'

As this passed in the French language, the meaning escaped the understanding of such Imperialists as were within hearing at the time; and the princess, who waited with some astonishment till the Crusader and the Varangian had finished their conference, when it was over, said to him with interest, 'I trust you feel that poor man's situation to be too much at a distance from your own, to admit of your meeting him in what is termed knightly battle?'

'On such a question,' said the knight, 'I have but one answer to any lady who does not, like my Brenhilda, cover herself with a shield, and bear a sword by her side, and the heart of a knight in her bosom.'

'And suppose for once,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'that I possessed such titles to your confidence, what would your answer be to me?'

'There can be little reason for concealing it,' said the count. 'The Varangian is a brave man, and a strong one; it is contrary to my vow to shun his challenge, and perhaps I shall derogate from my rank by accepting it; but the world is wide, and he is yet to be born who has seen Robert of Paris shun the face of mortal man. By means of some gallant officer among the Emperor's guards, this poor fellow, who

nourishes so strange an ambition, shall learn that he shall have his wish gratified.'

'And then?'——said Anna Comnena.

'Why, then,' said the count, 'in the poor man's own language, God schaw the right!'

'Which is to say,' said the princess, 'that if my father has an officer of his guards honourable enough to forward so pious and reasonable a purpose, the Emperor must lose an ally, in whose faith he puts confidence, or a most trusty and faithful soldier of his personal guard, who has distinguished himself upon many occasions?'

'I am happy to hear,' said the count, 'that the man bears such a character. In truth, his ambition ought to have some foundation. The more I think of it, the rather am I of opinion that there is something generous, rather than derogatory, in giving to the poor exile, whose thoughts are so high and noble, those privileges of a man of rank, which some who were born in such lofty station are too cowardly to avail themselves of. Yet despond not, noble princess; the challenge is not yet accepted of, and if it was, the issue is in the hand of God. As for me, whose trade is war, the sense that I have something so serious to transact with this resolute man will keep me from other less honourable quarrels, in which a lack of occupation might be apt to involve me.'

The princess made no further observation, being resolved, by private remonstrance to Achilles Tatius, to engage him to prevent a meeting which might be fatal to the one or the other of two brave men. The town now darkened before them, sparkling, at the same time, through its obscurity, by the many lights which illuminated the houses of the citizens. The royal cavalcade held their way to the Golden Gate, where the trusty centurion put his guard under arms to receive them.

'We must now break off, fair ladies,' said the count, as the party, having now dismounted, were standing together at the private gate of the Blacquernal Palace, 'and find as we can the lodgings which we occupied last night.'

'Under your favour, no,' said the empress. 'You must be content to take your supper and repose in quarters more fitting your rank; and,' added Irene, 'with no worse quartermaster than one of the Imperial family who has been your travelling companion.'

This the count heard with considerable inclination to accept the hospitality which was so readily offered. Although, as devoted as a man could well be to the charms of his Brenhilda, the very idea never having entered his head of preferring another's beauty to hers, yet, nevertheless, he had naturally felt himself flattered by the attentions of a woman of eminent beauty and very high rank; and the praises with which the princess had loaded him had not entirely fallen to the ground. He was no longer in the humour in which the morning had found him, disposed to outrage the feelings of the emperor, and to insult his dignity; but, flattered by the adroit sycophancy which the old philosopher had learned from the schools, and the beautiful princess had been gifted with by nature, he assented to the empress's proposal; the more readily, perhaps, that the darkness did not permit him to see that there was distinctly a shade of displeasure on the brow of Brenhilda. Whatever the cause, she cared not to express it, and the married pair had just entered that labyrinth of passages through which Hereward had formerly wandered, when a chamberlain and a female attendant, richly dressed, bent the knee before them, and offered them the means and place to adjust their attire, ere they entered the Imperial presence. Brenhilda looked upon her apparel and arms, spotted with the blood of the insolent Scythian, and, Amazon as she was, felt the shame of being carelessly and improperly dressed. The arms of the knight were also bloody, and in disarrangement.

'Tell my female squire Agatha to give her attendance,' said the countess. 'She alone is in the habit of assisting to unarm and to attire me.'

'Now, God be praised,' thought the Grecian lady of the bed-chamber, 'that I am not called to a toilet where smiths' hammers and tongs are like to be the instruments most in request!'

'Tell Marcian, my armourer,' said the count, 'to attend with the silver and blue suit of plate and mail which I won in a wager from the Count of Thoulouse.'*

'Might I not have the honour of adjusting your armour?' said a splendidly-dressed courtier, with some marks of the armourer's profession, 'since I have put on that of the Emperor himself,—may his name be sacred!'

'And how many rivets hast thou clenched upon the occasion with this hand,' said the count, catching hold of it, 'which looks as if it had never been washed save with milk of roses,—and with this childish toy?' pointing to a hammer with ivory haft and silver head, which, stuck into a milk-white kidskin apron, the official wore as badges of his duty. The armourer fell back in some confusion. 'His grasp,' he said to another domestic, 'is like the seizure of a vice!'

While this little scene passed apart, the Empress Irene, her daughter, and her son-in-law, left the company, under pretence of making a necessary change in their apparel. Immediately after, Agelastes was required to attend the emperor, and the strangers were conducted to two adjacent chambers of retirement, splendidly fitted up, and placed for the present at their disposal, and that of their attendants. There we shall for a time leave them, assuming, with the assistance of their own attendants, a dress which their ideas regarded as most fit for a great occasion; those of the Grecian court willingly keeping apart from a task which they held nearly as formidable as assisting at the lair of a royal tiger or his bride.

Agelastes found the emperor sedulously arranging his most splendid court dress; for, as in the court of Pekin, the change of ceremonial

* Raymond, Count of Thoulouse and Saint Giles, Duke of Carbonne, and Marquis of Provence, an aged warrior who had won high distinction in the contests against the Saracens in Spain, was the chief leader of the Crusaders from the South of France. His title of Saint Giles is corrupted by Anna Comnena into *Sangles*, by which name she constantly mentions him in the Alexiad.

attire was a great part of the ritual observed at Constantinople.

'Thou hast done well, wise Agelastes,' said Alexius to the philosopher, as he approached with abundance of prostrations and genuflections—'Thou hast done well, and we are content with thee. Less than thy wit and address must have failed in separating from their company this tameless bull and unyoked heifer, over whom, if we obtain influence, we shall command, by every account, no small interest among those who esteem them the bravest in the host.'

'My humble understanding,' said Agelastes, 'had been infinitely inferior to the management of so prudent and sagacious a scheme, had it not been shaped forth and suggested by the inimitable wisdom of your most sacred Imperial Highness.'

'We are aware,' said Alexius, 'that we had the merit of blocking forth the scheme of detaining these persons, either by their choice as allies, or by main force as hostages. Their friends, ere yet they have missed them, will be engaged in war with the Turks, and at no liberty, if the devil should suggest such an undertaking, to take arms against the sacred empire. Thus, Agelastes, we shall obtain hostages at least as important and as valuable as that Count of Vermandois, whose liberty the tremendous Godfrey of Bouillon extorted from us by threats of instant war.'

'Pardon,' said Agelastes, 'if I add another reason to those which of themselves so happily support your august resolution. It is possible that we may, by observing the greatest caution and courtesy towards these strangers, win them in good earnest to our side.'

'I conceive you, I conceive you,' said the emperor; 'and this very night I will exhibit myself to this Count and his lady in the royal presence chamber, in the richest robes which our wardrobe can furnish. The lions of Solomon shall roar, the golden tree of Comnenus shall display its wonders, and the feeble eyes of these Franks shall be altogether dazzled by the splendour of the empire. These spectacles cannot but sink into their minds, and dispose them to become the allies and servants of a nation so much more powerful, skilful, and wealthy than their own—Thou hast something to say, Agelastes? Years and long study have made thee wise; though we have given our opinion, thou mayst speak thine own, and live.'

Thrice three times did Agelastes press his brow against the hem of the emperor's garment, and great seemed his anxiety to find such words as might intimate his dissent from his sovereign, yet save him from the informality of contradicting him expressly.

'These sacred words in which your sacred Highness has uttered your most just and accurate opinions, are undeniable, and incapable of contradiction, were any vain enough to attempt to impugn them. Nevertheless, be it lawful to say, that men show the wisest arguments in vain to those who do not understand reason, just as you would in vain exhibit a curious piece of limning to the blind, or endeavour to bribe, as Scripture saith, a sow by the offer of a precious stone. The fault is not, in such case, in the accuracy of your sacred reasoning, but in the obtuseness and perverseness of the barbarians to whom it is applied.'

'Speak more plainly,' said the emperor; 'how often must we tell thee, that in cases in which we really want counsel, we know we must be contented to sacrifice ceremony?'

'Then, in plain words,' said Agelastes, 'these European barbarians are like no others under the cope of the universe, either on the things on which they look with desire, or on those which they consider as discouraging. The treasures of this noble empire, so far as they affected their wishes, would merely inspire them with the desire to go to war with a nation possessed of so much wealth, and who, in their self-conceited estimation, were less able to defend, than they themselves are powerful to assail. Of such a description, for instance, is Bohemond of Tarentum,—and such a one is many a Crusader less able and sagacious than he; for I think I need not tell your Imperial Divinity that he holds his own self-interest to be the devoted guide of his whole conduct through this extraordinary war; and that, therefore, you can justly calculate his course, when once you are aware from which point of the compass the wind of avarice and self-interest breathes with respect to him. But there are spirits among the Franks of a very different nature, and who must be acted upon by very different motives, if we would make ourselves masters of their actions, and the principles by which they are governed. If it were lawful to do so, I would request your Majesty to look at the manner by which an artful juggler of your court achieves his imposition upon the eyes of spectators, yet heedfully disguises the means by which he attains his object. This people—I mean the more lofty-minded of these Crusaders, who act up to the pretences of the doctrine which they call chivalry—despise the thirst of gold, and gold itself, unless to hilt their swords, or to furnish forth some necessary expenses, as alike useless and contemptible. The man who can be moved by the thirst of gain, they contemn, scorn, and despise, and liken him, in the meanness of his objects, to the most paltry serf that ever followed the plough, or wielded the spade. On the other hand, if it happens that they actually need gold, they are sufficiently unceremonious in taking it where they can most easily find it. Thus, they are neither easily to be bribed by giving them sums of gold, nor to be starved into compliance by withholding what chance may render necessary for them. In the one case, they set no value upon the gift of a little paltry yellow dross; in the other, they are accustomed to take what they want.'

'Yellow dross!' interrupted Alexius. 'Do they call that noble metal, equally respected by Roman and barbarian, by rich and poor, by great and mean, by churchmen and laymen, which all mankind are fighting for, plotting for, planning for, intriguing for, and damning themselves for, both soul and body—by the opprobrious name of yellow dross? They are mad, Agelastes, utterly mad. Perils and dangers, penalties and scourges, are the only arguments

to which men who are above the universal influence which moves all others, can possibly be accessible.'

'Nor are they,' said Agelastes, 'more accessible to fear than they are to self-interest. They are, indeed, from their boyhood, brought up to scorn those passions which influence ordinary minds, whether by means of avarice to impel, or of fear to hold back. So much is this the case, that what is enticing to other men, must, to interest them, have the piquant sauce of extreme danger. I told, for instance, to this very hero, a legend of a Princess of Zulichium, who lay on an enchanted couch, beautiful as an angel, awaiting the chosen knight who should, by dispelling her enchanted slumbers, become master of her person, of her kingdom of Zulichium, and of her countless treasures; and, would your Imperial Majesty believe me, I could scarce get the gallant to attend to my legend or take any interest in the adventure, till I assured him he would have to encounter a winged dragon, compared to which the largest of those in the Frank romances was but like a mere dragon-fly?'

'And did this move the gallant?' said the emperor.

'So much so,' replied the philosopher, 'that had I not unfortunately, by the earnestness of my description, awakened the jealousy of his Penthesilea * of a Countess, he had forgotten the Crusade and all belonging to it, to go in quest of Zulichium and its slumbering sovereign.'

'Nay then,' said the emperor, 'we have in our empire (make us sensible of the advantage!) innumerable tale-tellers who are not possessed in the slightest degree of that noble scorn of gold which is proper to the Franks, but shall, for a brace of besants, lie with the devil, and beat him to boot, if in that manner we can gain, as mariners say, the weathergage of the Franks.'

'Discretion,' said Agelastes, 'is in the highest degree necessary. Simply to lie is no very great matter; it is merely a departure from the truth, which is little different from missing a mark at archery, where the whole horizon, one point alone excepted, will alike serve the shooter's purpose; but to move the Frank as is desired, requires a perfect knowledge of his temper and disposition, great caution and presence of mind, and the most versatile readiness in changing from one subject to another. Had I not myself been somewhat alert, I might have paid the penalty of a false step in your Majesty's service, by being flung into my own cascade by the virago whom I offended.'

'A perfect Thalestris!' † said the emperor; 'I shall take care what offence I give her.'

'If I might speak and live,' said Agelastes, 'the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius had best adopt the same precaution.'

'Nicephorus,' said the emperor, 'must settle that with our daughter. I have ever told her that she gives him too much of that history, of which a page or two is sufficiently refreshing; but by our own self we must swear it, Agelastes, that night after night, hearing nothing else, would subdue the patience of a saint!—Forget, good Agelastes, that thou hast heard me say such a thing—more especially, remember it not when thou art in presence of our Imperial wife and daughter.'

'Nor were the freedoms taken by the Cæsar beyond the bounds of an innocent gallantry,' said Agelastes; 'but the Countess, I must needs say, is dangerous. She killed this day the Scythian Toxartis, by what seemed a mere fillip on the head.'

'Hah!' said the emperor; 'I knew that Toxartis, and he was like enough to deserve his death, being a bold, unscrupulous marauder. Take notes, however, how it happened, the names of witnesses, etc., that, if necessary, we may exhibit the fact as a deed of aggression on the part of the Count and Countess of Paris, to the assembly of the Crusaders.'

'I trust,' said Agelastes, 'your Imperial Majesty will not easily resign the golden opportunity of gaining to your standard persons whose character stands so very high in chivalry. It would cost you but little to bestow upon them a Grecian island, worth a hundred of their own paltry lordship of Paris; and if it were given under the condition of their expelling the infidels or the disaffected who may have obtained the temporary possession, it would be so much the more likely to be an acceptable offer. I need not say that the whole knowledge, wisdom, and skill of the poor Agelastes is at your Imperial Majesty's disposal.'

The emperor paused for a moment, and then said, as if on full consideration, 'Worthy Agelastes, I dare trust thee in this difficult and somewhat dangerous matter; but I will keep my purpose of exhibiting to them the lions of Solomon, and the golden tree of our Imperial house.'

'To that there can be no objection,' returned the philosopher; 'only remember to exhibit few guards, for these Franks are like a fiery horse; when in temper he may be ridden with a silk thread, but when he has taken umbrage or suspicion, as they would likely do if they saw many armed men, a steel bridle would not restrain him.'

'I will be cautious,' said the emperor, 'in that particular, as well as others.—Sound the silver bell, Agelastes, that the officers of our wardrobe may attend.'

'One single word, while your Highness is alone,' said Agelastes. 'Will your Imperial Majesty transfer to me the direction of your menagerie, or collection of extraordinary creatures?'

'You make me wonder,' said the emperor, taking a signet, bearing upon it a lion, with the legend *Vicit Leo ex tribu Judæ*. 'This,' he said, 'will give thee the command of our dens. And now, be candid for once with thy master—for deception is thy nature even with me—By what charm wilt thou subdue these untamed savages?'

'By the power of falsehood,' replied Agelastes, with deep reverence.

'I believe thee an adept in it,' said the emperor. 'And to which of their foibles wilt thou address it?'

'To their love of fame,' said the philosopher; and retreated backwards out of the royal apart-

* [Queen of the Amazons, who fought against the Greeks at Troy.]

† [Queen of the Amazons in the time of Alexander the Great.]

ment, as the officers of the wardrobe entered to complete the investment of the emperor in his Imperial habiliments.

CHAPTER XIV.

I will converse with iron-witted fools
And unrespective boys; none are for me,
That look into me with considerate eyes;—
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
RICHARD III.

As they parted from each other, the emperor and philosopher had each their own anxious thoughts on the interview which had passed between them; thoughts which they expressed in broken sentences and ejaculations, though for the better understanding of the degree of estimation in which they held each other, we will give them a more regular and intelligible form.

'Thus, then,' half muttered half said Alexius, but so low as to hide his meaning from the officers of the wardrobe, who entered to do their office,—'thus, then, this bookworm—this remnant of old heathen philosophy, who hardly believes, so God save me, the truth of the Christian creed—has topp'd his part so well that he forces his emperor to dissemble in his presence. Beginning by being the buffoon of the court, he has wormed himself into all its secrets, made himself master of all its intrigues, conspired with my own son-in-law against me, debauched my guards,—indeed, so woven his web of deceit, that my life is safe no longer than he believes me the Imperial dolt which I have affected to seem, in order to deceive him; fortunate that even so I can escape his cautionary anticipation of my displeasure, by avoiding to precipitate his measures of violence. But were this sudden storm of the Crusade fairly passed over, the ungrateful Cæsar, the boastful coward Achilles Tatius, and the bosom serpent Agelastes, shall know whether Alexius Comnenus has been born their dupe. When Greek meets Greek, comes the strife of subtlety, as well as the tug of war.' Thus saying, he resigned himself to the officers of his wardrobe, who proceeded to ornament him as the solemnity required.

'I trust him not,' said Agelastes, the meaning of whose gestures and exclamations we in like manner render into a connected meaning. 'I cannot and do not trust him—he somewhat overacts his part. He has borne himself upon other occasions with the shrewd wit of his family the Comneni; yet he now trusts to the effect of his trumpery lions upon such a shrewd people as the Franks and Normans, and seems to rely upon me for the character of men with whom he has been engaged in peace and war for many years. This can be but to gain my confidence; for there were imperfect looks and broken sentences which seemed to say, "Agelastes, the Emperor knows thee, and confides not in thee." Yet the plot is successful and undiscovered, as far as can be judged; and were I to attempt to recede now, I were lost for ever. A little time to carry on this intrigue with the Frank, when possibly, by the assistance of this gallant, Alexius shall exchange the crown for a cloister, or a still narrower abode; and then, Agelastes, thou deservest to be blotted from the roll of philosophers, if thou canst not push out of the throne the conceited and luxurious Cæsar, and reign in his stead, a second Marcus Antoninus,* when the wisdom of thy rule, long unfelt in a world which has been guided by tyrants and voluptuaries, shall soon obliterate recollection of the manner in which thy power was acquired. To work, then—be active, and be cautious. The time requires it, and the prize deserves it.'

While these thoughts passed through his mind, he arrayed himself, by the assistance of Diogenes, in a clean suit of that simple apparel in which he always frequented the court; a garb as unlike that of a candidate for royalty, as it was a contrast to the magnificent robes with which Alexius was now investing himself.

In their separate apartments, or dressing-rooms, the Count of Paris and his lady put on the best apparel which they had prepared to meet such a chance upon their journey. Even in France, Robert was seldom seen in the peaceful cap and sweeping mantle, whose high plumes and flowing folds were the garb of knights in times of peace. He was now arrayed in a splendid suit of armour, all except the head, which was bare otherwise than as covered by his curled locks. The rest of his person was sheathed in the complete mail of the time, richly inlaid with silver, which contrasted with the azure in which the steel was damasked. His spurs were upon his heels—his sword was by his side, and his triangular shield was suspended round his neck, bearing, painted upon it, a number of *fleurs-de-lis semées*, as it is called, upon the field, being the origin of those lily flowers which after times reduced to three only; and which were the terror of Europe, until they suffered so many reverses in our own time.

The extreme height of Count Robert's person adapted him for a garb which had a tendency to make persons of a lower stature appear rather dwarfish and thick when arrayed *cap-à-pie*. The features, with their self-collected composure and noble contempt of whatever could have astounded or shaken an ordinary mind, formed a well-fitted capital to the excellently-proportioned and vigorous frame which they terminated. The countess was in more peaceful attire; but her robes were short and succinct, like those of one who might be called to hasty exercise. The upper part of her dress consisted of more than one tunic, sitting close to the body, while a skirt, descending from the girdle and reaching to the ankles, embroidered elegantly but richly, completed an attire which a lady might have worn in much more modern times. Her tresses were covered with a light steel head-piece, though some of them, escaping, played round her face, and gave relief to those handsome features which might otherwise have seemed too formal, if closed entirely within the verge of steel. Over these under-garments was flung a rich velvet cloak of a deep green colour, descending from the head, where a species of hood was loosely adjusted over the helmet, deeply laced upon its verges and seams, and

* [Usually called Marcus Aurelius, a noble-minded philosopher of the Stoic school, who ruled the empire of Rome for twenty years (till 180).]

so long as to sweep the ground behind. A dagger of rich materials ornamented a girdle of curious goldsmith's work, and was the only offensive weapon which, notwithstanding her military occupation, she bore upon this occasion.

The toilet—as modern times would say—of the countess was not nearly so soon ended as that of Count Robert, who occupied his time, as husbands of every period are apt to do, in little sub-acid complaints between jest and earnest, upon the dilatory nature of ladies, and the time which they lose in doffing and donning their garments. But when the Countess Brenhilda came forth, in the pride of loveliness, from the inner chamber where she had attired herself, her husband, who was still her lover, clasped her to his breast, and expressed his privilege by the kiss which he took as of right from a creature so beautiful. Chiding him for his folly, yet almost returning the kiss which she received, Brenhilda began now to wonder how they were to find their way to the presence of the emperor.

The query was soon solved, for a gentle knock at the door announced Agelastes, to whom, as best acquainted with the Frankish manners, had been committed, by the emperor, the charge of introducing the noble strangers. A distant sound, like that of the roaring of a lion, or not unsimilar to a large and deep gong of modern times, intimated the commencement of the ceremonial. The black slaves upon guard, who, as hath been observed, were in small numbers, stood ranged in their state dresses of white and gold, bearing in one hand a naked sabre, and in the other a torch of white wax, which served to guide the count and countess through the passages that led to the interior of the palace, and to the most secret hall of audience.

The door of this *sanctum sanctorum* was lower than usual, a simple stratagem devised by some superstitious officer of the Imperial household, to compel the lofty-crested Frank to lower his body, as he presented himself in the Imperial presence. Robert, when the door flew open and he discovered in the background the emperor seated upon his throne amidst a glare of light, which was broken and reflected in ten thousand folds by the jewels with which his vestments were covered, stopped short, and demanded the meaning of introducing him through so low an arch? Agelastes pointed to the emperor by way of shifting from himself a question which he could not have answered. The mute, to apologize for his silence, yawned, and showed the loss of his tongue.

'Holy Virgin!' said the countess, 'what can these unhappy Africans have done, to have deserved a condemnation which involves so cruel a fate?'

'The hour of retribution is perhaps come,' said the count, in a displeased tone, while Agelastes, with such hurry as time and place permitted, entered, making his prostrations and genuflections, little doubting that the Frank must follow him, and to do so must lower his body to the emperor. The count, however, in the height of displeasure at the trick which he conceived had been intended him, turned himself round, and entered the presence-chamber with his back purposely turned to the sovereign, and did not face Alexius until he reached the middle of the apartment, when he was joined by the countess, who had made her approach in a more seemly manner. The emperor, who had prepared to acknowledge the count's expected homage in the most gracious manner, found himself now even more unpleasantly circumstanced than when this uncompromising Frank had usurped the royal throne in the course of the day.

The officers and nobles who stood around, though a very select number, were more numerous than usual, as the meeting was not held for counsel, but merely for state. These assumed such an appearance of mingled displeasure and confusion as might best suit with the perplexity of Alexius, while the wily features of the Norman-Italian, Bohemond of Tarentum, who was also present, had a singular mixture of fantastical glee and derision. It is the misfortune of the weaker on such occasions, or at least the more timid, to be obliged to take the petty part of winking hard, as if not able to see what they cannot avenge.

Alexius made the signal that the ceremonial of the grand reception should immediately commence. Instantly the lions of Solomon, which had been newly furbished, raised their heads, erected their manes, brandished their tails, until they excited the imagination of Count Robert, who, being already on fire at the circumstances of his reception, conceived the bellowing of these automata to be the actual annunciation of immediate assault. Whether the lions, whose forms he beheld, were actually lords of the forest,—whether they were mortals who had suffered transformation,—whether they were productions of the skill of an artful juggler or profound naturalist,—the count neither knew nor cared. All that he thought of the danger was, that it was worthy of his courage; nor did his heart permit him a moment's irresolution. He strode to the nearest lion, which seemed in the act of springing up, and said, in a tone loud and formidable as its own, 'How now, dog!' At the same time he struck the figure with his clenched fist and steel gauntlet with so much force, that its head burst, and the steps and carpet of the throne were covered with wheels, springs, and other machinery, which had been the means of producing its mimic terrors.

On this display of the real nature of the cause of his anger, Count Robert could not but feel a little ashamed of having given way to passion on such an occasion. He was still more confused when Bohemond, descending from his station near the emperor, addressed him in the Frank language,—'You have done a gallant deed, truly, Count Robert, in freeing the court of Byzantium from an object of fear which has long been used to frighten peevish children and unruly barbarians!'

Enthusiasm has no greater enemy than ridicule. 'Why, then,' said Count Robert, blushing deeply at the same time, 'did they exhibit its fantastic terrors to me? I am neither child nor barbarian.'

'Address yourself to the Emperor, then, as an intelligent man,' answered Bohemond. 'Say something to him in excuse of your conduct, and show that our bravery has not entirely run away with our common sense. And hark you also,

while I have a moment's speech of you,—do you and your wife heedfully follow my example at supper!' These words were spoken with a significant tone and corresponding look.

The opinion of Bohemond, from his long intercourse, both in peace and war, with the Grecian emperor, gave him great influence with the other Crusaders, and Count Robert yielded to his advice. He turned towards the emperor, with something liker an obeisance than he had hitherto paid. 'I crave your pardon,' he said, 'for breaking that gilded piece of pageantry; but, in sooth, the wonders of sorcery and the portents of accomplished and skilful jugglers are so numerous in this country, that one does not clearly distinguish what is true from what is false, or what is real from what is illusory.'

The emperor, notwithstanding the presence of mind for which he was remarkable, and the courage in which he was not held by his countrymen to be deficient, received this apology somewhat awkwardly. Perhaps the rueful complaisance with which he accepted the count's apology might be best compared to that of a lady of the present day, when an awkward guest has broken a valuable piece of china. He muttered something about the machines having been long preserved in the Imperial family, as being made on the model of those which guarded the throne of the wise King of Israel; to which the blunt, plain-spoken count expressed his doubt in reply, whether the wisest prince in the world ever condescended to frighten his subjects or guests by the mimic roarings of a wooden lion. 'If,' said he, 'I too hastily took it for a living creature, I have had the worst, by damaging my excellent gauntlet in dashing to pieces its timber skull.'

The emperor, after a little more had been said, chiefly on the same subject, proposed that they should pass to the banquet-room. Marshalled, accordingly, by the grand sewer of the Imperial table, and attended by all present, excepting the emperor and the immediate members of his family, the Frankish guests were guided through a labyrinth of apartments, each of which was filled with wonders of nature and art, calculated to enhance their opinion of the wealth and grandeur which had assembled together so much that was wonderful. Their passage being necessarily slow and interrupted, gave the emperor time to change his dress, according to the ritual of his court, which did not permit his appearing twice in the same vesture before the same spectators. He took the opportunity to summon Agelastes into his presence, and, that their conference might be secret, he used, in assisting his toilet, the agency of some of the mutes destined for the service of the interior.

The temper of Alexius Comnenus was considerably moved, although it was one of the peculiarities of his situation to be ever under the necessity of disguising the emotions of his mind, and of affecting, in presence of his subjects, a superiority to human passion which he was far from feeling. It was therefore with gravity, and even reprehension, that he asked, 'By whose error it was that the wily Bohemond, half Italian and half Norman, was present at this interview? Surely, if there be one in the crusading army likely to conduct that foolish youth and his wife behind the scenes of the exhibition by which we hoped to impose upon them, the Count of Tarentum, as he entitles himself, is that person.'

'It was that old man,' said Agelastes, '(if I may reply and live), Michael Cantacuzene, who deemed that his presence was peculiarly desired; but he returns to the camp this very night.'

'Yes,' said Alexius, 'to inform Godfrey and the rest of the Crusaders that one of the boldest and most highly-esteemed of their number is left, with his wife, a hostage in our Imperial city, and to bring back, perhaps, an alternative of instant war, unless they are delivered up!'

'If it is your Imperial Highness's will to think so,' said Agelastes, 'you can suffer Count Robert and his wife to return to the camp with the Italian-Norman.'

'What?' answered the emperor, 'and so lose all the fruits of an enterprise, the preparations for which have already cost us so much in actual expense; and, were our heart made of the same stuff with that of ordinary mortals, would have cost us so much more in vexation and anxiety? No, no; issue warning to the Crusaders who are still on the hither side, that further rendering of homage is dispensed with, and that they repair to the quays, on the banks of the Bosphorus, by peep of light to-morrow. Let our admiral, as he values his head, pass every man of them over to the farther side before noon. Let there be largesses, a princely banquet on the farther bank—all that may increase their anxiety to pass. Then, Agelastes, we will trust to ourselves to meet this additional danger, either by bribing the venality of Bohemond, or by bidding defiance to the Crusaders. Their forces are scattered and the chief of them, with the leaders themselves, are all now—or by far the greater part—on the east side of the Bosphorus.—And now to the banquet! seeing that the change of dress has been made sufficient to answer the statutes of the household; since our ancestors chose to make rules for exhibiting us to our subjects, as priests exhibit their images at their shrines!'

'Under grant of life,' said Agelastes, 'it was not done inconsiderately, but in order that the Emperor, ruled ever by the same laws from father to son, might ever be regarded as something beyond the common laws of humanity—the divine image of a saint, therefore, rather than a human being.'

'We know it, good Agelastes,' answered the emperor, with a smile; 'and we are also aware that many of our subjects, like the worshippers of Bel in Holy Writ, treat us so far as an image, as to assist us in devouring the revenues of our provinces, which are gathered in our name, and for our use. These things we now only touch lightly, the time not suiting them.'

Alexius left the secret council accordingly, after the order for the passage of the Crusaders had been written out and subscribed in due form and in the sacred ink of the Imperial Chancery.

Meantime the rest of the company had arrived in a hall, which, like the other apartments in the palace, was most tastefully as well as gorgeously fitted up, except that a table, which

presented a princely banquet, might have been deemed faulty in this respect, that the dishes, which were most splendid, both in the materials of which they were composed and in the viands which they held, were elevated by means of feet, so as to be upon a level with female guests as they sat, and with men as they lay recumbent at the banquet which it offered.

Around stood a number of black slaves richly attired, while the grand sewer, Michael Cantacuzene, arranged the strangers with his golden wand, and conveyed orders to them, by signs, that all should remain standing around the table, until a signal should be given.

The upper end of the board, thus furnished, and thus surrounded, was hidden by a curtain of muslin and silver, which fell from the top of the arch under which the upper part seemed to pass. On this curtain the sewer kept a wary eye; and when he observed it slightly shake, he waved his wand of office, and all expected the result.

As if self-moved, the mystic curtain arose, and discovered behind it a throne eight steps higher than the end of the table, decorated in the most magnificent manner, and having placed before it a small table of ivory inlaid with silver, behind which was seated Alexius Comnenus, in a dress entirely different from what he had worn in the course of the day, and so much more gorgeous than his former vestments, that it seemed not unnatural that his subjects should prostrate themselves before a figure so splendid. His wife, his daughter, and his son-in-law the Cæsar, stood behind him with faces bent to the ground, and it was with deep humility that, descending from the throne at the emperor's command, they mingled with the guests of the lower table, and, exalted as they were, proceeded to the festive board at the signal of the grand sewer. So that they could not be said to partake of the repast with the emperor, nor to be placed at the Imperial table, although they supped in his presence, and were encouraged by his repeated request to them to make good cheer. No dishes presented at the lower table were offered at the higher; but wines, and more delicate sorts of food, which arose before the emperor as if by magic, and seemed designed for his own proper use, were repeatedly sent, by his special directions, to one or other of the guests whom Alexius delighted to honour—among these the Franks being particularly distinguished.

The behaviour of Bohemond was on this occasion particularly remarkable.

Count Robert, who kept an eye upon him, both for his recent words, and owing to an expressive look which he once or twice darted towards him, observed that in no liquors or food, not even those sent from the emperor's own table, did this astucious prince choose to indulge. A piece of bread, taken from the canister at random, and a glass of pure water, was the only refreshment of which he was pleased to partake. His alleged excuse was, the veneration due to the Holy Festival of the Advent, which chanced to occur that very night and which both the Greek and Latin rule agree to hold sacred.

'I had not expected this of you, Sir Bohemond,' said the emperor, 'that you should have refused my personal hospitality, at my own board, on the very day on which you honoured me by entering into my service as vassal for the principality of Antioch.'

'Antioch is not yet conquered,' said Sir Bohemond; 'and conscience, dread sovereign, must always have its exceptions, in whatever temporal contracts we may engage.'

'Come, gentle Count,' said the emperor, who obviously regarded Bohemond's inhospitable humour as something arising more from suspicion than devotion, 'we invite, though it is not our custom, our children, our noble guests, and our principal officers here present, to a general carouse. Fill the cups called the Nine Muses! let them be brimful of the wine which is said to be sacred to the Imperial lips!'

At the emperor's command the cups were filled; they were of pure gold, and there was richly engraved upon each the effigy of the Muse to whom it was dedicated.

'You at least,' said the emperor, 'my gentle Count Robert, you and your lovely lady will not have any scruple to pledge your Imperial host?'

'If that scruple is to imply suspicion of the provision with which we are here served, I disdain to nourish such,' said Count Robert. 'If it is a sin which I commit by tasting wine to-night, it is a venial one; nor shall I greatly augment my load by carrying it, with the rest of my trespasses, to the next confessional.'

'Will you, then, Prince Bohemond, not be ruled by the conduct of your friend?' said the emperor.

'Methinks,' replied the Norman-Italian, 'my friend might have done better to have been ruled by mine; but be it as his wisdom pleases. The flavour of such exquisite wine is sufficient for me.'

So saying, he emptied the wine into another goblet, and seemed alternately to admire the carving of the cup, and the flavour of what it had lately contained.

'You are right, Sir Bohemond,' said the emperor; 'the fabric of that cup is beautiful; it was done by one of the ancient gravers of Greece. The boasted cup of Nestor, which Homer has handed down to us, was a good deal larger, perhaps, but neither equalled these in the value of the material, nor the exquisite beauty of the workmanship. Let each one, therefore, of my stranger guests accept of the cup which he either has or might have drunk out of, as a recollection of me; and may the expedition against the infidels be as propitious as their confidence and courage deserve!'

'If I accept your gift, mighty Emperor,' said Bohemond, 'it is only to atone for the apparent discourtesy, when my devotion compels me to decline your Imperial pledge, and to show you that we part on the most intimate terms of friendship.'

So saying, he bowed deeply to the emperor, who answered him with a smile, into which was thrown a considerable portion of sarcastic expression.

'And I,' said the Count of Paris, 'having taken upon my conscience the fault of meeting your Imperial pledge, may stand excused from

incurring the blame of aiding to dismantle your table of these curious drinking-cups. We empty them to your health, and we cannot in any other respect profit by them.'

'But Prince Bohemond can,' said the emperor; 'to whose quarters they shall be carried, sanctioned by your generous use. And we have still a set for you, and for your lovely Countess, equal to that of the Graces, though no longer matching in number the nymphs of Parnassus.—The evening bell rings, and calls us to remember the hour of rest, that we may be ready to meet the labours of to-morrow.'

The party then broke up for the evening. Bohemond left the palace that night, not forgetting the Muses, of whom he was not in general a devotee. The result was, as the wily Greek had intended, that he had established between Bohemond and the count, not indeed a quarrel, but a kind of difference of opinion; Bohemond feeling that the fiery Count of Paris must think his conduct sordid and avaricious, while Count Robert was far less inclined than before to rely on him as a counsellor.

CHAPTER XV.

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!
SAMSON AGONISTES.

THE Count of Paris and his lady were that night lodged in the Imperial Palace of the Blacquernal. Their apartments were contiguous, but the communication between them was cut off for the night by the mutual door being locked and barred. They marvelled somewhat at this precaution. The observance, however, of the festival of the Church was pleaded as an admissible, and not unnatural excuse for this extraordinary circumstance. Neither the Count nor his lady entertained, it may be believed, the slightest personal fear for anything which could happen to them. Their attendants, Marcian and Agatha, having assisted their master and mistress in the performance of their usual offices, left them, in order to seek the places of repose assigned to them among persons of their degree.

The preceding day had been one of excitation, and of much bustle and interest; perhaps, also, the wine, sacred to the Imperial lips, of which Count Robert had taken a single, indeed, but a deep draught, was more potent than the delicate and high-flavoured juice of the Gascogne grape, to which he was accustomed; at any rate, it seemed to him that, from the time he felt that he had slept, daylight ought to have been broad in his chamber when he awaked, and yet it was still darkness almost palpable. Somewhat surprised, he gazed eagerly around, but could discern nothing, except two balls of red light which shone from among the darkness with a self-emitted brilliancy, like the eyes of a wild animal while it glares upon its prey. The count started from bed to put on his armour, a necessary precaution if what he saw should really be a wild creature and at liberty; but the instant he stirred, a deep growl was uttered, such as the count had never heard, but which might be compared to the sound of a thousand monsters at once; and, as the symphony, was heard the clash of iron chains, and the springing of a monstrous creature towards the bedside, which appeared, however, to be withheld by some fastening from attaining the end of its bound. The roars which it uttered now ran thick on each other. They were most tremendous, and must have been heard throughout the whole palace. The creature seemed to gather itself many yards nearer to the bed than by its glaring eyeballs it appeared at first to be stationed, and how much nearer, or what degree of motion, might place him within the monster's reach, the count was totally uncertain. Its breathing was even heard, and Count Robert thought he felt the heat of its respiration, while his defenceless limbs might not be two yards distant from the fangs which he heard grinding against each other, and the claws which tore up fragments of wood from the oaken floor. The Count of Paris was one of the bravest men who lived in a time when bravery was the universal property of all who claimed a drop of noble blood, and the knight was a descendant of Charlemagne. He was, however, a man, and therefore cannot be said to have endured unappalled a sense of danger so unexpected and so extraordinary. But his was not a sudden alarm or panic, it was a calm sense of extreme peril, qualified by a resolution to exert his faculties to the uttermost, to save his life if it were possible. He withdrew himself within the bed, no longer a place of rest, being thus a few feet farther from the two glaring eyeballs, which remained so closely fixed upon him, that, in spite of his courage, nature painfully suggested the bitter imagination of his limbs being mangled, torn, and churned with the life-blood, in the jaws of some monstrous beast of prey. One saving thought alone presented itself—this might be a trial, an experiment of the philosopher Agelastes, or of the emperor his master, for the purpose of proving the courage of which the Christians vaunted so highly, and punishing the thoughtless insult which the count had been unadvised enough to put upon the emperor the preceding day.

'Well is it said,' he reflected in his agony, 'Beard not the lion in his den! Perhaps even now some base slave deliberates whether I have yet tasted enough of the preliminary agonies of death, and whether he shall yet slip the chain which keeps the savage from doing his work. But, come death when it will, it shall never be said that Count Robert was heard to receive it with prayers for compassion, or with cries of pain or terror.' He turned his face to the wall, and waited, with a strong mental exertion, the death which he conceived to be fast approaching.

His first feelings had been unavoidably of a selfish nature. The danger was too instant and of a description too horrible, to admit of any which involved a more comprehensive view of his calamity; and other reflections of a more distant kind were at first swallowed up in the all-engrossing thought of immediate death. But, as his ideas became clearer, the safety of his countess rushed upon his mind—what might

she now be suffering! and, while he was subjected to a trial so extraordinary, for what were her weaker frame and female courage reserved? Was she still within a few yards of him, as when he lay down the last night? or had the barbarians, who had devised for him a scene so cruel, availed themselves of his and his lady's incautious confidence to inflict upon her some villany of the same kind, or even yet more perfidious? Did she sleep or wake, or could she sleep within the close hearing of that horrible cry, which shook all around? He resolved to utter her name, warning her, if possible, to be upon her guard, and to answer without venturing rashly into the apartment which contained a guest so horribly perilous.

He uttered, therefore, his wife's name, but in trembling accents, as if he had been afraid of the savage beast overhearing him.

'Brenhilda! Brenhilda!—there is danger—awake, and speak to me, but do not arise.' There was no answer.—'What am I become,' he said to himself, 'that I call upon Brenhilda of Aspramonte, like a child on its sleeping nurse, and all because there is a wild-cat in the same room with me? Shame on thee, Count of Paris! Let thy arms be rent, and thy spurs be hacked from thy heels!—What ho!' he cried aloud, but still with a tremulous voice, 'Brenhilda, we are beset, the foe are upon us!—Answer me, but stir not.'

A deep growl from the monster which garrisoned his apartment was the only answer. The sound seemed to say, 'Thou hast no hope!' and it ran to the knight's bosom as the genuine expression of despair.

'Perhaps, however, I am still too cold in making my misery known. What ho! my love! Brenhilda!'

A voice, hollow and disconsolate as that which might have served an inhabitant of the grave, answered as if from a distance. 'What disconsolate wretch art thou, who expectest that the living can answer thee from the habitations of the dead?'

'I am a Christian man, a free noble of the kingdom of France,' answered the count. 'Yesterday the captain of five hundred men, the bravest in France,—the bravest, that is, who breathe mortal air,—and I am here without a glimpse of light, to direct me how to avoid the corner in which lies a wild tiger-cat, prompt to spring upon and to devour me.'

'Thou art an example,' replied the voice, 'and wilt not long be the last, of the changes of fortune. I, who am now suffering in my third year, was that mighty Ursel, who rivalled Alexius Comnenus for the crown of Greece, was betrayed by my confederates, and, being deprived of that eyesight which is the chief blessing of humanity, I inhabit these vaults, no distant neighbour of the wild animals by whom they are sometimes occupied, and whose cries of joy I hear when unfortunate victims like thyself are delivered up to their fury.'

'Didst thou not then hear,' said Count Robert, in return, 'a warlike guest and his bride conducted hither last night, with sounds as it might seem of bridal music?—O Brenhilda! hast thou, so young—so beautiful—been so treacherously done to death by means so unutterably horrible?'

'Think not,' answered Ursel, as the voice had called its owner, 'that the Greeks pamper their wild beasts on such lordly fare. For their enemies, which term includes not only all that are really such, but all those whom they fear or hate, they have dungeons whose locks never revolve; hot instruments of steel, to sear the eyeballs in the head; lions and tigers, when it pleases them to make a speedy end of their captives—but these are only for the male prisoners. While for the women—if they be young and beautiful, the princes of the land have places in their bed and bower; nor are they employed, like the captives of Agamemnon's host, to draw water from an Argive spring, but are admired and adored by those whom fate has made the lords of their destiny.'

'Such shall never be the doom of Brenhilda!' exclaimed Count Robert; 'her husband still lives to assist her, and should he die, she knows well how to follow him without leaving a blot in the epitaph of either.'

The captive did not immediately reply, and a short pause ensued, which was broken by Ursel's voice. 'Stranger,' he said, 'what noise is that I hear?'

'Nay, I hear nothing,' said Count Robert.

'But I do,' said Ursel. 'The cruel deprivation of my eyesight renders my other senses more acute.'

'Disquiet not thyself about the matter, fellow-prisoner,' answered the count, 'but wait the event in silence.'

Suddenly a light arose in the apartment, lurid, red, and smoky. The knight had bethought him of a flint and match which he usually carried about him, and with as little noise as possible had lighted the torch by the bedside; this he instantly applied to the curtains of the bed, which, being of thin muslin, were in a moment in flames. The knight sprang at the same instant from his bed. The tiger, for such it was, terrified at the flame, leaped backwards as far as his chain would permit, heedless of anything save this new object of terror. Count Robert upon this seized on a massive wooden stool, which was the only offensive weapon on which he could lay his hand, and, marking at those eyes which now reflected the blaze of fire, and which had recently seemed so appalling, he discharged against them this fragment of ponderous oak, with a force which less resembled human strength than the impetus with which an engine hurls a stone. He had employed his instant of time so well, and his aim was so true, that the missile went right to the mark and with incredible force. The skull of the tiger, which might be, perhaps, somewhat exaggerated if described as being of the very largest size, was fractured by the blow, and with the assistance of his dagger, which had fortunately been left with him, the French count despatched the monster, and had the satisfaction to see him grin his last, and roll, in the agony of death, those eyes which were lately so formidable.

Looking around him, he discovered, by the light of the fire which he had raised, that the apartment in which he now lay was different

from that in which he had gone to bed overnight; nor could there be a stronger contrast between the furniture of both, than the flickering, half-burnt remains of the thin muslin curtains, and the strong, bare, dungeon-looking walls of the room itself, or the very serviceable wooden stool, of which he had made such good use.

The knight had no leisure to form conclusions upon such a subject. He hastily extinguished the fire, which had, indeed, nothing that it could lay hold of, and proceeded, by the light of the flambeau, to examine the apartment, and its means of entrance. It is scarce necessary to say that he saw no communication with the room of Brenhilda, which convinced him that they had been separated the evening before, under pretence of devotional scruples, in order to accomplish some most villanous design upon one or both of them. His own part of the night's adventure we have already seen, and success, so far, over so formidable a danger, gave him a trembling hope that Brenhilda, by her own worth and valour, would be able to defend herself against all attacks of fraud or force, until he could find his way to her rescue. 'I should have paid more regard,' he said, 'to Bohemond's caution last night, who, I think, intimated to me, as plainly as if he had spoken it in direct terms, that that same cup of wine was a drugged potion. But then, fie upon him for an avaricious hound! how was it possible I should think he suspected any such thing, when he spoke not out like a man, but, for sheer coldness of heart, or base self-interest, suffered me to run the risk of being poisoned by the wily despot?'

Here he heard a voice from the same quarter as before. 'Ho there! ho, stranger! Do you live, or have you been murdered? What means this stifling smell of smoke? For God's sake, answer him who can receive no information from eyes, closed, alas! for ever.'

'I am at liberty,' said the count, 'and the monster destined to devour me has groaned its last. I would, my friend Ursel, since such is thy name, thou hadst the advantage of thine eyes, to have borne witness to yonder combat; it had been worth thy while, though thou shouldst have lost them a minute afterwards, and it would have greatly advantaged whoever shall have the task of compiling my history.'

While he gave a thought to that vanity which strongly ruled him, he lost no time in seeking some mode of escape from the dungeon, for by that means only might he hope to recover his countess. At last he found an entrance in the wall, but it was strongly locked and bolted. 'I have found the passage,' he called out; 'and its direction is the same in which thy voice is heard—But how shall I undo the door?'

'I'll teach thee that secret,' said Ursel. 'I would I could as easily unlock each bolt that withholds us from the open air; but as for thy seclusion within the dungeon, heave up the door by main strength, and thou shalt lift the locks to a place where, pushing then the door from thee, the fastenings will find a grooved passage in the wall, and the door itself will open. Would that I could indeed see thee, not only because, being a gallant man, thou must be a goodly sight, but also because I should thereby know that I was not caverned in darkness for ever.'

While he spoke thus, the count made a bundle of his armour, from which he missed nothing except his sword Tranchefer, and then proceeded to try what efforts he could make, according to the blind man's instructions, to open the door of his prison-house. Pushing in a direct line was, he soon found, attended with no effect; but when he applied his gigantic strength, and raised the door as high as it would go, he had the satisfaction to find that the bolts yielded, though reluctantly. A space had been cut so as to allow them to move out of the socket into which they had been forced; and, without the turn of a key, but by a powerful thrust forwards, a small passage was left open. The knight entered, bearing his armour in his hand.

'I hear thee,' said Ursel, 'O stranger! and am aware thou art come into my place of captivity. For three years have I been employed in cutting these grooves, corresponding to the sockets which hold these iron bolts, and preserving the knowledge of the secret from the prison-keepers. Twenty such bolts, perhaps, must be sawn through, ere my steps shall approach the upper air. What prospect is there that I shall have strength of mind sufficient to continue the task? Yet credit me, noble stranger, I rejoice in having been thus far aiding to thy deliverance; for if Heaven blesses not, in any further degree, our aspirations after freedom, we may still be a comfort to each other, while tyranny permits our mutual life.'

Count Robert looked around, and shuddered that a human being should talk of anything approaching to comfort, connected with his residence in what seemed a living tomb. Ursel's dungeon was not above twelve feet square, vaulted in the roof, and strongly built in the walls by stones which the chisel had morticed closely together. A bed, a coarse footstool, like that which Robert had just launched at the head of the tiger, and a table of equally massive materials, were its only articles of furniture. On a long stone, above the bed, were these few but terrible words:—'Zedekias Ursel, imprisoned here on the Ides of March, A.D. ——. Died and interred on the spot——' A blank was left for filling up the period. The figure of the captive could hardly be discerned amid the wildness of his dress and dishabille. The hair of his head, uncut and uncombed, descended in elf-locks, and mingled with a beard of extravagant length.

'Look on me,' said the captive, 'and rejoice that thou canst yet see the wretched condition to which iron-hearted tyranny can reduce a fellow-creature, both in mortal existence and in future hope.'

'Was it thou,' said Count Robert, whose blood ran cold in his veins, 'that hadst the heart to spend thy time in sawing through the blocks of stone by which these bolts are secured?'

'Alas!' said Ursel, 'what could a blind man do? Busy I must be, if I would preserve my senses. Great as the labour was, it was to me the task of three years; nor can you wonder that I should have devoted to it my whole time, when I had no other means of occupying it. Perhaps, and most likely, my dungeon does not

admit the distinction of day and night; but a distant cathedral clock told me how hour after hour fled away, and found me expending them in rubbing one stone against another. But when the door gave way, I found I had only cut an access into a prison more strong than that which held me. I rejoice, nevertheless, since it has brought us together, given thee an entrance to my dungeon, and me a companion in my misery.'

'Think better than that,' said Count Robert; 'think of liberty—think of revenge! I cannot believe such unjust treachery will end successfully, else needs must I say, the Heavens are less just than priests tell us of. How art thou supplied with food in this dungeon of thine?'

'A warder,' said Ursel, 'and who, I think, understands not the Greek language—at least he never either answers or addresses me—brings a loaf and a pitcher of water, enough to supply my miserable life till two days are past. I must, therefore, pray that you will retire for a space into the next prison, so that the warder may have no means of knowing that we can hold correspondence together.'

'I see not,' said Count Robert, 'by what access the barbarian, if he is one, can enter my dungeon without passing through yours; but no matter, I will retire into the inner or outer room, whichever it happens to be, and be thou then well aware that the warder will have some one to grapple with ere he leaves his prison-work to-day. Meanwhile, think thyself dumb as thou art blind, and be assured that the offer of freedom itself would not induce me to desert the cause of a companion in adversity.'

'Alas!' said the old man, 'I listen to thy promises as I should to those of the morning gale, which tells me that the sun is about to rise, although I know that I at least shall never behold it. Thou art one of those wild and undespairing knights, whom for so many years the west of Europe hath sent forth to attempt impossibilities, and from thee, therefore, I can only hope for such a fabric of relief as an idle boy would blow out of soap bubbles.'

'Think better of us, old man,' said Count Robert, retiring; 'at least let me die with my blood warm, and believing it possible for me to be once more united to my beloved Brenhilda.'

So saying, he retired into his own cell, and replaced the door, so that the operations of Ursel, which indeed were only such as three years' solitude could have achieved, should escape observation when again visited by the warder. 'It is ill luck,' said he when once more within his own prison—for that in which the tiger had been secured, he instinctively concluded to be destined for him—'It is ill luck that I had not found a young and able fellow-captive, instead of one decrepit by imprisonment, blind, and broken down past exertion. But God's will be done! I will not leave behind me the poor wretch whom I have found in such a condition, though he is perfectly unable to assist me in accomplishing my escape, and is rather more likely to retard it. Meantime, before we put out the torch, let us see if by close examination we can discover any door in the wall save that to the blind man's dungeon. If not, I much suspect that my descent has been made through the roof. That cup of wine—that Muse, as they called it—had a taste more like medicine than merry companions' pledge.'

He began accordingly a strict survey of the walls, which he resolved to conclude by extinguishing the torch, that he might take the person who should enter his dungeon darkling and by surprise. For a similar reason, he dragged into the darkest corner the carcass of the tiger, and covered it with the remains of the bed-clothes, swearing, at the same time, that a half-tiger should be his crest in future, if he had the fortune, which his bold heart would not suffer him to doubt, of getting through the present danger. 'But,' he added, 'if these necromantic vassals of hell shall raise the devil upon me, what shall I do then? And so great is the chance, that methinks I would fain dispense with extinguishing the flambeau. Yet it is childish for one dubbed in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Broken Lances to make much difference between a light room and a dark one. Let them come, as many fiends as the cell can hold, and we shall see if we receive them not as becomes a Christian knight; and surely Our Lady, to whom I was ever a true votary, will hold it an acceptable sacrifice that I tore myself from my Brenhilda, even for a single moment, in honour of her advent, and thus led the way for our woeful separation. Fiends! I defy ye in the body as in the spirit, and I retain the remains of this flambeau until some more convenient opportunity.' He dashed it against the wall as he spoke, and then quietly sat down in a corner, to watch what should next happen.

Thought after thought chased each other through his mind. His confidence in his wife's fidelity, and his trust in her uncommon strength and activity, were the greatest comforts which he had; nor could her danger present itself to him in any shape so terrible, but that he found consolation in these reflections: 'She is pure,' he said, 'as the dew of heaven, and Heaven will not abandon its own.'

CHAPTER XVI.

Strange ape of man! who loathes thee while he scorns thee,
Half a reproach to us, and half a jest;
What fancies can be ours ere we have pleasure
In viewing our own form, our pride and passions,
Reflected in a shape grotesque as thine.

ANONYMOUS.

COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS, having ensconced himself behind the ruins of the bed so that he could not well be observed, unless a strong light was at once flung upon the place of his retreat, waited with anxiety how and in what manner the warder of the dungeon, charged with the task of bringing food to the prisoners, should make himself visible; nor was it long ere symptoms of his approach began to be heard and observed.

A light was partially seen, as from a trap-door opening in the roof, and a voice was heard to utter these words in Anglo-Saxon: 'Leap,

sirrah ; come, no delay ; leap, my good Sylvan, show your honour's activity.' A strange chuckling hoarse voice, in a language totally unintelligible to Count Robert, was heard to respond, as if disputing the orders which were received.

'What, sir,' said his companion, 'you must contest the point, must you? Nay, if thou art so lazy, I must give your honour a ladder, and perhaps a kick to hasten your journey.' Something, then, of very great size, in the form of a human being, jumped down from the trap-door, though the height might be above fourteen feet. This figure was gigantic, being upwards of seven feet high. In its left hand it held a torch, and in its right a skein of fine silk, which, unwinding itself as it descended, remained unbroken, though it was easy to conceive it could not have afforded a creature so large any support in his descent from the roof. He alighted with perfect safety and activity upon his feet, and, as if rebounding from the floor, he sprung upwards again, so as almost to touch the roof. In this last gambaud the torch which he bore was extinguished ; but this extraordinary warder whirled it round his head with infinite velocity, so that it again ignited. The bearer, who appeared to intend the accomplishment of this object, endeavoured to satisfy himself that it was really attained, by approaching, as if cautiously, its left hand to the flame of the torch. This practical experiment seemed attended with consequences which the creature had not expected, for it howled with pain, shaking the burnt hand, and chattering as if bemoaning itself.

'Take heed there, Sylvanus!' said the same voice in Anglo-Saxon, and in a tone of rebuke, 'Ho there! mind thy duty, Sylvan! Carry food to the blind man, and stand not there to play thyself, lest I trust thee not again alone on such an errand!'

The creature—for it would have been rash to have termed it a man—turning its eye upwards to the place from whence the voice came, answered with a dreadful grin and shaking of its fist, yet presently began to undo a parcel, and rummage in the pockets of a sort of jerkin and pantaloons which it wore, seeking, it appeared, a bunch of keys, which at length it produced, while it took from the pocket a loaf of bread. Heating the stone of the wall, it affixed the torch to it by a piece of wax, and then cautiously looked out for the entrance to the old man's dungeon, which it opened with a key selected from the bunch. Within the passage it seemed to look for and discover the handle of a pump, at which it filled a pitcher that it bore, and, bringing back the fragments of the former loaf and remains of the pitcher of water, it ate a little, as if it were in sport, and very soon, making a frightful grimace, flung the fragments away. The Count of Paris, in the meanwhile, watched anxiously the proceedings of this unknown animal. His first thought was, that the creature, whose limbs were so much larger than humanity, whose grimaces were so frightful, and whose activity seemed supernatural, could be no other than the devil himself, or some of his imps, whose situation and office in those gloomy regions seemed by no means hard to conjecture. The human voice, however, which he had heard, was less that of a necromancer conjuring a fiend, than that of a person giving commands to a wild animal, over whom he had, by training, obtained a great superiority.

'A shame on it,' said the count, 'if I suffer a common jackanapes,—for such I take this devil-seeming beast to be, although twice as large as any of its fellows whom I have ever seen,—to throw an obstacle in the way of my obtaining daylight and freedom! Let us but watch, and the chance is that we make that furry gentleman our guide to the upper regions.'

Meantime the creature, which rummaged about everywhere, at length discovered the body of the tiger,—touched it, stirred it, with many strange motions, and seemed to lament and wonder at its death. At once it seemed struck with the idea that some one must have slain it, and Count Robert had the mortification to see it once more select the key, and spring towards the door of Ursel's prison with such alacrity, that, had its intention been to strangle him, it would have accomplished its purpose before the interference of Count Robert could have prevented its revenge taking place. Apparently, however, it reflected that, for reasons which seemed satisfactory, the death of the tiger could not be caused by the unfortunate Ursel, but had been accomplished by some one concealed within the outer prison.

Slowly grumbling, therefore, and chattering to itself, and peeping anxiously into every corner, the tremendous creature, so like, yet so very unlike, to the human form, came stealing along the walls, moving whatever he thought could seclude a man from his observation. Its extended legs and arms were protruded forward with great strides, and its sharp eyes, on the watch to discover the object of its search, kept prying, with the assistance of the torch, into every corner.

Considering the vicinity of Alexius' collection of animals, the reader by this time can have little doubt that the creature in question, whose appearance seemed to the Count of Paris so very problematical, was a specimen of that gigantic species of ape—if it is not indeed some animal more nearly allied to ourselves—to which, I believe, naturalists have given the name of the Ourang Outang. This creature differs from the rest of its fraternity, in being comparatively more docile and serviceable ; and though possessing the power of imitation which is common to the whole race, yet making use of it less in mere mockery, than in the desire of improvement and instruction perfectly unknown to his brethren. The aptitude which it possesses of acquiring information is surprisingly great, and probably, if placed in a favourable situation, it might admit of being domesticated in a considerable degree ; but such advantages the ardour of scientific curiosity has never afforded this creature. The last we have heard of was seen, we believe, in the island of Sumatra—it was of great size and strength, and upwards of seven feet high. It died defending desperately its innocent life against a party of Europeans, who, we cannot help thinking, might have better employed the superiority which their knowledge gave them over the poor native of the forest. It was pro-

bably this creature, seldom seen, but when once seen never forgotten, which occasioned the ancient belief in the god Pan,* with his sylvans and satyrs. Nay, but for the gift of speech, which we cannot suppose any of the family to have attained, we should have believed the satyr seen by Saint Anthony in the desert to have belonged to this tribe.

We can therefore the more easily credit the annals which attest that the collection of natural history belonging to Alexius Comnenus preserved an animal of this kind, which had been domesticated and reclaimed to a surprising extent, and showed a degree of intelligence never perhaps to be attained in any other case. These explanations being premised, we return to the thread of our story.

The animal advanced with long noiseless steps; its shadow on the wall, when it held the torch so as to make it visible to the Frank, forming another fiend-resembling mimicry of its own large figure and extravagant-looking members. Count Robert remained in his lurking hole, in no hurry to begin a strife of which it was impossible to foretell the end. In the meantime the man of the woods came nigh, and every step by which he approached caused the count's heart to vibrate almost audibly, at the idea of meeting danger of a nature so strange and new. At length the creature approached the bed—his hideous eyes were fixed on those of the count; and, as much surprised at seeing him as Robert was at the meeting, he skipped about fifteen paces backwards at one spring, with a cry of instinctive terror, and then advanced on tiptoe, holding his torch as far forward as he could between him and the object of his fears, as if to examine him at the safest possible distance. Count Robert caught up a fragment of the bedstead large enough to form a sort of club, with which he menaced the native of the wilds.

Apparently this poor creature's education, like education of most kinds, had not been acquired without blows, of which the recollection was as fresh as that of the lessons which they enforced. Sir Robert of Paris was a man at once to discover and to avail himself of the advantage obtained by finding that he possessed a degree of ascendency over his enemy, which he had not suspected. He erected his warlike figure, assumed a step as if triumphant in the lists, and advanced, threatening his enemy with his club, as he would have menaced his antagonist with the redoubtable Tranchefer. The man of the woods, on the other hand, obviously gave way, and converted his cautious advance into a retreat no less cautious. Yet apparently the creature had not renounced some plan of resistance; he chattered in an angry and hostile tone, held out his torch in opposition, and seemed about to strike the Crusader with it. Count Robert, however, determined to take his opponent at advantage, while his fears influenced him, and for this purpose resolved, if possible, to deprive him of his natural superiority in strength and agility, which his singular form showed he could not but possess over the human species. A master of his weapon, therefore, the count menaced his savage antagonist with a stroke on the right side of his head, but, suddenly averting the blow, struck him with his whole force on the left temple, and in an instant was kneeling above him, when, drawing his dagger, he was about to deprive him of life.

The Ourang Outang, ignorant of the nature of this new weapon with which he was threatened, attempted at one and the same moment to rise from the ground, overthrow his antagonist, and wrench the dagger from his grasp. In the first attempt he would probably have succeeded; and, as it was, he gained his knees, and seemed likely to prevail in the struggle, when he became sensible that the knight, drawing his poniard sharply through his grasp, had cut his paw severely, and, seeing him aim the trenchant weapon at his throat, became probably aware that his enemy had his life at command. He suffered himself to be borne backwards without further resistance, with a deep wailing and melancholy cry, having in it something human, which excited compassion. He covered his eyes with the unwounded hand, as if he would have hid from his own sight the death which seemed approaching him.

Count Robert, notwithstanding his military frenzy, was, in ordinary matters, a calm-tempered and mild man, and particularly benevolent to the lower classes of creation. The thought rushed through his mind, 'Why take from this unfortunate monster the breath which is in its nostrils, after which it cannot know another existence? And then, may it not be some prince or knight changed to this grotesque shape that it may help to guard these vaults, and the wonderful adventures that attach to them? Should I not, then, be guilty of a crime by slaying him, when he has rendered himself, rescue or no rescue, which he has done as completely as his transformed figure permits; and if he be actually a bestial creature, may he not have some touch of gratitude? I have heard the minstrels sing the lay of Androcles and the Lion.† I will be on my guard with him.'

So saying, he rose from above the man of the woods, and permitted him also to arise. The creature seemed sensible of the clemency, for he muttered in a low and supplicating tone, which seemed at once to crave for mercy, and to return thanks for what he had already experienced. He wept too, as he saw the blood dropping from his wound, and with an anxious countenance, which had more of the human now that it was composed into an expression of pain and melancholy, seemed to await in terror the doom of a being more powerful than himself.

The pocket which the knight wore under his armour, capable of containing but few things, had, however, some vulnerary balsam, for which its owner had often occasion, a little lint, and a small roll of linen; these the knight took out, and motioned to the animal to hold forth his wounded hand. The man of the woods obeyed with hesitation and reluctance, and Count Robert

* [The Greek god of rural scenes.]

† [Androcles was the Roman slave who removed a thorn from the paw of a lion, and was afterwards saved from death by the grateful animal, when he was thrown into the arena to be torn to pieces by wild animals.]

applied the balsam and the dressings, acquainting his patient, at the same time, in a severe tone of voice, that perhaps he did wrong in putting to his use a balsam compounded for the service of the noblest knights; but that, if he saw the least sign of his making an ungrateful use of the benefit he had conferred, he would bury the dagger, of which he had felt the efficacy, to the very handle in his body.

The Sylvan looked fixedly upon Count Robert, almost as if he understood the language used to him, and, making one of its native murmurs, it stooped to the earth, kissed the feet of the knight, and, embracing his knees, seemed to swear to him eternal gratitude and fidelity. Accordingly, when the count retired to the bed and assumed his armour, to await the reopening of the trap-door, the animal sat down by his side, directing its eyes in the line with his, and seemed quietly to wait till the door should open.

After waiting about an hour, a slight noise was heard in the upper chamber, and the wild man plucked the Frank by the cloak, as if to call his attention to what was about to happen. The same voice which had before spoken, was, after a whistle or two, heard to call, 'Sylvan! Sylvan! where loiterest thou? Come instantly, or, by the rood, thou shalt abye thy sloth!'

The poor monster, as Trinculo* might have called him, seemed perfectly aware of the meaning of this threat, and showed his sense of it by pressing close to the side of Count Robert, making at the same time a kind of whining, entreating, it would seem, the knight's protection. Forgetting the great improbability there was, even in his own opinion, that the creature could understand him, Count Robert said, 'Why, my friend, thou hast already learned the principal court prayer of this country, by which men entreat permission to speak and live. Fear nothing, poor creature—I am thy protector.'

'Sylvan! what ho!' said the voice again; 'whom hast thou got for a companion?—some of the fiends, or ghosts of murdered men, who they say are frequent in these dungeons? or dost thou converse with the old blind rebel Grecian?—or, finally, is it true what men say of thee, that thou canst talk intelligibly when thou wilt, and only gibberest and chatterest for fear thou art sent to work? Come, thou lazy rascal! thou shalt have the advantage of the ladder to ascend by, though thou needest it no more than a daw to ascend the steeple of the Cathedral of Saint Sophia.† Come along, then,' he said, putting a ladder down the trap-door, 'and put me not to the trouble of descending to fetch thee, else, by Saint Swithin, it shall be the worse for thee. Come along, therefore, like a good fellow, and for once I shall spare the whip.'

The animal, apparently, was moved by this rhetoric, for, with a doleful look, which Count Robert saw by means of the nearly extinguished torch, he seemed to bid him farewell, and to creep away towards the ladder with the same excellent good-will wherewith a condemned criminal performs the like evolution. But no sooner did the count look angry, and shake the formidable dagger, than the intelligent animal seemed at once to take his resolution, and, clenching his hands firmly together in the fashion of one who has made up his mind, he returned from the ladder's foot, and drew up behind Count Robert,—with the air, however, of a deserter, who feels himself but little at home when called into the field against his ancient commander.

In a short time the warder's patience was exhausted, and, despairing of the Sylvan's voluntary return, he resolved to descend in quest of him. Down the ladder he came, a bundle of keys in one hand, the other assisting his descent, and a sort of dark lantern, whose bottom was so fashioned that he could wear it upon his head like a hat. He had scarce stepped on the floor, when he was surrounded by the nervous arms of the Count of Paris. At first the warder's idea was, that he was seized by the recusant Sylvan.

'How now, villain!' he said; 'let me go, or thou shalt die the death.'

'Thou diest thyself,' said the count, who, between the surprise and his own skill in wrestling, felt fully his advantage in the struggle.

'Treason! treason!' cried the warder, hearing by the voice that a stranger had mingled in the contest; 'help ho! above there! help, Hereward—Varangian!—Anglo-Saxon, or whatever accursed name thou callest thyself!'

While he spoke thus, the irresistible grasp of Count Robert seized his throat, and choked his utterance. They fell heavily, the jailor undermost, upon the floor of the dungeon, and Robert of Paris, the necessity of whose case excused the action, plunged his dagger in the throat of the unfortunate. Just as he did so, a noise of armour was heard, and, rattling down the ladder, our acquaintance Hereward stood on the floor of the dungeon. The light, which had rolled from the head of the warder, continued to show him streaming with blood, and in the death-grasp of a stranger. Hereward hesitated not to fly to his assistance, and, seizing upon the Count of Paris at the same advantage which that knight had gained over his own adversary a moment before, held him forcibly down with his face to the earth.

Count Robert was one of the strongest men of that military age; but then so was the Varangian; and save that the latter had obtained a decided advantage by having his antagonist beneath him, it could not certainly have been conjectured which way the combat was to go.

'Yield! as your own jargon goes, rescue or no rescue,' said the Varangian, 'or die on the point of my dagger!'

'A French Count never yields,' answered Robert, who began to conjecture with what sort of person he was engaged, 'above all, to a vagabond slave like thee!' With this he made an effort to rise, so sudden, so strong, so powerful, that he had almost freed himself from the Varangian's grasp, had not Hereward, by a violent exertion of his great strength, preserved the advantage he had gained, and raised his

* [See *The Tempest*.]

† Now the chief mosque of the Ottoman capital.

poniard to end the strife for ever; but a loud chuckling laugh of an unearthly sound was at this instant heard. The Varangian's extended arm was seized with vigour, while a rough arm, embracing his throat, turned him over on his back, and gave the French count an opportunity of springing up.

'Death to thee, wretch!' said the Varangian, scarce knowing whom he threatened; but the man of the woods apparently had an awful recollection of the prowess of human beings. He fled, therefore, swiftly up the ladder, and left Hereward and his deliverer to fight it out with what success chance might determine between them.

The circumstances seemed to argue a desperate combat; both were tall, strong, and courageous, both had defensive armour, and the fatal and desperate poniard was their only offensive weapon. They paused facing each other, and examined eagerly into their respective means of defence before hazarding a blow, which, if it missed its attaint, would certainly be fatally requited. During this deadly pause, a gleam shone from the trap-door above, as the wild and alarmed visage of the man of the woods was seen peering down by the light of a newly-kindled torch, which he held as low into the dungeon as he well could.

'Fight bravely, comrade,' said Count Robert of Paris, 'for we no longer battle in private; this respectable person having chosen to constitute himself judge of the field.'

Hazardous as his situation was, the Varangian looked up, and was so struck with the wild and terrified expression which the creature had assumed, and the strife between curiosity and terror which its grotesque features exhibited, that he could not help bursting into a fit of laughter.

'Sylvan is among those,' said Hereward, 'who would rather hold the candle to a dance so formidable than join in it himself.'

'Is there then,' said Count Robert, 'any absolute necessity that thou and I perform this dance at all?'

'None but our own pleasure,' answered Hereward; 'for I suspect there is not between us any legitimate cause of quarrel demanding to be fought out in such a place, and before such a spectator. Thou art, if I mistake not, the bold Frank who was yesternight imprisoned in this place with a tiger, chained within no distant spring of his bed?'

'I am,' answered the count.

'And where is the animal who was opposed to thee?'

'He lies yonder,' answered the count, 'never again to be the object of more terror than the deer whom he may have preyed on in his day.' He pointed to the body of the tiger, which Hereward examined by the light of the dark lantern already mentioned.

'And this, then, was thy handiwork?' said the wondering Anglo-Saxon.

'Sooth to say it was,' answered the count, with indifference.

'And thou hast slain my comrade of this strange watch?' said the Varangian.

'Mortally wounded him at the least,' said Count Robert.

'With your patience, I will be beholden to you for a moment's truce, while I examine his wound,' said Hereward.

'Assuredly,' answered the count; 'blighted be the arm which strikes a foul blow at an open antagonist!'

Without demanding further security, the Varangian quitted his posture of defence and precaution, and set himself, by the assistance of the dark lantern, to examine the wound of the first warder who appeared on the field, who seemed, by his Roman military dress, to be a soldier of the bands called Immortals. He found him in the death-agony, but still able to speak.

'So, Varangian, thou art come at last,—and is it to thy sloth or treachery that I am to impute my fate?—Nay, answer me not!—The stranger struck me over the collar-bone—had we lived long together, or met often, I had done the like by thee, to wipe out the memory of certain transactions at the Golden Gate.—I know the use of the knife too well to doubt the effect of a blow aimed over the collar-bone by so strong a hand—I feel it coming. The Immortal, so called, becomes now, if priests say true, an immortal indeed, and Sebastes of Mitylene's bow is broken ere his quiver is half emptied.'

The robber Greek sunk back in Hereward's arms, and closed his life with a groan, which was the last sound he uttered. The Varangian laid the body at length on the dungeon floor.

'This is a perplexed matter,' he said; 'I am certainly not called upon to put to death a brave man, although my national enemy, because he hath killed a miscreant who was privately meditating my own murder. Neither is this a place or a light by which to fight as becomes the champions of two nations. Let that quarrel be still for the present.—How say you then, noble sir, if we adjourn the present dispute till we effect your deliverance from the dungeons of the Blacquernal, and your restoration to your own friends and followers? If a poor Varangian should be of service to you in this matter, would you, when it was settled, refuse to meet him in fair fight, with your national weapons or his own?'

'If,' said Count Robert, 'whether friend or enemy, thou wilt extend thy assistance to my wife, who is also imprisoned somewhere in this inhospitable palace, be assured that, whatever be thy rank, whatever be thy country, whatever be thy condition, Robert of Paris will, at thy choice, proffer thee his right hand in friendship, or raise it against thee in fair and manly battle—a strife not of hatred, but of honour and esteem; and this I vow by the soul of Charlemagne, my ancestor, and by the shrine of my patroness, Our Lady of the Broken Lances.'

'Enough said,' replied Hereward; 'I am as much bound to the assistance of your lady Countess, being a poor exile, as if I were the first in the ranks of chivalry; for if anything can make the cause of worth and bravery yet more obligatory, it must be its being united with that of a helpless and suffering female.'

'I ought,' said Count Robert, 'to be here silent, without loading thy generosity with further requests; yet thou art a man, whom, if fortune

has not smiled at thy birth, by ordaining thee to be born within the ranks of noblesse and knighthood, yet Providence hath done thee more justice by giving thee a more gallant heart than is always possessed, I fear, by those who are inwoven in the gayest wreath of chivalry. There lingers here in these dungeons, for I cannot say he lives —a blind old man, to whom for three years everything beyond his prison has been a universal blot. His food is bread and water, his intercourse limited to the conversation of a sullen warder, and if death can ever come as a deliverer, it must be to this dark old man. What sayst thou? Shall he, so unutterably miserable, not profit by perhaps the only opportunity of freedom that may ever occur to him?'

'By Saint Dunstan,' answered the Varangian, 'thou keepest over truly the oath thou hast taken as a redresser of wrongs! Thine own case is well-nigh desperate, and thou art willing to make it utterly so by uniting with it that of every unhappy person whom fate throws in thy way!'

'The more of human misery we attempt to relieve,' said Robert of Paris, 'the more we shall carry with us the blessing of our merciful saints, and Our Lady of the Broken Lances, who views with so much pain every species of human suffering or misfortune, save that which occurs within the enclosure of the lists. But come, valiant Anglo-Saxon, resolve me on my request as speedily as thou canst. There is something in thy face of candour as well as sense, and it is with no small confidence that I desire to see us set forth in quest of my beloved Countess, who, when her deliverance is once achieved, will be a powerful aid to us in recovering that of others.'

'So be it, then,' said the Varangian; 'we will proceed in quest of the Countess Brenhilda; and if, on recovering her, we find ourselves strong enough to procure the freedom of the dark old man, my cowardice, or want of compassion, shall never stop the attempt.'

CHAPTER XVII.

'Tis strange that, in the dark sulphureous mine,
Where wild ambition piles its ripening stores
Of slumbering thunder, Love will interpose
His tiny torch, and cause the stern explosion
To burst, when the deviser's least aware.
ANONYMOUS.

ABOUT noon of the same day, Agelastes met with Achilles Tatius, the commander of the Varangian Guard, in those ruins of the Egyptian temple in which we formerly mentioned Hereward having had an interview with the philosopher. They met, as it seemed, in a very different humour. Tatius was gloomy, melancholy, and downcast; while the philosopher maintained the calm indifference which procured for him, and in some sort deserved, the title of the Elephant. 'Thou blenchest, Achilles Tatius,' said the philosopher, 'now that thou hast frankly opposed thyself to all the dangers which stood between thee and greatness. Thou art like the idle boy who turned the mill-stream upon the machine, and that done, instead of making a proper use of it, was terrified at seeing it in motion.'

'Thou dost me wrong, Agelastes,' answered the Acolyte, 'foul wrong; I am but like the mariner, who, although determined upon his voyage, yet cannot forbear a sorrowing glance at the shore, before he parts with it, it may be, for ever.'

'It may have been right to think of this, but pardon me, valiant Tatius, when I tell you the account should have been made up before; and the grandson of Alguric the Hun ought to have computed chances and consequences ere he stretched his hand to his master's diadem.'

'Hush! for Heaven's sake,' said Tatius, looking round; 'that, thou knowest, is a secret between our two selves; for if Nicephorus, the Cæsar, should learn it, where were we and our conspiracy?'

'Our bodies on the gibbet, probably,' answered Agelastes, 'and our souls divorced from them, and in the way of discovering the secrets which thou hast hitherto taken upon trust.'

'Well,' said Achilles, 'and should not the consciousness of the possibility of this fate render us cautious?'

'Cautious *men*, if you will,' answered Agelastes, 'but not timid children.'

'Stone walls can hear,' said the Follower, lowering his voice. 'Dionysius the Tyrant,* I have read, had an Ear which conveyed to him the secrets spoken within his state prison at Syracuse.'

'And that Ear is still stationary at Syracuse,' said the philosopher. 'Tell me, my most simple friend, art thou afraid it has been transported hither in one night, as the Latins believe of Our Lady's house of Loretto?'†

'No,' answered Achilles, 'but in an affair so important too much caution cannot be used.'

'Well, thou most cautious of candidates for empire, and most cold of military leaders, know that the Cæsar, deeming, I think, that there is no chance of the empire falling to any one but himself, hath taken in his head to consider his succession to Alexius as a matter of course, whenever the election takes place. In consequence, as matters of course are usually matters of indifference, he has left all thoughts of securing his interest upon this material occasion to thee and to me, while the foolish voluptuary hath himself run mad—for what, think you? Something between man and woman—female in her lineaments, her limbs, and a part at least of her garments; but, so help me Saint George, most masculine in the rest of her attire, in her propensities, and in her exercises.'

'The Amazonian wife, thou meanest,' said Achilles, 'of that iron-handed Frank, who dashed to pieces last night the golden lion of Solomon with a blow of his fist? By Saint George, the least which can come of such an amour is broken bones.'

'That,' said Agelastes, 'is not quite so improbable as that Dionysius's Ear should fly

* [King of Syracuse in Sicily in the fourth century B.C.]
† [The house in which the Virgin Mary is reputed to have lived at Nazareth was, according to tradition, miraculously carried away and put down finally at Loretto, on the Adriatic coast of Italy.]

hither from Syracuse in a single night; but he is presumptuous in respect of the influence which his supposed good looks have gained him among the Grecian dames.'

'He was too presumptuous, I suppose,' said Achilles Tatius, 'to make a proper allowance for his situation as Cæsar, and the prospect of his being Emperor.'

'Meantime,' said Agelastes, 'I have promised him an interview with his Bradamante, who may perhaps reward his tender epithets of *Zoe kai psyche** by divorcing his amorous soul from his unrivalled person.'

'Meantime,' said the Follower, 'thou obtainest, I conclude, such orders and warrants as the Cæsar can give, for the furtherance of our plot?'

'Assuredly,' said Agelastes, 'it is an opportunity not to be lost. This love fit, or mad fit, has blinded him; and without exciting too much attention to the progress of the plot, we can thus in safety conduct matters our own way, without causing malevolent remarks; and though I am conscious that in doing so I act somewhat at variance with my age and character, yet the end being to convert a worthy Follower into an Imperial Leader, I shame me not in procuring that interview with the lady, of which the Cæsar, as they term him, is so desirous.—What progress, meanwhile, hast thou made with the Varangians, who are, in respect of execution, the very arm of our design?'

'Scarce so good as I could wish,' said Achilles Tatius; 'yet I have made sure of some two or three score of those whom I found most accessible; nor have I any doubt that, when the Cæsar is set aside, their cry will be for Achilles Tatius.'

'And what of the gallant who assisted at our prelections?' said Agelastes; 'your Edward, as Alexius termed him?'

'I have made no impression upon him,' said the Follower; 'and I am sorry for it, for he is one whom his comrades think well of, and would gladly follow. Meantime I have placed him as an additional sentinel upon the iron-witted Count of Paris, whom, both having an inveterate love of battle, he is very likely to put to death; and if it is afterwards challenged by the Crusaders as a cause of war, it is only delivering up the Varangian, whose personal hatred will needs be represented as having occasioned the catastrophe. All this being prepared beforehand, how and when shall we deal with the Emperor?'

'For that,' said Agelastes, 'we must consult the Cæsar, who, although his expected happiness of to-day is not more certain than the state preferment that he expects to-morrow, and although his ideas are much more anxiously fixed upon his success with this said Countess than his succession to the empire, will nevertheless expect to be treated as the head of the enterprise for accelerating the latter. But, to speak my opinion, valiant Tatius, to-morrow will be the last day that Alexius shall hold the reins of empire.'

'Let me know for certain,' said the Follower, 'as soon as thou canst, that I may warn our brethren, who are to have in readiness the insurgent citizens, and those of the Immortals who are combined with us, in the neighbourhood of the court, and in readiness to act—And, above all, that I may disperse upon distant guards such Varangians as I cannot trust.'

'Rely upon me,' said Agelastes, 'for the most accurate information and instructions, so soon as I have seen Nicephorus Briennius. One word permit me to ask—in what manner is the wife of the Cæsar to be disposed of?'

'Somewhere,' said the Follower, 'where I can never be compelled to hear more of her history. Were it not for that nightly pest of her lectures, I could be good-natured enough to take care of her destiny myself, and teach her the difference betwixt a real Emperor and this Briennius, who thinks so much of himself.' So saying, they separated; the Follower elated in look and manner considerably above what he had been when they met.

Agelastes looked after his companion with a scornful laugh. 'There,' he said, 'goes a fool, whose lack of sense prevents his eyes from being dazzled by the torch which cannot fail to consume him. A half-bred, half-acting, half-thinking, half-daring caitiff, whose poorest thoughts—and those which deserve that name must be poor indeed—are not the produce of his own understanding. He expects to circumvent the fiery, haughty, and proud Nicephorus Briennius! If he does so, it will not be by his own policy, and still less by his valour. Nor shall Anna Comnena, the soul of wit and genius, be chained to such an unimaginative log as yonder half-barbarian. No—she shall have a husband of pure Grecian extraction, and well stored with that learning which was studied when Rome was great, and Greece illustrious. Nor will it be the least charm of the Imperial throne, that it is partaken by a partner whose personal studies have taught her to esteem and value those of the Emperor.' He took a step or two with conscious elevation, and then, as conscience-checked, he added, in a suppressed voice, 'But then, if Anna were destined for Empress, it follows of course that Alexius must die—no consent could be trusted to.—And what then?—the death of an ordinary man is indifferent, when it plants on the throne a philosopher and a historian; and at what time were the possessors of the empire curious to inquire when or by whose agency their predecessors died?—Diogenes! Ho, Diogenes!' The slave did not immediately come, so that Agelastes, wrapped in the anticipation of his greatness, had time to add a few more words—'Tush—I must reckon with Heaven, say the priests, for many things, so I will throw this also into the account. The death of the Emperor may be twenty ways achieved without my having the blame of it. The blood which we have shed may spot our hand if closely regarded, but it shall scarce stain our forehead.' Diogenes here entered—'Has the Frank lady been removed?' said the philosopher.

The slave signified his assent.

'How did she bear her removal?

'As authorized by your lordship, indifferently well. She had resented her separation from her husband, and her being detained in the palace, and committed some violence upon the slaves of the Household, several of whom were said to be slain, although we perhaps ought only to read

* 'Life and Soul.'

sorely frightened. She recognised me at once, and when I told her that I came to offer her a day's retirement in your own lodgings, until it should be in your power to achieve the liberation of her husband, she at once consented, and I deposited her in the secret Cytherean garden-house.'

'Admirably done, my faithful Diogenes,' said the philosopher; 'thou art like the genii who attended on the Eastern talismans; I have but to intimate my will to thee, and it is accomplished.'

Diogenes bowed deeply, and withdrew.

'Yet remember, slave!' said Agelastes, speaking to himself; 'there is danger in knowing too much—and should my character ever become questioned, too many of my secrets are in the power of Diogenes.'

At this moment a blow thrice repeated, and struck upon one of the images without, which had been so framed as to return a tingling sound, and in so far deserved the praise of being vocal, interrupted his soliloquy.

'There knocks,' said he, 'one of our allies; who can it be that comes so late?' He touched the figure of Isis with his staff, and the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius entered, in the full Grecian habit, and that graceful dress anxiously arranged to the best advantage. 'Let me hope, my lord,' said Agelastes, receiving the Cæsar with an apparently grave and reserved face, 'your Highness comes to tell me that your sentiments are changed on reflection, and that whatever you had to confer about with this Frankish lady may be at least deferred until the principal part of our conspiracy has been successfully executed.'

'Philosopher,' answered the Cæsar, 'no. My resolution, once taken, is not the sport of circumstances. Believe me, that I have not finished so many labours without being ready to undertake others. The favour of Venus is the reward of the labours of Mars; nor would I think it worth while to worship the god armipotent with the toil and risk attending his service, unless I had previously attained some decided proofs that I was wreathed with the myrtle, intimating the favour of his beautiful mistress.'

'I beg pardon for my boldness,' said Agelastes; 'but has your Imperial Highness reflected that you were wagering, with the wildest rashness, an empire, including thine own life, mine, and all who are joined with us in a hardy scheme? And against what were they waged? Against the very precarious favour of a woman, who is altogether divided betwixt fiend and female, and in either capacity is most likely to be fatal to our present scheme, either by her good will, or by the offence which she may take. If she prove such as you wish, she will desire to keep her lover by her side, and to spare him the danger of engaging in a perilous conspiracy; and if she remains, as the world believe her, constant to her husband, and to the sentiments she vowed to him at the altar, you may guess what cause of offence you are likely to give, by urging a suit which she has already received so very ill.'

'Pshaw, old man! thou turnest a dotard, and in the great knowledge thou possessest of other things, hast forgotten the knowledge best worth knowing—that of the beautiful part of the creation. Think of the impression likely to be made by a gallant neither ignoble in situation, nor unacceptable in presence, upon a lady who must fear the consequences of refusal! Come, Agelastes, let me have no more of thy croaking, auguring bad fortune like the raven from the blasted oak on the left hand; but declaim, as well thou canst, how faint heart never won fair lady, and how those best deserve empire who can wreath the myrtles of Venus with the laurels of Mars. Come, man, undo me the secret entrance which combines these magical ruins with groves that are fashioned rather like those of Cytheros * or Naxos.' †

'It must be as you will!' said the philosopher, with a deep and somewhat affected sigh.

'Here, Diogenes!' called aloud the Cæsar; 'when thou art summoned, mischief is not far distant. Come, undo the secret entrance. Mischief, my trusty negro, is not so distant but she will answer the first clatter of the stones.'

The negro looked at his master, who returned him a glance acquiescing in the Cæsar's proposal. Diogenes then went to a part of the ruined wall which was covered by some climbing shrubs, all of which he carefully removed. This showed a little postern door, closed irregularly, and filled up, from the threshold to the top, with large square stones, all of which the slave took out and piled aside, as if for the purpose of replacing them. 'I leave thee,' said Agelastes to the negro, 'to guard this door, and let no one enter, except he has the sign, upon the peril of thy life. It were dangerous it should be left open at this period of the day.'

The obsequious Diogenes put his hand to his sabre and to his head, as if to signify the usual promise of fidelity or death by which those of his condition generally expressed their answer to their master's commands. Diogenes then lighted a small lantern, and, pulling out a key, opened an inner door of wood, and prepared to step forward.

'Hold, friend Diogenes,' said the Cæsar; 'thou wantest not my lantern to discern an honest man, whom, if thou didst seek, I must needs say thou hast come to the wrong place to find one. Nail thou up these creeping shrubs before the entrance of the place, and abide thou there as already directed, till our return, to parry the curiosity of any who may be attracted by the sight of the private passage.'

The black slave drew back as he gave the lamp to the Cæsar, and Agelastes followed the light through a long, but narrow, arched passage, well supplied with air from space to space, and not neglected in the inside to the degree which its exterior would have implied.

'I will not enter with you into the gardens,' said Agelastes, 'or to the bower of Cytherea, where I am too old to be a worshipper. Thou thyself, I think, Imperial Cæsar, art well aware of the road, having travelled it divers times; and, if I mistake not, for the fairest reasons.'

'The more thanks,' said the Cæsar, 'are due

* [Now one of the Ionian islands, was in ancient times intimately associated with the cult of Venus.]

† [One of the Greek islands in the Ægean Sea, celebrated for its great fertility.]

to mine excellent friend Agelastes, who forgets his own age to accommodate the youth of his friends.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

Triumphant constancy has fixed her seat:
In vain the syrens sing, the tempests beat.
PRIOR.

We must now return to the dungeon of the Blacquernal, where circumstances had formed at least a temporary union between the stout Varangian and Count Robert of Paris, who had a stronger resemblance to each other in their dispositions than probably either of them would have been willing to admit. The virtues of the Varangian were all of that natural and unrefined kind which Nature herself dictates to a gallant man, to whom a total want of fear, and the most prompt alacrity to meet danger, had been attributes of a lifelong standing. The count, on the other hand, had all that bravery, generosity, and love of adventure, which was possessed by the rude soldier, with the virtues, partly real, partly fantastic, which those of his rank and country acquired from the spirit of chivalry. The one might be compared to the diamond as it came from the mine, before it had yet received the advantages of cutting and setting; the other was the ornamented gem, which, cut into facets and richly set, had lost perhaps a little of its original substance, yet still, at the same time, to the eye of an inspector, had something more showy and splendid than when it was, according to the phrase of lapidaries, *en brut*. In the one case, the value was more artificial; in the other, it was the more natural and real of the two. Chance, therefore, had made a temporary alliance between two men, the foundation of whose characters bore such strong resemblance to each other, that they were only separated by a course of education, which had left rigid prejudices on both sides, and which prejudices were not unlikely to run counter to each other. The Varangian commenced his conversation with the count in a tone of familiarity, approaching nearer to rudeness than the speaker was aware of, and much of which, though most innocently intended by Hereward, might be taken amiss by his new brother in arms. The most offensive part of his deportment, however, was a blunt, bold disregard to the title of those whom he addressed, adhering thereby to the manners of the Saxons, from whom he drew his descent, and which was likely to be at least unpleasing to the Franks as well as Normans, who had already received and become very tenacious of the privileges of the feudal system, the mummery of heraldry, and the warlike claims assumed by knights, as belonging only to their own order

Hereward was apt, it must be owned, to think too little of these distinctions; while he had at least a sufficient tendency to think enough of the power and wealth of the Greek Empire which he served,—of the dignity inherent in Alexius Comnenus, and which he was also disposed to grant to the Grecian officers, who, under the emperor, commanded his own corps, and particularly to Achilles Tatius. This man Hereward knew to be a coward and half suspected to be a villain. Still, however, the Follower was always the direct channel through which the Imperial graces were conferred on the Varangians in general, as well as upon Hereward himself; and he had always the policy to represent such favours as being more or less indirectly the consequence of his own intercession. He was supposed vigorously to espouse the quarrel of the Varangians, in all the disputes between them and the other corps; he was liberal and open-handed; gave every soldier his due; and, bating the trifling circumstance of valour, which was not particularly his *forte*, it would have been difficult for these strangers to have demanded a leader more to their wishes. Besides this, our friend Hereward was admitted by him into his society, attended him, as we have seen, upon secret expeditions, and shared, therefore, deeply in what may be termed by an expressive, though vulgar phrase, the sneaking kindness entertained for this new Achilles * by the greater part of his myrmidons.

Their attachment might be explained, perhaps, as a liking to their commander as strong as could well exist with a marvellous lack of honour and esteem. The scheme, therefore, formed by Hereward to effect the deliverance of the Count of Paris comprehended as much faith to the emperor, and his representative the Acolyte or Follower, as was consistent with rendering justice to the injured Frank.

In furtherance of this plan, he conducted Count Robert from the subterranean vaults of the Blacquernal, of the intricacies of which he was master, having been repeatedly, of late, stationed sentinel there, for the purpose of acquiring that knowledge of which Tatius promised himself the advantage in the ensuing conspiracy. When they were in the open air, and at some distance from the gloomy towers of the palace, he bluntly asked the Count of Paris whether he knew Agelastes the philosopher. The other answered in the negative.

'Look you now, Sir Knight, you hurt yourself in attempting to impose upon me,' said Hereward. 'You must know him; for I saw you dined with him yesterday.'

'O, with that learned old man?' said the count. 'I know nothing of him worth owning or disguising to thee or any one. A wily person he is, half herald and half minstrel.'

'Half procurer and whole knave,' subjoined the Varangian. 'With the mask of apparent good-humour he conceals his pandering to the vices of others; with the specious jargon of philosophy, he has argued himself out of religious belief and moral principle; and, with the appearance of the most devoted loyalty, he will, if he is not checked in time, either argue his too confiding master out of life and empire, or, if he fails in this, reason his simple associates into death and misery.'

'And do you know all this,' said Count Robert, 'and permit this man to go unimpeached?'

'O, content you, sir,' replied the Varangian;

* [One of the principal heroes in the Greek army that warred against Troy.]

'I cannot yet form any plot which Agelastes may not countermine; but the time will come, nay, it is already approaching, when the Emperor's attention shall be irresistibly turned to the conduct of this man, and then let the philosopher sit fast, or, by Saint Dunstan, the barbarian overthrows him! I would only fain, methinks, save from his clutches a foolish friend, who has listened to his delusions.'

'But what have I to do,' said the count, 'with this man, or with his plots?'

'Much,' said Hereward, 'although you know it not. The main supporter of this plot is no other than the Cæsar, who ought to be the most faithful of men; but ever since Alexius has named a Sebastocrator, an officer that is higher in rank and nearer to the throne than the Cæsar himself, so long has Nicephorus Briennius been displeased and dissatisfied, though for what length of time he has joined the schemes of the astucious Agelastes it is more difficult to say. This I know, that for many months he has fed liberally, as his riches enable him to do, the vices and prodigality of the Cæsar. He has encouraged him to show disrespect to his wife, although the Emperor's daughter; has put ill-will between him and the royal family. And if Briennius bears no longer the fame of a rational man, and the renown of a good leader, he is deprived of both by following the advice of this artful sycophant.'

'And what is all this to me?' said the Frank. 'Agelastes may be a true man or a time-serving slave; his master, Alexius Comnenus, is not so much allied to me or mine that I should meddle in the intrigues of his court.'

'You may be mistaken in that,' said the blunt Varangian; 'if these intrigues involve the happiness and virtue'——

'Death of a thousand martyrs!' said the Frank, 'do paltry intrigues and quarrels of slaves involve a single thought of suspicion of the noble Countess of Paris? The oaths of thy whole generation were ineffectual to prove but that one of her hairs had changed its colour to silver!'

'Well imagined, gallant knight,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'thou art a husband fitted for the atmosphere of Constantinople, which calls for little vigilance and a strong belief. Thou wilt find many followers and fellows in this court of ours.'

'Hark thee, friend,' replied the Frank; 'let us have no more words, nor walk farther together than just to the most solitary nook of this bewildered city, and let us there set to that work which we left even now unfinished.'

'If thou wert a duke, Sir Count,' replied the Varangian, 'thou couldst not invite to a combat one who is more ready for it. Yet consider the odds on which we fight. If I fall, my moan is soon made; but will my death set thy wife at liberty if she is under restraint, or restore her honour if it is tarnished?—Will it do anything more than remove from the world the only person who is willing to give thee aid, at his own risk and danger, and who hopes to unite thee to thy wife, and replace thee at the head of thy forces?'

'I was wrong,' said the Count of Paris; 'I was entirely wrong; but beware, my good friend, how thou couplest the name of Brenhilda of Aspramonte with the word of dishonour, and tell me, instead of this irritating discourse, whither go we now?'

'To the Cytherean gardens of Agelastes, from which we are not far distant,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'yet he hath a nearer way to it than that by which we now travel, else I should be at a loss to account for the short space in which he could exchange the charms of his garden for the gloomy ruins of the Temple of Isis and the Imperial Palace of the Blacquernal.'

'And wherefore, and how long,' said Count Robert, 'dost thou conclude that my countess is detained in these gardens?'

'Ever since yesterday,' replied Hereward. 'When both I, and several of my companions, at my request, kept close watch upon the Cæsar and your lady, we did plainly perceive passages of fiery admiration on his part, and anger as it seemed on hers, which Agelastes, being Nicephorus's friend, was likely, as usual, to bring to an end, by a separation of you both from the army of the Crusaders, that your wife, like many a matron before, might have the pleasure of taking up her residence in the gardens of that worthy sage; while you, my lord, might take up your own permanently in the Castle of Blacquernal.'

'Villain! why didst thou not apprise me of this yesterday?'

'A likely thing,' said Hereward, 'that I should feel myself at liberty to leave the ranks, and make such a communication to a man whom, far from a friend, I then considered in the light of a personal enemy? Methinks that, instead of such language as this, you should be thankful that so many chance circumstances have at length brought me to befriend and assist you.'

Count Robert felt the truth of what was said, though at the same time his fiery temper longed to avenge itself, according to its wont, upon the party which was nearest at hand.

But now they arrived at what the citizens of Constantinople called the Philosopher's Gardens. Here Hereward hoped to obtain entrance, for he had gained a knowledge of some part, at least, of the private signals of Achilles and Agelastes, since he had been introduced to the last at the ruins of the Temple of Isis. They had not, indeed, admitted him to their entire secret; yet, confident in his connection with the Follower, they had no hesitation in communicating to him snatches of knowledge, such as, committed to a man of shrewd natural sense like the Anglo-Saxon, could scarce fail, in time and by degrees, to make him master of the whole. Count Robert and his companion stood before an arched door, the only opening in a high wall, and the Anglo-Saxon was about to knock, when, as if the idea had suddenly struck him,—

'What if the wretch Diogenes opens the gate? We must kill him, ere he can fly back and betray us. Well, it is a matter of necessity, and the villain has deserved his death by a hundred horrid crimes.'

'Kill him, then, thyself,' retorted Count Robert; 'he is nearer thy degree, and assuredly

I will not defile the name of Charlemagne with the blood of a black slave.'

'Nay, God-a-mercy!' answered the Anglo-Saxon, 'but you must bestir yourself in the action, supposing there come rescue, and that I be overborne by odds.'

'Such odds,' said the knight, 'will render the action more like a *mêlée*, or general battle; and assure yourself, I will not be slack when I may, with my honour, be active.'

'I doubt it not,' said the Varangian; 'but the distinction seems a strange one, that, before permitting a man to defend himself, or annoy his enemy, requires him to demand the pedigree of his ancestor.'

'Fear you not, sir,' said Count Robert. 'The strict rule of chivalry indeed bears what I tell thee, but when the question is, Fight or not? there is great allowance to be made for a decision in the affirmative.'

'Let me give, then, the exorcisor's rap,' replied Hereward, 'and see what fiend will appear.'

So saying, he knocked in a particular manner, and the door opened inwards; a dwarfish negress stood in the gap—her white hair contrasted singularly with her dark complexion, and with the broad laughing look peculiar to those slaves. She had something in her physiognomy which, severely construed, might argue malice, and a delight in human misery.

'Is Agelastes'——said the Varangian; but he had not completed the sentence, when she answered him by pointing down a shadowed walk.

The Anglo-Saxon and Frank turned in that direction, when the hag rather muttered than said distinctly, 'You are one of the initiated, Varangian; take heed whom you take with you, when you may hardly, peradventure, be welcomed even going alone.'

Hereward made a sign that he understood her, and they were instantly out of her sight. The path winded beautifully through the shades of an Eastern garden, where clumps of flowers and labyrinths of flowering shrubs, and the tall boughs of the forest trees, rendered even the breath of noon cool and acceptable.

'Here we must use our utmost caution,' said Hereward, speaking in a low tone of voice; 'for here it is most likely the deer that we seek has found its refuge. Better allow me to pass before, since you are too deeply agitated to possess the coolness necessary for a scout. Keep concealed beneath yon oak, and let no vain scruples of honour deter you from creeping beneath the underwood, or beneath the earth itself, if you should hear a footfall. If the lovers have agreed, Agelastes, it is probable, walks his round, to prevent intrusion.'

'Death and furies! it cannot be!' exclaimed the fiery Frank.—'Lady of the Broken Lances, take thy votary's life, ere thou torment him with this agony!'

He saw, however, the necessity of keeping a strong force upon himself, and permitted, without further remonstrance, the Varangian to pursue his way, looking, however, earnestly after him.

By advancing forward a little, he could observe Hereward draw near to a pavilion which arose at no great distance from the place where they had parted. Here he observed him apply, first his eye and then his ear to one of the casements, which were in a great measure grown over and excluded from the light by various flowering shrubs. He almost thought he saw a grave interest take place in the countenance of the Varangian, and he longed to have his share of the information which he had doubtless obtained.

He crept, therefore, with noiseless steps, through the same labyrinth of foliage which had covered the approaches of Hereward; and so silent were his movements, that he touched the Anglo-Saxon, in order to make him aware of his presence, before he observed his approach.

Hereward, not aware at first by whom he was approached, turned on the intruder with a countenance like a burning coal. Seeing, however, that it was the Frank, he shrugged his shoulders, as if pitying the impatience which could not be kept under prudent restraint, and, drawing himself back, allowed the count the privilege of a peeping place through plinths of the casement, which could not be discerned by the sharpest eye from the inner side. The sombre character of the light which penetrated into this abode of pleasure was suited to that species of thought to which a Temple of Cytherea was supposed to be dedicated. Portraits and groups of statuary were also to be seen, in the taste of those which they had beheld at the kiosk of the waterfall, yet something more free in the ideas which they conveyed than were to be found at their first resting-place. Shortly after, the door of the pavilion opened, and the countess entered, followed by her attendant Agatha. The lady threw herself on a couch as she came in, while her attendant, who was a young and very handsome woman, kept herself modestly in the background, so much so as hardly to be distinguished.

'What dost thou think,' said the countess, 'of so suspicious a friend as Agelastes? so gallant an enemy as the Cæsar, as he is called?'

'What should I think,' returned the damsel, 'except that what the old man calls friendship is hatred, and what the Cæsar terms a patriotic love for his country, which will not permit him to set its enemies at liberty, is in fact too strong an affection for his fair captive?'

'For such an affection,' said the countess, 'he shall have the same requital as if it were indeed the hostility of which he would give it the colour.—My true and noble lord! hadst thou an idea of the calamities to which they have subjected me, how soon wouldst thou break through every restraint to hasten to my relief!'

'Art thou a man,' said Count Robert to his companion; 'and canst thou advise me to remain still and hear this?'

'I am one man,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'you, sir, are another; but all our arithmetic will not make us more than two; and, in this place, it is probable that a whistle from the Cæsar, or a scream from Agelastes, would bring a thousand to match us, if we were as bold as Bevis of Hampton.* — Stand still and keep quiet. I counsel this, less as respecting my own life, which, by embarking upon a wild-goose chase

* [The traditional Saxon giant]

with so strange a partner, I have shown I put at little value, than for thy safety, and that of the lady thy Countess, who shows herself as virtuous as beautiful.'

'I was imposed on at first,' said the Lady Brenhilda to her attendant. 'Affectation of severe morals, of deep learning, and of rigid rectitude, assumed by this wicked old man, made me believe in part the character which he pretended; but the gloss is rubbed off since he let me see into his alliance with the unworthy Cæsar, and the ugly picture remains in its native loathsomeness. Nevertheless, if I can, by address or subtlety, deceive this arch-deceiver,—as he has taken from me, in a great measure, every other kind of assistance,—I will not refuse that of craft, which he may find perhaps equal to his own!'

'Hear you that?' said the Varangian to the Count of Paris. 'Do not let your impatience mar the web of your lady's prudence. I will weigh a woman's wit against a man's valour where there is aught to do! Let us not come in with our assistance until time shall show us that it is necessary for her safety and our success.'

'Amen,' said the Count of Paris; 'but hope not, Sir Saxon, that thy prudence shall persuade me to leave this garden without taking full vengeance on that unworthy Cæsar, and the pretended philosopher, if indeed he turns out to have assumed a character'—— The count was here beginning to raise his voice, when the Saxon, without ceremony, placed his hand on his mouth. 'Thou takest a liberty,' said Count Robert, lowering, however, his tones.

'Ay, truly,' said Hereward; 'when the house is on fire, I do not stop to ask whether the water which I pour on it be perfumed or no.'

This recalled the Frank to a sense of his situation; and, if not contented with the Saxon's mode of making an apology, he was at least silenced. A distant noise was now heard—the countess listened and changed colour. 'Agatha,' she said, 'we are like champions in the lists, and here comes the adversary. Let us retreat into this side apartment, and so for a while put off an encounter thus alarming.' So saying, the two females withdrew into a sort of anteroom, which opened from the principal apartment behind the seat which Brenhilda had occupied.

They had scarcely disappeared, when, as the stage direction has it, enter from the other side the Cæsar and Agelastes. They had perhaps heard the last words of Brenhilda, for the Cæsar repeated in a low tone—

'Militat omnis amans, habet et sua castra Cupido.

What, has our fair opponent withdrawn her forces? No matter; it shows she thinks of the warfare, though the enemy be not in sight. Well, thou shalt not have to upbraid me this time, Agelastes, with precipitating my amours, and depriving myself of the pleasure of pursuit. By Heavens, I will be as regular in my progress as if in reality I bore on my shoulders the whole load of years which make the difference between us; for I shrewdly suspect that with thee, old man, it is that envious churl Time that hath plucked the wings of Cupid.'

'Say not so, mighty Cæsar,' said the old man; 'it is the hand of prudence, which, depriving Cupid's wing of some wild feathers, leaves him still enough to fly with an equal and steady flight.'

'Thy flight, however, was less measured, Agelastes, when thou didst collect that armoury—that magazine of Cupid's panoply, out of which thy kindness permitted me but now to arm myself, or rather to repair my accoutrements.'

So saying, he glanced his eye over his own person, blazing with gems, and adorned with a chain of gold, bracelets, rings, and other ornaments, which, with a new and splendid habit, assumed since his arrival at these Cytherean gardens, tended to set off his very handsome figure.

'I am glad,' said Agelastes, 'if you have found among toys, which I now never wear, and seldom made use of even when life was young with me, anything which may set off your natural advantages. Remember only this slight condition, that such of these trifles as have made part of your wearing apparel on this distinguished day, cannot return to a meaner owner, but must of necessity remain the property of that greatness of which they had once formed the ornament.'

'I cannot consent to this, my worthy friend,' said the Cæsar; 'I know thou valuest these jewels only in so far as a philosopher may value them; that is, for nothing save the remembrances which attach to them. This large sealring, for instance, was—I have heard you say—the property of Socrates;* if so, you cannot view it save with devout thankfulness that your own philosophy has never been tried with the exercise of a Xantippe. These clasps released, in older times, the lovely bosom of Phryne;† and they now belong to one who could do better homage to the beauties they concealed or discovered than could the cynic Diogenes.‡ These buckles, too'——

'I will spare thy ingenuity, good youth,' said Agelastes, somewhat nettled, 'or rather, noble Cæsar. Keep thy wit—thou wilt have ample occasion for it.'

'Fear not me,' said the Cæsar. 'Let us proceed, since you will, to exercise the gifts which we possess, such as they are, either natural or bequeathed to us by our dear and respected friend. Hah!' he said, the door opening suddenly, and the countess almost meeting him, 'our wishes are here anticipated.'

He bowed accordingly with the deepest deference to the Lady Brenhilda, who, having made some alterations to enhance the splendour of her attire, now moved forward from the withdrawing-room into which she had retreated.

'Hail, noble lady,' said the Cæsar, 'whom I have visited with the intention of apologizing for detaining you, in some degree against your will, in those strange regions in which you unexpectedly find yourself.'

'Not in some degree,' answered the lady, 'but entirely contrary to my inclinations, which are to be with my husband, the Count of Paris,

* [The most celebrated of the sages of ancient Greece.]

† [An Athenian courtezan of wondrous beauty.]

‡ [A Greek philosopher, remarkable for his churlish manners.]

and the followers who have taken the Cross under his banner.'

'Such, doubtless, were your thoughts when you left the land of the West,' said Agelastes; 'but, fair Countess, have they experienced no change? You have left a shore streaming with human blood when the slightest provocation occurred, and thou hast come to one whose principal maxim is to increase the sum of human happiness by every mode which can be invented. In the West yonder, he or she is respected most who can best exercise their tyrannical strength in making others miserable; while in these more placid realms we reserve our garlands for the ingenious youth, or lovely lady, who can best make happy the person whose affection is fixed upon her.'

'But, reverend philosopher,' said the countess, 'who labourest so artificially in recommending the yoke of pleasure, know that you contradict every notion which I have been taught from my infancy. In the land where my nurture lay, so far are we from acknowledging your doctrines, that we match not, except like the lion and the lioness, when the male has compelled the female to acknowledge his superior worth and valour. Such is our rule, that a damsel, even of mean degree, would think herself heinously undermatched, if wedded to a gallant whose fame in arms was yet unknown.'

'But, noble lady,' said the Cæsar, 'a dying man may then find room for some faint hope. Were there but a chance that distinction in arms could gain those affections which have been stolen, rather than fairly conferred, how many are there who would willingly enter into the competition where the prize is so fair? What is the enterprise too bold to be undertaken on such a condition? And where is the individual whose heart would not feel, that in baring his sword for the prize, he made vow never to return it to the scabbard without the proud boast, What I have not yet won, I have deserved!'

'You see, lady,' said Agelastes, who, apprehending that the last speech of the Cæsar had made some impression, hastened to follow it up with a suitable observation—'You see that the fire of chivalry burns as gallantly in the bosom of the Grecians as in that of the Western nations.'

'Yes,' answered Brenhilda; 'and I have heard of the celebrated siege of Troy, on which occasion a dastardly coward carried off the wife of a brave man, shunned every proffer of encounter with the husband whom he had wronged, and finally caused the death of his numerous brothers, the destruction of his native city, with all the wealth which it contained, and died himself the death of a pitiful poltroon, lamented only by his worthless leman, to show how well the rules of chivalry were understood by your predecessors.'

'Lady, you mistake,' said the Cæsar; 'the offences of Paris were those of a dissolute Asiatic; the courage which avenged them was that of the Greek Empire.'

'You are learned, sir,' said the lady; 'but think not that I will trust your words until you produce before me a Grecian knight, gallant enough to look upon the armed crest of my husband without quaking.'

'That, methinks, were not extremely difficult,' returned the Cæsar; 'if they have not flattered me, I have myself been thought equal in battle to more dangerous men than him who has been strangely mated with the Lady Brenhilda.'

'That is soon tried,' answered the countess. 'You will hardly, I think, deny that my husband, separated from me by some unworthy trick, is still at thy command, and could be produced at thy pleasure. I will ask no armour for him save what he wears, no weapon but his good sword Tranchefer; then place him in this chamber, or any other lists equally narrow, and if he flinch, or cry craven, or remain dead under shield, let Brenhilda be the prize of the conqueror. Merciful Heaven!' she concluded, as she sank back upon her seat, 'forgive me for the crime of even imagining such a termination, which is equal almost to doubting thine unerring judgment!'

'Let me, however,' said the Cæsar, 'catch up these precious words before they fall to the ground. Let me hope that he to whom the Heavens shall give power and strength to conquer this highly-esteemed Count of Paris, shall succeed him in the affections of Brenhilda; and believe me, the sun plunges not through the sky to his resting-place with the same celerity that I shall hasten to the encounter.'

'Now, by Heaven!' said Count Robert, in an anxious whisper to Hereward, 'it is too much to expect me to stand by and hear a contemptible Greek, who durst not stand even the rattling farewell which Tranchefer takes of his scabbard, brave me in my absence, and affect to make love to my lady *par amours!* And she, too — methinks Brenhilda allows more licence than she is wont to do to yonder chattering popinjay. By the rood! I will spring into the apartment, front them with my personal appearance, and confute yonder braggart in a manner he is like to remember.'

'Under favour,' said the Varangian, who was the only auditor of this violent speech, 'you shall be ruled by calm reason while I am with you. When we are separated, let the devil of knight-errantry, which has such possession of thee, take thee upon his shoulders, and carry thee full tilt wheresoever he lists.'

'Thou art a brute,' said the count, looking at him with a contempt corresponding to the expression he made use of; 'not only without humanity, but without the sense of natural honour or natural shame. The most despicable of animals stands not by tamely and sees another assail his mate. The bull offers his horns to a rival—the mastiff uses his jaws—and even the timid stag becomes furious and gores.'

'Because they are beasts,' said the Varangian, 'and their mistresses also creatures without shame or reason, who are not aware of the sanctity of a choice. But thou too, Count, canst thou not see the obvious purpose of this poor lady, forsaken by all the world, to keep her faith towards thee, by eluding the snares with which wicked men have beset her? By the souls of my fathers! my heart is so much moved by her ingenuity, mingled as I see it is with the most perfect candour and faith, that

I myself, in fault of a better champion, would willingly raise the axe in her behalf!'

'I thank thee, my good friend,' said the count; 'I thank thee as heartily as if it were possible thou shouldst be left to do that good office for Brenhilda, the beloved of many a noble lord, the mistress of many a powerful vassal; and what is more, much more than thanks, I crave thy pardon for the wrong I did thee but now.'

'My pardon you cannot need,' said the Varangian; 'for I take no offence that is not seriously meant.—Stay, they speak again.'

'It is strange it should be so,' said the Cæsar, as he paced the apartment; 'but methinks, nay, I am almost certain, Agelastes, that I hear voices in the vicinity of this apartment of thy privacy.'

'It is impossible,' said Agelastes; 'but I will go and see.'

Perceiving him to leave the pavilion, the Varangian made the Frank sensible that they must crouch down among a little thicket of evergreens, where they lay completely obscured. The philosopher made his rounds with a heavy step, but a watchful eye; and the two listeners were obliged to observe the strictest silence, without motion of any kind, until he had completed an ineffectual search, and returned into the pavilion.

'By my faith, brave man,' said the count, 'ere we return to our skulking-place, I must tell thee in thine ear, that never in my life was temptation so strong upon me, as that which prompted me to beat out that old hypocrite's brains, provided I could have reconciled it with my honour; and heartily do I wish that thou, whose honour no way withheld thee, hadst experienced and given way to some impulse of a similar nature.'

'Such fancies have passed through my head,' said the Varangian; 'but I will not follow them till they are consistent both with our own safety, and more particularly with that of the Countess.'

'I thank thee again for thy goodwill to her,' said Count Robert; 'and, by Heaven! if fight we must at length, as it seems likely, I will neither grudge thee an honourable antagonist, nor fair quarter if the combat goes against thee.'

'Thou hast my thanks,' was the reply of Hereward; 'only, for Heaven's sake, be silent in this conjuncture, and do what thou wilt afterwards.'

Before the Varangian and the count had again resumed their posture of listeners, the parties within the pavilion, conceiving themselves unwatched, had resumed their conversation, speaking low, yet with considerable animation:—

'It is in vain you would persuade me,' said the countess, 'that you know not where my husband is, or that you have not the most absolute influence over his captivity. Who else could have an interest in banishing or putting to death the husband, but he that affects to admire the wife?'

'You do me wrong, beautiful lady,' answered the Cæsar, 'and forget that I can in no shape be termed the moving-spring of this empire; that my father-in-law Alexius, is the Emperor; and that the woman who terms herself my wife is jealous as a fiend can be of my slightest motion.—What possibility was there that I should work the captivity of your husband and your own? The open affront which the Count of Paris put upon the Emperor was one which he was likely to avenge, either by secret guile or by open force. Me it no way touched, save as the humble vassal of thy charms; and it was by the wisdom and the art of the sage Agelastes that I was able to extricate thee from the gulf in which thou hadst else certainly perished. Nay, weep not, lady, for as yet we know not the fate of Count Robert; but credit me, it is wisdom to choose a better protector, and consider him as no more.'

'A better than him,' said Brenhilda, 'I can never have, were I to choose out of the knighthood of all the world!'

'This hand,' said the Cæsar, drawing himself into a martial attitude, 'should decide that question, were the man of whom thou thinkest so much yet moving on the face of this earth, and at liberty.'

'Thou art,' said Brenhilda, looking fixedly at him with the fire of indignation flashing from every feature—'thou art—but it avails not telling thee what is thy real name; believe me, the world shall one day ring with it, and be justly sensible of its value. Observe what I am about to say—Robert of Paris is gone—or captive, I know not where. He cannot fight the match of which thou seemest so desirous—but here stands Brenhilda, born heiress of Aspramonte, by marriage the wedded wife of the good Count of Paris. She was never matched in the lists by mortal man, except the valiant Count, and since thou art so grieved that thou canst not meet her husband in battle, thou canst not surely object, if she is willing to meet thee in his stead!'

'How, madam?' said the Cæsar, astonished; 'do you propose yourself to hold the lists against me?'

'Against you,' said the countess; 'against all the Grecian Empire, if they shall affirm that Robert of Paris is justly used and lawfully confined.'

'And are the conditions,' said the Cæsar, 'the same as if Count Robert himself held the lists? The vanquished must then be at the pleasure of the conqueror for good or evil.'

'It would seem so,' said the countess, 'nor do I refuse the hazard; only, that if the other champion shall bite the dust, the noble Count Robert shall be set at liberty, and permitted to depart with all suitable honours.'

'This I refuse not,' said the Cæsar, 'provided it is in my power.'

A deep growling sound, like that of a modern gong, here interrupted the conference.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Varangian and Count Robert, at every risk of discovery, had remained so near as fully to conjecture, though they could not expressly overhear, the purport of the conversation.

'He has accepted her challenge!' said the Count of Paris.

'And with apparent willingness,' said Hereward.

'O, doubtless, doubtless,' answered the Crusader; 'but he knows not the skill in war which a woman may attain. For my part, God knows I have enough depending upon the issue of this contest, yet such is my confidence that I would to God I had more. I vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances, that I desire every furrow of land I possess—every honour which I can call my own, from the countship of Paris, down to the leather that binds my spur, were dependent and at issue upon this fair field, between your Cæsar, as men term him, and Brenhilda of Aspramonte.'

'It is a noble confidence,' said the Varangian, 'nor durst I say it is a rash one; only I cannot but remember that the Cæsar is a strong man as well as a handsome, expert in the use of arms, and, above all, less strictly bound than you esteem yourself by the rules of honour. There are many ways in which advantage may be given and taken, which will not, in the Cæsar's estimation, alter the character of the field from an equal one, although it might do so in the opinion of the chivalrous Count of Paris, or even in that of the poor Varangian. But first let me conduct you to some place of safety, for your escape must be soon, if it is not already, detected. The sounds which we heard intimate that some of his confederate plotters have visited the garden on other than love affairs. I will guide thee to another avenue than that by which we entered. But you would hardly, I suppose, be pleased to adopt the wisest alternative?'

'And what may that be?' said the count.

'To give thy purse, though it were thine all, to some poor ferryman to waft thee over the Hellespont, then hasten to carry thy complaint to Godfrey of Bouillon, and what friends thou mayst have among thy brethren Crusaders, and determine, as thou easily canst, on a sufficient number of them to come back and menace the city with instant war, unless the Emperor should deliver up thy lady, most unfairly made prisoner, and prevent, by his authority, this absurd and unnatural combat.'

'And would you have me, then,' said Count Robert, 'move the Crusaders to break a fairly-appointed field of battle? Do you think that Godfrey of Bouillon would turn back upon his pilgrimage for such an unworthy purpose; or that the Countess of Paris would accept as a service, means of safety which would stain her honour for ever, by breaking an appointment solemnly made on her own challenge?—Never!'

'My judgment is then at fault,' said the Varangian, 'for I see I can hammer out no expedient which is not, in some extravagant manner or another, controlled by your foolish notions. Here is a man who has been trapped into the power of his enemy, that he might not interfere to prevent a base stratagem upon his lady, involving both her life and honour; yet he thinks it a matter of necessity that he keeps faith as precisely with these midnight poisoners, as he would had it been pledged to the most honourable men!'

'Thou say'st a painful truth,' said Count Robert; 'but my word is the emblem of my faith; and if I pass it to a dishonourable or faithless foe, it is imprudently done on my part; but if I break it, being once pledged, it is a dishonourable action, and the disgrace can never be washed from my shield.'

'Do you mean, then,' said the Varangian, 'to suffer your wife's honour to remain pledged, as it at present is, on the event of an unequal combat?'

'God and the saints pardon thee such a thought!' said the Count of Paris. 'I will go to see this combat with a heart as firm, if not as light, as any time I ever saw spears splintered. If by the influence of any accident or treachery,—for fairly, and with such an antagonist, Brenhilda of Aspramonte cannot be overthrown,—I step into the lists, proclaim the Cæsar as he is—a villain—show the falsehood of his conduct from beginning to end,—appeal to every noble heart that hears me, and then—God show the right!'

Hereward paused, and shook his head. 'All this,' he said, 'might be feasible enough, provided the combat were to be fought in the presence of your own countrymen, or even, by the mass! if the Varangians were to be guards of the lists. But treachery of every kind is so familiar to the Greeks, that I question if they would view the conduct of their Cæsar as anything else than a pardonable and natural stratagem of Dan Cupid, to be smiled at, rather than subjected to disgrace or punishment.'

'A nation,' said Count Robert, 'who could smile at such a jest, may Heaven refuse them sympathy at their utmost need, when their sword is broken in their hand, and their wives and daughters shrieking in the relentless grasp of a barbarous enemy!'

Hereward looked upon his companion, whose flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes bore witness to his enthusiasm.

'I see,' he said, 'you are resolved, and I know that your resolution can in justice be called by no other name than an act of heroic folly—What then? it is long since life has been bitter to the Varangian exile. Morn has raised him from a joyless bed, which night has seen him lie down upon, weary with wielding a mercenary weapon in the wars of strangers. He has longed to lay down his life in an honourable cause, and this is one in which the extremity and very essence of honour is implicated. It tallies also with my scheme of saving the Emperor, which will be greatly facilitated by the downfall of his ungrateful son-in-law.' Then, addressing himself to the count, he continued, 'Well, Sir Count, as thou art the person principally concerned, I am willing to yield to thy reasoning in this affair; but I hope you will permit me to mingle with your resolution some advices of a more everyday and less fantastic nature. For example, thy escape from the dungeons of the Blacquernal must soon be generally known. In prudence, indeed, I myself must be the first to communicate it, since otherwise the suspicion will fall on me—Where do you think of concealing yourself? for assuredly the search will be close and general.'

'For that,' said the Count of Paris, 'I must be indebted to thy suggestion, with thanks for every lie which thou findest thyself obliged to make, to contrive, and produce in my behalf, entreating thee only to render them as few as possible, they being a coin which I myself never fabricate.'

'Sir Knight,' answered Hereward, 'let me begin first by saying that no knight that ever belted sword is more a slave to truth, when truth is observed towards him, than the poor soldier who talks to thee; but when the game depends not upon fair play, but upon lulling men's cautiousness asleep by falsehood, and drugging their senses by opiate draughts, they who would scruple at no means of deceiving me, can hardly expect that I, who am paid in such base money, should pass nothing on my part but what is lawful and genuine. For the present, thou must remain concealed within my poor apartment, in the barracks of the Varangians, which is the last place where they will think of seeking for thee. Take this, my upper cloak, and follow me; and now that we are about to leave these gardens, thou mayest follow me unsuspected as a sentinel attending his officer; for, take it along with you, noble Count, that we Varangians are a sort of persons upon whom the Greeks care not to look very long or fixedly.'

They now reached the gate where they had been admitted by the negress, and Hereward, who was entrusted with the power, it seems, of letting himself out of the philosopher's premises, though not of entering without assistance from the portress, took out a key which turned the lock on the garden side, so that they soon found themselves at liberty. They then proceeded by by-paths through the city, Hereward leading the way, and the count following, without speech or remonstrance, until they stood before the portal of the barracks of the Varangians.

'Make haste,' said the sentinel who was on duty, 'dinner is already begun.' The communication sounded joyfully in the ears of Hereward, who was much afraid that his companion might have been stopped and examined. By a side passage he reached his own quarters, and introduced the count into a small room, the sleeping chamber of his squire, where he apologized for leaving him for some time; and, going out, locked the door, for fear, as he said, of intrusion.

The demon of suspicion was not very likely to molest a mind so frankly constituted as that of Count Robert, and yet the last action of Hereward did not fail to occasion some painful reflections.

'This man,' he said, 'had needs be true, for I have reposed in him a mighty trust, which few hirelings in his situation would honourably discharge. What is to prevent him to report to the principal officer of his watch, that the Frank prisoner, Robert, Count of Paris, whose wife stands engaged for so desperate a combat with the Cæsar, has escaped, indeed, this morning, from the prisons of the Blacquernal, but has suffered himself to be trepanned at noon, and is again a captive in the barracks of the Varangian Guard?—what means of defence are mine, were I discovered to these mercenaries?—What man could do, by the favour of Our Lady of the Broken Lances, I have not failed to achieve. I have slain a tiger in single combat—I have killed one warder, and conquered the desperate and gigantic creature by whom he was supported. I have had terms enough at command to bring over this Varangian to my side, in appearance at least; yet all this does not encourage me to hope that I could long keep at bay ten or a dozen such men as these beef-fed knaves appear to be, led in upon me by a fellow of thews and sinews such as those of my late companion.—Yet for shame, Robert! such thoughts are unworthy a descendant of Charlemagne. When wert thou wont so curiously to count thine enemies, and when wert thou wont to be suspicious, since he, whose bosom may truly boast itself incapable of fraud, ought in honesty to be the last to expect it in another? The Varangian's look is open, his coolness in danger is striking, his speech is more frank and ready than ever was that of a traitor. If he is false, there is no faith in the hand of nature, for truth, sincerity, and courage are written upon his forehead.'

While Count Robert was thus reflecting upon his condition, and combating the thick-coming doubts and suspicions which its uncertainties gave rise to, he began to be sensible that he had not eaten for many hours; and, amidst many doubts and fears of a more heroic nature, he half entertained a lurking suspicion that they meant to let hunger undermine his strength before they adventured into the apartment to deal with him.

We shall best see how far these doubts were deserved by Hereward, or how far they were unjust, by following his course after he left his barrack-room. Snatching a morsel of dinner, which he ate with an affectation of great hunger, but, in fact, that his attention to his food might be a pretence for dispensing with disagreeable questions, or with conversation of any kind, he pleaded duty, and, immediately leaving his comrades, directed his course to the lodgings of Achilles Tatius, which were a part of the same building. A Syrian slave who opened the door, after a deep reverence to Hereward, whom he knew as a favourite attendant of the Acolyte, said to him that his master was gone forth, but had desired him to say, that if he wished to see him, he would find him at the Philosopher's Gardens, so called as belonging to the sage Agelastes.

Hereward turned about instantly, and, availing himself of his knowledge of Constantinople to thread its streets in the shortest time possible, at length stood alone before the door in the garden-wall, at which he and the Count of Paris had previously been admitted in the earlier part of the day. The same negress appeared at the same private signal, and when he asked for Achilles Tatius, she replied, with some sharpness, 'Since you were here this morning, I marvel you did not meet him, or that, having business with him, you did not stay till he arrived. Sure I am, that not long after you entered the garden the Acolyte was inquiring for you.'

'It skills not, old woman,' said the Varangian; 'I communicate the reason of my motions to my

commander, but not to thee.' He entered the garden accordingly, and, avoiding the twilight path that led to the Bower of Love,—so was the pavilion named in which he had overheard the dialogue between the Cæsar and the Countess of Paris,—he arrived before a simple garden-house, whose humble and modest front seemed to announce that it was the abode of philosophy and learning. Here, passing before the windows, he made some little noise, expecting to attract the attention either of Achilles Tatius, or his accomplice Agelastes, as chance should determine. It was the first who heard, and who replied. The door opened; a lofty plume stooped itself, that its owner might cross the threshold, and the stately form of Achilles Tatius entered the gardens. 'What now,' he said, 'our trusty sentinel? what hast thou, at this time of day, come to report to us? Thou art our good friend and highly-esteemed soldier, and well we wot thine errand must be of importance, since thou hast brought it thyself and at an hour so unusual.'

'Pray Heaven,' said Hereward, 'that the news I have brought deserve a welcome.'

'Speak them instantly,' said the Acolyte, 'good or bad; thou speakest to a man to whom fear is unknown.' But his eye, which quailed as he looked on the soldier—his colour, which went and came—his hands, which busied themselves in an uncertain manner in adjusting the belt of his sword,—all argued a state of mind very different from that which his tone of defiance would fain have implied. 'Courage,' he said, 'my trusty soldier! speak the news to me. I can bear the worst thou hast to tell.'

'In a word, then,' said the Varangian, 'your valour directed me this morning to play the office of master of the rounds upon those dungeons of the Blacquernal Palace, where last night the boisterous Count Robert of Paris was incarcerated'——

'I remember well,' said Achilles Tatius.—'What then?'

'As I reposed me,' said Hereward, 'in an apartment above the vaults, I heard cries from beneath, of a kind which attracted my attention. I hastened to examine, and my surprise was extreme, when, looking down into the dungeon, though I could see nothing distinctly, yet, by the wailing and whimpering sounds, I conceived that the man of the forest, the animal called Sylvan, whom our soldiers have so far indoctrinated in our Saxon tongue as to make him useful in the wards of the prison, was bemoaning himself on account of some violent injury. Descending with a torch, I found the bed on which the prisoner had been let down burnt to cinders; the tiger which had been chained within a spring of it, with its skull broken to pieces; the creature called Sylvan, prostrate and writhing under great pain and terror, and no prisoner whatever in the dungeon. There were marks that all the fastenings had been withdrawn by a Mitylenian soldier, companion of my watch, when he visited the dungeon at the usual hour; and as, in my anxious search, I at length found his dead body, slain apparently by a stab in the throat, I was obliged to believe that, while I was examining the cell, he, this Count Robert, with whose daring life the adventure is well consistent, had escaped to the upper air, by means, doubtless, of the ladder and trap-door by which I had descended.'

'And wherefore didst thou not instantly call treason, and raise the hue and cry?' demanded the Acolyte.

'I dared not venture to do so,' replied the Varangian, 'till I had instructions from your valour. The alarming cry of treason, and the various rumours likely at this moment to ensue, might have involved a search so close, as perchance would have discovered matters in which the Acolyte himself would have been rendered subject to suspicion.'

'Thou art right,' said Achilles Tatius, in a whisper; 'and yet it will be necessary that we do not pretend any longer to conceal the flight of this important prisoner, if we would not pass for being his accomplices. Where thinkest thou this unhappy fugitive can have taken refuge?'

'That I was in hopes of learning from your valour's greater wisdom,' said Hereward.

'Thinkest thou not,' said Achilles, 'that he may have crossed the Hellespont, in order to rejoin his own countrymen and adherents?'

'It is much to be dreaded,' said Hereward. 'Undoubtedly, if the Count listened to the advice of any one who knew the face of the country, such would be the very counsel he would receive.'

'The danger, then, of his return at the head of a vengeful body of Franks,' said the Acolyte, 'is not so immediate as I apprehended at first; for the Emperor gave positive orders that the boats and galleys which yesterday transported the Crusaders to the shores of Asia should recross the strait, and bring back no single one of them from the step upon their journey on which he had so far furthered them.—Besides, they all—their leaders, that is to say—made their vows before crossing, that they would not turn back so much as a foot's pace, now that they had set actually forth on the road to Palestine.'

'So, therefore,' said Hereward, 'one of two propositions is unquestionable,—either Count Robert is on the eastern side of the strait, having no means of returning with his brethren to avenge the usage he has received, and may therefore be securely set at defiance; or else he lurks somewhere in Constantinople, without a friend or ally to take his part, or encourage him openly to state his supposed wrongs: in either case, there can, I think, be no tact in conveying to the palace the news that he has freed himself, since it would only alarm the court, and afford the Emperor ground for many suspicions.—But it is not for an ignorant barbarian like me to prescribe a course of conduct to your valour and wisdom, and methinks the sage Agelastes were a fitter counsellor than such as I am.'

'No, no, no,' said the Acolyte, in a hurried whisper; 'the philosopher and I are right good friends, sworn good friends, very especially bound together; but should it come to this, that one of us must needs throw before the footstool of the Emperor the head of the other, I think thou wouldst not advise that I, whose hairs have not a trace of silver, should be the last in making the offering; therefore we will say nothing of

this mishap, but give thee full power and the highest charge to seek for Count Robert of Paris, be he dead or alive, to secure him within the dungeons set apart for the discipline of our own corps, and when thou hast done so, to bring me notice. I may make him my friend in many ways, by extricating his wife from danger by the axes of my Varangians. What is there in this metropolis that they have to oppose them?'

'When raised in a just cause,' answered Hereward, 'nothing.'

'Hah!—say'st thou?' said the Acolyte; 'how meanest thou by that?—but I know—Thou art scrupulous about having the just and lawful command of thy officer in every action in which thou art engaged, and, thinking in that dutiful and soldier-like manner, it is my duty as thine Acolyte to see thy scruples satisfied. A warrant shalt thou have, with full powers, to seek for and imprison this foreign count of whom we have been speaking—And hark thee, my excellent friend,' he continued, with some hesitation, 'I think thou hadst better begone, and begin, or rather continue, thy search. It is unnecessary to inform our friend Agelastes of what has happened, until his advice be more needful than as yet it is on the occasion. Home—home to the barracks; I will account to him for thy appearance here, if he be curious on the subject, which, as a suspicious old man, he is likely to be. Go to the barracks, and act as if thou hadst a warrant in every respect full and ample. I will provide thee with one when I come back to my quarters.'

The Varangian turned hastily homewards.

'Now, is it not,' he said, 'a strange thing, and enough to make a man a rogue for life—to observe how the devil encourages young beginners in falsehood! I have told a greater lie—at least I have suppressed more truth—than on any occasion before in my whole life—and what is the consequence? Why, my commander throws almost at my head a warrant sufficient to guarantee and protect me in all I have done or propose to do! If the Foul Fiend were thus regular in protecting his votaries, methinks they would have little reason to complain of him, or better men to be astonished at their number. But a time comes, they say, when he seldom fails to desert them. Therefore, get thee behind me, Satan! If I have seemed to be thy servant for a short time, it is but with an honest and Christian purpose.'

As he entertained these thoughts, he looked back upon the path, and was startled at an apparition of a creature of a much greater size and a stranger shape than human, covered, all but the face, with a reddish dun fur; his expression an ugly, and yet a sad melancholy; a cloth was wrapped round one hand, and an air of pain and languor bespoke suffering from a wound. So much was Hereward preoccupied with his own reflections, that at first he thought his imagination had actually raised the devil; but, after a sudden start of surprise, he recognised his acquaintance Sylvan. 'Ha! old friend,' he said, 'I am happy thou hast made thy escape to a place where thou wilt find plenty of fruit to support thee. Take my advice—keep out of the way of discovery—Keep thy friend's counsel.'

The man of the wood uttered a chattering noise in return to this address.

'I understand thee,' said Hereward; 'thou wilt tell no tales, thou sayest; and faith, I will trust thee rather than the better part of my own two-legged race, who are eternally circumventing or murdering each other.'

A minute after the creature was out of sight, Hereward heard the shriek of a female, and a voice which cried for help. The accents must have been uncommonly interesting to the Varangian, since, forgetting his own dangerous situation, he immediately turned and flew to the suppliant's assistance.

CHAPTER XX.

She comes! she comes! in all the charms of youth,
Unequall'd love, and unsuspected truth!

HEREWARD was not long in tracing the cry through the wooded walks, when a female rushed into his arms; alarmed, as it appeared, by Sylvan, who was pursuing her closely. The figure of Hereward, with his axe uplifted, put an instant stop to his career, and, with a terrified note of his native cries, he withdrew into the thickest of the adjoining foliage.

Relieved from his presence, Hereward had time to look at the female whom he had succoured: She was arrayed in a dress which consisted of several colours, that which predominated being a pale yellow; her tunic was of this colour, and, like a modern gown, was closely fitted to the body, which, in the present case, was that of a tall, but very well-formed person. The mantle, or upper garment, in which the whole figure was wrapped, was of fine cloth; and the kind of hood which was attached to it, having flown back with the rapidity of her motion, gave to view the hair beautifully adorned and twisted into a natural head-dress. Beneath this natural head-gear appeared a face pale as death, from a sense of the supposed danger, but which preserved, even amidst its terrors, an exquisite degree of beauty.

Hereward was thunderstruck at this apparition. The dress was neither Grecian, Italian, nor of the costume of the Franks;—it was *Saxon!*—connected by a thousand tender remembrances with Hereward's childhood and youth. The circumstance was most extraordinary. Saxon women, indeed, there were in Constantinople, who had united their fortunes with those of the Varangians; and those often chose to wear their national dress in the city, because the character and conduct of their husbands secured them a degree of respect which they might not have met with either as Grecian or as stranger females of a similar rank. But almost all these were personally known to Hereward. It was no time, however, for reverie—he was himself in danger—the situation of the young female might be no safe one. In every case, it was judicious to quit the more public part of the gardens; he therefore lost not a moment in conveying the fainting Saxon to a retreat he fortunately was acquainted with. A covered path, obscured by vegetation, led through a species of labyrinth to

an artificial cave, at the bottom of which, half-paved with shells, moss, and spar, lay the gigantic and half-recumbent statue of a river deity, with its usual attributes—that is, its front crowned with water-lilies and sedges, and its ample hand half-resting upon an empty urn. The attitude of the whole figure corresponded with the motto, —'I SLEEP—AWAKE ME NOT.'

'Accursed relic of paganism,' said Hereward, who was, in proportion to his light, a zealous Christian—'brutish stock or stone that thou art! I will wake thee with a vengeance.' So saying, he struck the head of the slumbering deity with his battle-axe, and deranged the play of the fountain so much that the water began to pour into the basin.

'Thou art a good block, nevertheless,' said the Varangian, 'to send succour so needful to the aid of my poor countrywoman. Thou shalt give her also, with thy leave, a portion of thy couch. So saying, he arranged his fair burden, who was as yet insensible, upon the pedestal where the figure of the river god reclined. In doing this, his attention was recalled to her face, and again and again he was thrilled with an emotion of hope, but so excessively like fear that it could only be compared to the flickering of a torch, uncertain whether it is to light up or be instantly extinguished. With a sort of mechanical attention, he continued to make such efforts as he could to recall the intellect of the beautiful creature before him. His feelings were those of the astronomical sage, to whom the rise of the moon slowly restores the contemplation of that heaven, which is at once, as a Christian, his hope of felicity, and, as a philosopher, the source of his knowledge. The blood returned to her cheek, and reanimation, and even recollection, took place in her earlier than in the astonished Varangian.

'Blessed Mary!' she said, 'have I indeed tasted the last bitter cup, and is it here where thou reunitest thy votaries after death?—Speak, Hereward; if thou art aught but an empty creature of the imagination!—speak, and tell me if I have but dreamed of that monstrous ogre!'

'Collect thyself, my beloved Bertha,' said the Anglo-Saxon, recalled by the sound of her voice, 'and prepare to endure what thou livest to witness, and thy Hereward survives to tell. That hideous thing exists—nay, do not start and look for a hiding-place—thy own gentle hand with a riding-rod is sufficient to tame its courage. And am I not here, Bertha? Wouldst thou wish another safeguard?'

'No—no,' exclaimed she, seizing on the arm of her recovered lover. 'Do I not know you now?'

'And is it but now you know me, Bertha?' said Hereward.

'I suspected before,' she said, casting down her eyes; 'but I know with certainty that mark of the boar's tusk.'

Hereward suffered her imagination to clear itself from the shock it had received so suddenly, before he ventured to enter upon present events, in which there was so much both to doubt and to fear. He permitted her, therefore, to recall to her memory all the circumstances of the rousing the hideous animal, assisted by the tribes of both their fathers. She mentioned in broken words the flight of arrows discharged against the boar by young and old, male and female, and how her own well-aimed but feeble shaft wounded him sharply; she forgot not how, incensed at the pain, the creature rushed upon her as the cause, laid her palfrey dead upon the spot, and would soon have slain her, had not Hereward, when every attempt failed to bring his horse up to the monster, thrown himself from his seat, and interposed personally between the boar and Bertha. The battle was not decided without a desperate struggle; the boar was slain, but Hereward received the deep gash upon his brow which she whom he had saved now recalled to her memory. 'Alas!' she said, 'what have we been to each other since that period? and what are we now in this foreign land?'

'Answer for thyself, my Bertha,' said the Varangian, 'if thou canst;—and if thou canst with truth say that thou art the same Bertha who vowed affection to Hereward, believe me, it were sinful to suppose that the saints have brought us together with a view of our being afterwards separated.'

'Hereward,' said Bertha, 'you have not preserved the bird in your bosom safer than I have; at home or abroad, in servitude or in freedom, amidst sorrow or joy, plenty or want, my thought was always on the troth I had plighted to Hereward at the stone of Odin.'*

'Say no more of that,' said Hereward; 'it was an impious rite, and good could not come of it.'

'Was it then so impious?' she said, the unbidden tear rushing into her large blue eye.—'Alas! it was a pleasure to reflect that Hereward was mine by that solemn engagement!'

'Listen to me, my Bertha,' said Hereward, taking her hand: 'we were then almost children; and though our vow was in itself innocent, yet it was so far wrong, as being sworn in the presence of a dumb idol, representing one who was, while alive, a bloody and cruel magician. But we will, the instant an opportunity offers itself, renew our vow before a shrine of real sanctity, and promise suitable penance for our ignorant acknowledgment of Odin, to propitiate the real Deity, who can bear us through those storms of adversity which are like to surround us.'

Leaving them for the time to their love-discourse, of a nature pure, simple, and interesting, we shall give, in a few words, all that the reader needs to know of their separate history between the boar's hunt and the time of their meeting in the gardens of Agelastes.

In that doubtful state experienced by outlaws, Waltheoff, the father of Hereward, and Engelred, the parent of Bertha, used to assemble their unsubdued tribes, sometimes in the fertile regions of Devonshire, sometimes in the dark wooded solitudes of Hampshire, but as much as possible within the call of the bugle of the famous Edric the Forester, so long leader of the insurgent Saxons. The chiefs we have mentioned were among the last bold men who asserted the independence of the Saxon race of England; and,

* [The principal god of the ancient Scandinavians.]

like their captain, Edric, they were generally known by the name of Foresters, as men who lived by hunting, when their power of making excursions was checked and repelled. Hence they made a step backwards in civilisation, and became more like to their remote ancestors of German descent, than they were to their more immediate and civilised predecessors, who, before the battle of Hastings, had advanced considerably in the arts of civilised life.

Old superstitions had begun to revive among them, and hence the practice of youths and maidens plighting their troth at the stone circles dedicated, as it was supposed, to Odin, in whom, however, they had long ceased to nourish any of the sincere belief which was entertained by their heathen ancestors.

In another respect these outlaws were fast resuming a striking peculiarity of the ancient Germans. Their circumstances naturally brought the youth of both sexes much together, and by early marriage, or less permanent connections, the population would have increased far beyond the means which the outlaws had to maintain, or even to protect themselves. The laws of the Foresters, therefore, strictly enjoined that marriages should be prohibited until the bridegroom was twenty-one years complete. Future alliances were indeed often formed by the young people, nor was this discountenanced by their parents, provided that the lovers waited until the period when the majority of the bridegroom should permit them to marry. Such youths as infringed this rule incurred the dishonourable epithet of *niddering*, or worthless,—an epithet of a nature so insulting, that men were known to have slain themselves, rather than endure life under such opprobrium. But the offenders were very few amidst a race trained in moderation and self-denial; and hence it was that woman, worshipped for so many years like something sacred, was received, when she became the head of a family, into the arms and heart of a husband who had so long expected her, was treated as something more elevated than the mere idol of the moment; and, feeling the rate at which she was valued, endeavoured by her actions to make her life correspond with it.

It was by the whole population of these tribes, as well as their parents, that, after the adventure of the boar-hunt, Hereward and Bertha were considered as lovers whose alliance was pointed out by Heaven, and they were encouraged to approximate as much as their mutual inclinations prompted them. The youths of the tribe avoided asking Bertha's hand at the dance, and the maidens used no maidenly entreaty or artifice to detain Hereward beside them, if Bertha was present at the feast. They clasped each other's hands through the perforated stone, which they called the altar of Odin, though later ages have ascribed it to the Druids, and they implored that if they broke their faith to each other, their fault might be avenged by the twelve swords which were now drawn around them during the ceremony by as many youths, and that their misfortunes might be so many as twelve maidens, who stood around with their hair loosened, should be unable to recount, either in prose or verse.

The torch of the Saxon Cupid shone for some years as brilliant as when it was first lighted. The time, however, came when they were to be tried by adversity, though undeserved by the perfidy of either. Years had gone past, and Hereward had to count with anxiety how many months and weeks were to separate him from the bride, who was beginning already by degrees to shrink less shyly from the expressions and caresses of one who was soon to term her all his own. William Rufus, however, had formed a plan of totally extirpating the Foresters, whose implacable hatred, and restless love of freedom, had so often disturbed the quiet of his kingdom, and despised his forest laws. He assembled his Norman forces, and united to them a body of Saxons who had submitted to his rule. He thus brought an overpowering force upon the bands of Waltheolf and Engelred, who found no resource but to throw the females of their tribe, and such as could not bear arms, into a convent dedicated to Saint Augustin, of which Kenelm their relation was prior, and then, turning to the battle, vindicated their ancient valour by fighting it to the last. Both the unfortunate chiefs remained dead on the field, and Hereward and his brother had well-nigh shared their fate; but some Saxon inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who adventured on the field of battle, which the victors had left bare of everything save the booty of the kites and the ravens, found the bodies of the youths still retaining life. As they were generally well known and much beloved by these people, Hereward and his brother were taken care of till their wounds began to close, and their strength returned. Hereward then heard the doleful news of the death of his father and Engelred. His next inquiry was concerning his betrothed bride and her mother. The poor inhabitants could give him little information. Some of the females who had taken refuge in the convent, the Norman knights and nobles had seized upon as their slaves; and the rest, with the monks who had harboured them, were turned adrift, and their place of retreat was completely sacked and burned to the ground.

Half-dead himself at hearing these tidings, Hereward sallied out, and at every risk of death, for the Saxon Foresters were treated as outlaws, commenced inquiries after those so dear to him. He asked concerning the particular fate of Bertha and her mother, among the miserable creatures who yet hovered about the neighbourhood of the convent, like a few half-scorched bees about their smothered hive. But, in the magnitude of their own terrors, none had retained eyes for their neighbours, and all that they could say was, that the wife and daughter of Engelred were certainly lost; and their imaginations suggested so many heartrending details to this conclusion, that Hereward gave up all thoughts of further researches, likely to terminate so uselessly and so horribly.

The young Saxon had been all his life bred up in a patriotic hatred to the Normans, who did not, it was likely, become dearer to his thoughts in consequence of this victory. He dreamed at first of crossing the strait, to make war against the hated enemy in their own country; but an idea so extravagant did not long retain possession of his mind. His fate was decided by his

ncountering an aged palmer, who knew, or pre-
ended to have known, his father, and to be a
ative of England. This man was a disguised
arangian, selected for the purpose, possessed of
rt and dexterity, and well provided with money.
e had little difficulty in persuading Hereward,
n the hopeless desolation of his condition, to
oin the Varangian Guard, at this moment at
ar with the Normans, under which name it
uited Hereward's prepossessions to represent
he emperor's wars with Robert Guiscard, his
on Bohemond, and other adventurers, in Italy,
reece, or Sicily. A journey to the East also
nferred a pilgrimage, and gave the unfortunate
Hereward the chance of purchasing pardon for
is sins by visiting the Holy Land. In gaining
Hereward, the recruiter also secured the services
f his elder brother, who had vowed not to
eparate from him.

The high character of both brothers for courage
nduced this wily agent to consider them as a
reat prize, and it was from the memoranda
especting the history and character of those
vhom he recruited, in which the elder had
een unreservedly communicative, that Agelastes
icked up the information respecting Hereward's
amily and circumstances, which, at their first
ecret interview, he made use of to impress upon
he Varangian the idea of his supernatural
nowledge. Several of his companions in arms
vere thus gained over; for it will easily be
uessed that these memorials were entrusted
o the keeping of Achilles Tatius, and he, to
urther their joint purposes, imparted them to
Agelastes, who thus obtained a general credit
or supernatural knowledge among these ignor-
nt men. But Hereward's blunt faith and
onesty enabled him to shun the snare.

Such being the fortunes of Hereward, those of
Bertha formed the subject of a broken and
assionate communication between the lovers,
roken like an April day, and mingled with
nany a tender caress, such as modesty permits
o lovers when they meet again unexpectedly
fter a separation which threatened to be
eternal. But the story may be comprehended
n few words. Amid the general sack of the
nonastery, an old Norman knight seized upon
Bertha as his prize. Struck with her beauty, he
lesigned her as an attendant upon his daughter,
ust then come out of the years of childhood,
nd the very apple of her father's eye, being the
nly child of his beloved countess, and sent late
n life to bless their marriage bed. It was in the
rder of things that the Lady of Aspramonte,
vho was considerably younger than the knight,
hould govern her husband, and that Brenhilda,
heir daughter, should govern both her parents.

The Knight of Aspramonte, however, it may
e observed, entertained some desire to direct
is young offspring to more feminine amusements
han those which began already to put her life
requently in danger. Contradiction was not to
e thought of, as the good old knight knew by
xperience. The influence and example of a
ompanion a little older than herself might be
f some avail, and it was with this view that, in
he confusion of the sack, Aspramonte seized
pon the youthful Bertha. Terrified to the ut-
most degree, she clung to her mother, and the Knight of Aspramonte, who had a softer heart than was then usually found under a steel cuirass, moved by the affliction of the mother and daughter, and recollecting that the former might also be a useful attendant upon his lady, extended his protection to both, and, conveying them out of the press, paid the soldiers who ventured to dispute the spoil with him, partly in some small pieces of money, and partly in dry blows with the reverse of his lance.

The well-natured knight soon after returned to his own castle, and, being a man of an orderly life and virtuous habits, the charming beauties of the Saxon virgin, and the more ripened charms of her mother, did not prevent their travelling in all honour as well as safety to his family fortress, the Castle of Aspramonte. Here such masters as could be procured were got together to teach the young Bertha every sort of female accomplishment, in the hope that her mistress Brenhilda might be inspired with a desire to partake in her education; but although this so far succeeded that the Saxon captive became highly skilled in such music, needlework, and other female accomplishments as were known to the time, yet her young mistress Brenhilda retained the taste for those martial amusements which had so sensibly grieved her father, but to which her mother, who herself had nourished such fancies in her youth, readily gave sanction.

The captives, however, were kindly treated. Brenhilda became infinitely attached to the young Anglo-Saxon, whom she loved less for her ingenuity in arts, than for her activity in field sports, to which her early state of independence had trained her.

The Lady of Aspramonte was also kind to both the captives; but, in one particular, she exercised a piece of petty tyranny over them. She had imbibed an idea, strengthened by an old doting father confessor, that the Saxons were heathens at that time, or at least heretics, and made a positive point with her husband, that the bondswoman and girl who were to attend on her person and that of her daughter, should be qualified for the office by being anew admitted into the Christian Church by baptism.

Though feeling the falsehood and injustice of the accusation, the mother had sense enough to submit to necessity, and received the name of Martha in all form at the altar, to which she answered during the rest of her life.

But Bertha showed a character upon this occasion inconsistent with the general docility and gentleness of her temper. She boldly refused to be admitted anew into the pale of the Church, of which her conscience told her she was already a member, or to exchange for another the name originally given her at the font. It was in vain that the old knight commanded, that the lady threatened, and that her mother advised and entreated. More closely pressed in private by her mother, she let her motive be known, which had not before been suspected. 'I know,' she said, with a flood of tears, 'that my father would have died ere I was subjected to this insult; and then—who shall assure me that vows which were made to the Saxon Bertha will be binding if a French Agatha be substituted in her stead? They may banish me,' she said,

or kill me if they will, but if the son of Waltheoff should again meet with the daughter of Engelred, he shall meet that Bertha whom he knew in the forests of Hampton.'

All argument was in vain; the Saxon maiden remained obstinate, and to try to break her resolution, the Lady of Aspramonte at length spoke of dismissing her from the service of her young mistress, and banishing her from the castle. To this also she had made up her mind, and she answered firmly, though respectfully, that she would sorrow bitterly at parting with her young lady; but as to the rest, she would rather beg under her own name, than be recreant to the faith of her fathers, and condemn it as heresy, by assuming one of Frank origin. The Lady Brenhilda in the meantime entered the chamber, where her mother was just about to pass the threatened doom of banishment.—'Do not stop for my entrance, madam,' said the dauntless young lady; 'I am as much concerned in the doom which you are about to pass as is Bertha; if she crosses the drawbridge of Aspramonte as an exile, so will I, when she has dried her tears, of which even my petulance could never wring one from her eyes. She shall be my squire and body attendant, and Launcelot, the bard, shall follow with my spear and shield.'

'And you will return, mistress,' said her mother, 'from so foolish an expedition before the sun sets?'

'So Heaven further me in my purpose, lady,' answered the young heiress, 'the sun shall neither rise nor set that sees us return, till this name of Bertha and of her mistress Brenhilda are wafted as far as the trumpet of fame can sound them.—Cheer up, my sweetest Bertha!' she said, taking her attendant by the hand; 'if Heaven hath torn thee from thy country and thy plighted troth, it hath given thee a sister and a friend, with whom thy fame shall be for ever blended.'

The Lady of Aspramonte was confounded. She knew that her daughter was perfectly capable of the wild course which she had announced, and that she herself, even with her husband's assistance, would be unable to prevent her following it. She passively listened, therefore, while the Saxon matron, formerly Urica, but now Martha, addressed her daughter. 'My child,' she said, 'as you value honour, virtue, safety, and gratitude, soften your heart towards your master and mistress, and follow the advice of a parent, who has more years and more judgment than you. And you, my dearest young lady, let not your lady-mother think that an attachment to the exercises you excel in has destroyed in your bosom filial affection, and a regard to the delicacy of your sex!—As they seem both obstinate, madam,' continued the matron, after watching the influence of this advice upon the young women, 'perhaps, if it may be permitted me, I could state an alternative, which might, in the meanwhile, satisfy your ladyship's wishes, accommodate itself to the wilfulness of my obstinate daughter, and answer the kind purpose of her generous mistress.' The Lady of Aspramonte signed to the Saxon matron to proceed. She went on accordingly: 'The Saxons, dearest lady, of the present day are neither pagans nor heretics; they are, in the time of keeping Easter, as well as in all other disputable doctrine, humbly obedient to the Pope of Rome; and this our good Bishop well knows, since he upbraided some of the domestics for calling me an old heathen. Yet our names are uncouth in the ears of the Franks, and bear, perhaps, a heathenish sound. If it be not exacted that my daughter submit to a new rite of baptism, she will lay aside her Saxon name of Bertha upon all occasions while in your honourable household. This will cut short a debate which, with forgiveness, I think is scarce of importance enough to break the peace of this castle. I will engage that, in gratitude for this indulgence of a trifling scruple, my daughter, if possible, shall double the zeal and assiduity of her service to her young lady.'

The Lady of Aspramonte was glad to embrace the means which this offer presented, of extricating herself from the dispute with as little compromise of dignity as could well be. 'If the good Lord Bishop approved of such a compromise,' she said, 'she would for herself withdraw her opposition.' The prelate approved accordingly, the more readily that he was informed that the young heiress desired earnestly such an agreement. The peace of the castle was restored, and Bertha recognised her new name of Agatha as a name of service, but not a name of baptism.

One effect the dispute certainly produced, and that was, increasing in an enthusiastic degree the love of Bertha for her young mistress. With that amiable failing of attached domestics and humble friends, she endeavoured to serve her as she knew she loved to be served; and therefore indulged her mistress in those chivalrous fancies which distinguished her even in her own age, and in ours would have rendered her a female Quixote. Bertha, indeed, never caught the frenzy of her mistress; but, strong, willing, and able-bodied, she readily qualified herself to act upon occasion as a squire of the body to a lady adventuress; and, accustomed from her childhood to see blows dealt, blood flowing, and men dying, she could look with an undazzled eye upon the dangers which her mistress encountered, and seldom teased her with remonstrances, unless when those were unusually great. This compliance on most occasions gave Bertha a right of advice upon some, which, always given with the best intentions and at fitting times, strengthened her influence with her mistress, which a course of conduct savouring of diametrical opposition would certainly have destroyed.

A few more words serve to announce the death of the Knight of Aspramonte — the romantic marriage of the young lady with the Count of Paris—their engagement in the Crusade — and the detail of events with which the reader is acquainted.

Hereward did not exactly comprehend some of the later incidents of the story, owing to a slight strife which arose between Bertha and him during the course of her narrative. When she avowed the girlish simplicity with which she obstinately refused to change her name,

ecause, in her apprehension, the troth-plight etwixt her and her lover might be thereby rejudiced, it was impossible for Hereward not acknowledge her tenderness, by snatching er to his bosom, and impressing his grateful anks upon her lips. She extricated herself mediately from his grasp, however, with eeks more crimsoned in modesty than in ger, and gravely addressed her lover thus: Enough, enough, Hereward; this may be ardoned to so unexpected a meeting; but we ust in future remember that we are probably e last of our race; and let it not be said that e manners of their ancestors were forgotten by ereward and by Bertha; think that, though e are alone, the shades of our fathers are not r off, and watch to see what use we make of e meeting, which, perhaps, their intercession as procured us.'

'You wrong me, Bertha,' said Hereward, 'if ou think me capable of forgetting my own uty and yours, at a moment when our thanks e due to Heaven, to be testified very differently an by infringing on its behests, or the com-ands of our parents. The question is now, ow we shall rejoin each other when we separate? nce separate, I fear, we must.'

'O, do not say so!' exclaimed the unfortunate ertha.

'It must be so,' said Hereward, 'for a time; ut I swear to thee by the hilt of my sword, nd the handle of my battle-axe, that blade was ever so true to shaft as I will be to thee!'

'But wherefore, then, leave me, Hereward?' aid the maiden; 'and O, wherefore not assist e in the release of my mistress?'

'Of thy mistress!' said Hereward. 'Shame! hat thou canst give that name to mortal oman!'

'But she *is* my mistress,' answered Bertha, and by a thousand kind ties which cannot be eparated so long as gratitude is the reward of indness.'

'And what is her danger?' said Hereward; what is it she wants, this accomplished lady hom thou callest mistress?'

'Her honour, her life, are alike in danger,' aid Bertha. 'She has agreed to meet the æsar in the field, and he will not hesitate, like base-born miscreant, to take every advantage the encounter, which, I grieve to say, may all likelihood be fatal to my mistress.'

'Why dost thou think so?' answered Here-ard. 'This lady has won many single combats, nless she is belied, against adversaries more ormidable than the Cæsar.'

'True,' said the Saxon maiden; 'but you peak of things that passed in a far different and, where faith and honour are not empty ounds; as, alas! they seem but too surely to e here. Trust me, it is no girlish terror which ends me out in this disguise of my country ress, which, they say, finds respect at Con-tantinople: I go to let the chiefs of the Crusade now the peril in which the noble lady stands, nd trust to their humanity, to their religion, o their love of honour and fear of disgrace, for ssistance in this hour of need; and now that I ave had the blessing of meeting with thee, all esides will go well—all will go well—and I will back to my mistress and report whom I have seen.'

'Tarry yet another moment, my recovered treasure!' said Hereward, 'and let me balance this matter carefully. This Frankish lady holds the Saxons like the very dust that thou brushest from the hem of her garment. She treats—she regards—the Saxons as pagans and heretics. She has dared to impose slavish tasks upon thee, born in freedom. Her father's sword has been imbrued to the hilt with Anglo-Saxon blood—perhaps that of Waltheoff and Engelred has added depth to the stain! She has been, besides, a presumptuous fool, usurping for herself the trophies and warlike character which belong to the other sex. Lastly, it will be hard to find a champion to fight in her stead, since all the Crusaders have passed over to Asia, which is the land, they say, in which they have come to war; and, by orders of the Emperor, no means of return to the hither shore will be permitted to any of them.'

'Alas! alas!' said Bertha, 'how does this world change us! The son of Waltheoff I once knew brave, ready to assist distress, bold and generous. Such was what I pictured him to myself during his absence. I have met him again, and he is calculating, cold, and selfish!'

'Hush, damsel,' said the Varangian, 'and know him of whom thou speakest, ere thou judgest him. The Countess of Paris is such as I have said; yet let her appear boldly in the lists, and when the trumpet shall sound thrice, another shall reply, which shall announce the arrival of her own noble lord to do battle in her stead; or, should he fail to appear—I will requite her kindness to thee, Bertha, and be ready in his place.'

'Wilt thou—wilt thou indeed?' said the damsel; 'that was spoken like the son of Waltheoff—like the genuine stock. I will home, and comfort my mistress; for surely, if the judgment of God ever directed the issue of a judicial combat, its influence will descend upon this. But you hint that the Count is here—that he is at liberty—she will inquire about that.'

'She must be satisfied,' replied Hereward, 'to know that her husband is under the guidance of a friend, who will endeavour to protect him from his own extravagances and follies; or, at all events, of one who, if he cannot properly be called a friend, has certainly not acted, and will not act, towards him the part of an enemy.—And now farewell, long lost—long loved!'—Before he could say more, the Saxon maiden, after two or three vain attempts to express her gratitude, threw herself into her lover's arms, and, despite the coyness which she had recently shown, impressed upon his lips the thanks which she could not speak.

They parted, Bertha returning to her mistress at the lodge, which she had left both with trouble and danger, and Hereward by the portal kept by the negro portress, who, complimenting the handsome Varangian on his success among the fair, intimated that she had been in some sort a witness of his meeting with the Saxon damsel. A piece of gold, part of a late largesse, amply served to bribe her tongue; and the soldier,

clear of the gardens of the philosopher, sped back as he might to the barrack—judging that it was full time to carry some supply to Count Robert, who had been left without food the whole day.

It is a common popular saying, that as the sensation of hunger is not connected with any pleasing or gentle emotion, so it is particularly remarkable for irritating those of anger and spleen. It is not, therefore, very surprising that Count Robert, who had been so unusually long without sustenance, should receive Hereward with a degree of impatience beyond what the occasion merited, and injurious certainly to the honest Varangian, who had repeatedly exposed his life that day for the interest of the countess and the count himself.

'Soh, sir!' he said, in that accent of affected restraint by which a superior modifies his displeasure against his inferior into a cold and scornful expression—'you have played a liberal host to us!—Not that it is of consequence; but methinks a Count of the most Christian kingdom dines not every day with a mercenary soldier, and might expect, if not the ostentatious, at least the needful part of hospitality.'

'And methinks,' replied the Varangian, 'O most Christian Count, that such of your high rank as, by choice or fate, become the guests of such as I, may think themselves pleased, and blame not their host's niggardliness, but the difficulty of his circumstances, if dinner should not present itself oftener than once in four-and-twenty hours.' So saying, he clapped his hands together, and his domestic Edric entered. His guest looked astonished at the entrance of this third party into their retirement. 'I will answer for this man,' said Hereward, and addressed him in the following words: 'What food hast thou, Edric, to place before the honourable Count?'

'Nothing but the cold pasty,' replied the attendant, 'marvellously damaged by your honour's encounter at breakfast.'

The military domestic, as intimated, brought forward a large pasty, but which had already that morning sustained a furious attack, insomuch that Count Robert of Paris, who, like all noble Normans, was somewhat nice and delicate in his eating, was in some doubt whether his scrupulousness should not prevail over his hunger; but, on looking more closely, sight, smell, and a fast of twenty hours joined to convince him that the pasty was an excellent one, and that the charger on which it was presented possessed corners yet untouched. At length, having suppressed his scruples, and made bold inroad upon the remains of the dish, he paused to partake of a flask of strong red wine which stood invitingly beside him, and a lusty draught increased the good humour which had begun to take place towards Hereward, in exchange for the displeasure with which he had received him.

'Now, by Heaven!' he said, 'I myself ought to be ashamed to lack the courtesy which I recommend to others! Here have I, with the manners of a Flemish boor, been devouring the provisions of my gallant host, without even asking him to sit down at his own table, and to partake of his own good cheer!'

'I will not strain courtesies with you for that,' said Hereward; and, thrusting his hand into the pasty, he proceeded with great speed and dexterity to devour the miscellaneous contents, a handful of which was enclosed in his grasp. The count now withdrew from the table, partly in disgust at the rustic proceedings of Hereward, who, however, by now calling Edric to join him in his attack upon the pasty, showed that he had, in fact, according to his manners, subjected himself previously to some observance of respect towards his guest; while the assistance of his attendant enabled him to make a clear *cacabulum* of what was left. Count Robert at length summoned up courage sufficient to put a question, which had been trembling upon his lips ever since Hereward had returned.

'Have thine inquiries, my gallant friend, learned more concerning my unfortunate wife, my faithful Brenhilda?'

'Tidings I have,' said the Anglo-Saxon, 'but whether pleasing or not, you yourself must be the judge.—This much I have learned;—she hath, as you know, come under an engagement to meet the Cæsar in arms in the lists, but under conditions which you may perhaps think strange: these, however, she hath entertained without scruple.'

'Let me know these terms,' said the Count of Paris; 'they will, I think, appear less strange in my eyes than in thine.'

But while he affected to speak with the utmost coolness, the husband's sparkling eye and crimsoned cheek betrayed the alteration which had taken place in his feelings. 'The lady and the Cæsar,' said Hereward, 'as you partly heard yourself, are to meet in fight; if the Countess wins, of course she remains the wife of the noble Count of Paris; if she loses, she becomes the paramour of the Cæsar, Nicephorus Briennius.'

'Saints and angels forbid!' said Count Robert; 'were they to permit such treason to triumph, we might be pardoned for doubting their divinity!'

'Yet methinks,' said the Anglo-Saxon, 'if there were no disgraceful precaution that both you and I, with other friends, if we can obtain such, should be seen under shield in the lists on the morning of the conflict. To triumph, or to be defeated, is in the hand of fate; but what we cannot fail to witness is, whether or not the lady receives that fair play which is the due of an honourable combatant, and which, as you have yourself seen, can be sometimes basely transgressed in this Grecian Empire.'

'On that condition,' said the count, 'and protesting that not even the extreme danger of my lady shall make me break through the rule of a fair fight, I will surely attend the lists, if thou brave Saxon, canst find me any means of doing so.—Yet stay,' he continued, after reflecting for a moment, 'thou shalt promise not to let her know that her Count is on the field, far less to point him out to her eye among the press of warriors. O, thou dost not know that the sight of the beloved will sometimes steal from us our courage, even when it has most to achieve!'

'We will endeavour,' said the Varangian, 'to arrange matters according to thy pleasure, so that thou findest out no more fantastical difficulties; for, by my word, an affair so com

cated in itself requires not to be confused by e fine-spun whims of thy national gallantry. antime, much must be done this night; and ile I go about it, thou, Sir Knight, hadst best ain here, with such disguise of garments, and ch food, as Edric may be able to procure for ee. Fear nothing from intrusion on the part thy neighbours. We Varangians respect each her's secrets, of whatever nature they may ance to be.'

CHAPTER XXI.

But for our trusty brother-in-law—and the Abbot,
With all the rest of that consorted crew,—
Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels:—
Good uncle, help to order several powers
To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are:
They shall not live within this world, I swear.
RICHARD II.

As Hereward spoke the last words narrated in he foregoing chapter, he left the count in his partment, and proceeded to the Blacquernal alace. We traced his first entrance into the ourt, but since then he had frequently been ummoned, not only by order of the Princess nna Comnena, who delighted in asking him uestions concerning the customs of his native ountry, and marking down the replies in her wn inflated language; but also by the direct ommand of the emperor himself, who had the umour of many princes, that of desiring to btain direct information from persons in a very nferior station in their court. The ring which he princess had given to the Varangian served s a pass-token more than once, and was now so enerally known by the slaves of the palace, hat Hereward had only to slip it into the hand f a principal person among them, and was ntroduced into a small chamber, not distant rom the saloon already mentioned, dedicated o the Muses. In this small apartment, the mperor, his spouse Irene, and their accomplished laughter, Anna Comnena, were seated together, lad in very ordinary apparel, as indeed the urniture of the room itself was of the kind used y respectable citizens, saving that mattresses, omposed of eiderdown, hung before each door o prevent the risk of eavesdropping.

'Our trusty Varangian,' said the empress.

'My guide and tutor respecting the manners f those steel-clad men,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'of whom it is so necessary that I hould form an accurate idea.'

'Your Imperial Majesty,' said the empress, will not, I trust, think your consort and your muse-inspired daughter are too many to share vith you the intelligence brought by this brave nd loyal man?'

'Dearest wife and daughter,' returned the mperor, 'I have hitherto spared you the burden f a painful secret, which I have locked in my wn bosom, at whatever expense of solitary orrow and unimparted anxiety. Noble daughter, ou in particular will feel this calamity, learning, s you must learn, to think odiously of one of vhom it has hitherto been your duty to hold a very different opinion.'

'Holy Mary!' exclaimed the princess.

'Rally yourself,' said the emperor; 'remember you are a child of the purple chamber, born, not to weep for your father's wrongs, but to avenge them,—not to regard even him who has lain by your side as half so important as the sacred Imperial grandeur, of which you are yourself a partaker.'

'What can such words preface?' said Anna Comnena, in great agitation.

'They say,' answered the emperor, 'that the Cæsar is an ungrateful man to all my bounties, and even to that which annexed him to my own house, and made him by adoption my own son. He hath consorted himself with a knot of traitors, whose very names are enough to raise the Foul Fiend, as if to snatch his assured prey!'

'Could Nicephorus do this?' said the astonished and forlorn princess; 'Nicephorus, who hath so often called my eyes the lights by which he steered his path? Could he do this to my father, to whose exploits he has listened hour after hour, protesting that he knew not whether it was the beauty of the language, or the heroism of the action, which most enchanted him? Thinking with the same thought, seeing with the same eye, loving with the same heart,—O my father! it is impossible that he could be so false. Think of the neighbouring Temple of the Muses!'

'And if I did,' murmured Alexius in his heart, 'I should think of the only apology which could be proposed for the traitor. A little is well enough, but the full soul loatheth the honeycomb.' Then speaking aloud, 'My daughter,' he said, 'be comforted; we ourselves were unwilling to believe the shameful truth; but our guards have been debauched; their commander, that ungrateful Achilles Tatius, with the equal traitor Agelastes, has been seduced to favour our imprisonment or murder; and, alas for Greece! in the very moment when she required the fostering care of a parent, she was to be deprived of him by a sudden and merciless blow!'

Here the emperor wept, whether for the loss to be sustained by his subjects, or of his own life, it is hard to say.

'Methinks,' said Irene, 'your Imperial Highness is slow in taking measures against the danger.'

'Under your gracious permission, mother,' answered the princess, 'I would rather say he was hasty in giving belief to it. Methinks the evidence of a Varangian, granting him to be ever so stout a man-at-arms, is but a frail guarantee against the honour of your son-in-law—the approved bravery and fidelity of the captain of your guards—the deep sense, virtue, and profound wisdom of the greatest of your philosophers'——

'And the conceit of an over-educated daughter,' said the emperor, 'who will not allow her parent to judge in what most concerns him. I will tell thee, Anna, I know every one of them, and the trust which may be reposed in them; the honour of your Nicephorus—the bravery and fidelity of the Acolyte—and the virtue and wisdom of Agelastes—have I not had them all in my purse? And had my purse continued well filled, and my arm strong as it was of late,

there they would have still remained. But the butterflies went off as the weather became cold, and I must meet the tempest without their assistance. You talk of want of proof? I have proof sufficient when I see danger; this honest soldier brought me indications which corresponded with my own private remarks, made on purpose. Varangian he shall be of Varangians; Acolyte he shall be named, in place of the present traitor; and who knows what may come thereafter?'

'May it please your Highness,' said the Varangian, who had been hitherto silent, 'many men in this empire rise to dignity by the fall of their original patrons, but it is a road to greatness to which I cannot reconcile my conscience; moreover, having recovered a friend, from whom I was long ago separated, I shall require, in short space, your Imperial licence for going hence, where I shall leave thousands of enemies behind me, and spending my life, like many of my countrymen, under the banner of King William of Scotland'——

'Part with *thee*, most inimitable man!' cried the emperor, with emphasis; 'where shall I get a soldier—a champion—a friend—so faithful?'

'Noble sir,' replied the Anglo-Saxon, 'I am every way sensible to your goodness and munificence; but let me entreat you to call me by my own name, and to promise me nothing but your forgiveness, for my having been the agent of such confusion among your Imperial servants. Not only is the threatened fate of Achilles Tatius, my benefactor; of the Cæsar, whom I think my well-wisher; and even of Agelastes himself, painful, so far as it is of my bringing round; but also I have known it somehow happen, that those on whom your Imperial Majesty has lavished the most valuable expressions of your favour one day, were the next day food to fatten the chough and crow. And this, I acknowledge, is a purpose for which I would not willingly have it said I had brought my English limbs to these Grecian shores.'

'Call thee by thine own name, my Edward,' said the emperor (while he muttered aside—'By Heaven, I have again forgot the name of the barbarian!')—'by thine own name certainly for the present, but only until we shall devise one more fitted for the trust we repose in thee. Meantime look at this scroll, which contains, I think, all the particulars which we have been able to learn of this plot, and give it to these unbelieving women, who will not credit that an emperor is in danger, till the blades of the conspirators' poniards are clashing within his ribs.'

Hereward did as he was commanded, and, having looked at the scroll, and signified, by bending his head, his acquiescence in its contents, he presented it to Irene, who had not read long, ere, with a countenance so embittered that she had difficulty in pointing out the cause of her displeasure to her daughter, she bade her, with animation, 'Read that—read that, and judge of the gratitude and affection of thy Cæsar!'

The Princess Anna Comnena awoke from a state of profound and overpowering melancholy, and looked at the passage pointed out to her, at first with an air of languid curiosity, which presently deepened into the most intense interest. She clutched the scroll as a falcon does his prey, her eye lightened with indignation; and it was with the cry of the bird when in fury that she exclaimed, 'Bloody-minded, double-hearted traitor! what wouldst thou have? Yes, father,' she said, rising in fury, 'it is no longer the voice of a deceived princess that shall intercede to avert from the traitor Nicephorus the doom he has deserved. Did he think that one born in the purple chamber could be divorced—murdered, perhaps—with the petty formula of the Romans, "Restore the keys—be no longer my domestic drudge"?* Was a daughter of the blood of Comnenus liable to such insults as the meanest of Quirites† might bestow on a family housekeeper?'

So saying, she dashed the tears from her eyes, and her countenance, naturally that of beauty and gentleness, became animated with the expression of a fury. Hereward looked at her with a mixture of fear, dislike, and compassion. She again burst forth, for nature, having given her considerable abilities, had lent her at the same time an energy of passion far superior in power to the cold ambition of Irene, or the wily, ambidexter, shuffling policy of the emperor.

'He shall abye it,' said the princess; 'he shall dearly abye it! False, smiling, cozening traitor!—and for that unfeminine barbarian! Something of this I guessed, even at that old fool's banqueting-house; and yet if this unworthy Cæsar submits his body to the chance of arms, he is less prudent than I have some reason to believe. Think you he will have the madness to brand us with such open neglect, my father? and will you not invent some mode of insuring our revenge?'

'Soh!' thought the emperor, 'this difficulty is over; she will run down-hill to her revenge, and will need the snaffle and curb more than the lash. If every jealous dame in Constantinople were to pursue her fury as unrelentingly, our laws should be written, like Draco's,‡ not in ink, but in blood.—Attend to me now,' he said aloud, 'my wife, my daughter, and thou, dear Edward, and you shall learn, and you three only, my mode of navigating the vessel of the state through these shoals.

'Let us see distinctly,' continued Alexius, 'the means by which they propose to act, and these shall instruct us how to meet them. A certain number of the Varangians are unhappily seduced, under pretence of wrongs, artfully stirred up by their villanous general. A part of them are studiously to be arranged nigh our person—the traitor Ursel, some of them suppose, is dead, but if it were so, his name is sufficient to draw together his old factionaries—I have a means of satisfying them on that point, on which I shall remain silent for the present.—A considerable body of the Immortal Guards have also given way to seduction; they are to be placed to support the handful of treacherous

* The laconic form of the Roman divorce.

† [The name of the citizens of ancient Rome.]

‡ [An Athenian lawgiver of the seventh century B.C., who supported his laws by exceptionally severe and bloody penalties.]

arangians, who are in the plot to attack our erson.—Now, a slight change in the stations f the soldiery, which thou, my faithful Edward —or—a—a—whatever thou art named,—for hich thou, I say, shalt have full authority, ill derange the plans of the traitors, and place he true men in such position around them as o cut them to pieces with little trouble.'

'And the combat, my lord?' said the Saxon.

'Thou hadst been no true Varangian hadst hou not inquired after that,' said the emperor, odding good-humouredly towards him. 'As o the combat, the Cæsar has devised it, and it hall be my care that he shall not retreat from he dangerous part of it. He cannot in honour void fighting with this woman, strange as the ombat is; and however it ends, the conspiracy vill break forth, and as assuredly as it comes gainst persons prepared, and in arms, shall it e stifled in the blood of the conspirators!'

'My revenge does not require this,' said the princess; 'and your Imperial honour is also interested that this Countess shall be protected.'

'It is little business of mine,' said the emperor. 'She comes here with her husband altogether uninvited. He behaves with insolence in my presence, and deserves whatever may be the issue to himself or his lady of their mad adventure. In sooth, I desired little more than to give him a fright with those animals whom their ignorance judged enchanted, and to give his wife a slight alarm about the impetuosity of a Grecian lover, and there my vengeance should have ended. But it may be that his wife may be taken under my protection, now that little revenge is over.'

'And a paltry revenge it was,' said the empress, 'that you, a man past middle life, and with a wife who might command some attention, should constitute yourself the object of alarm to such a handsome man as Count Robert, and the Amazon his wife.'

'By your favour, Dame Irene, no,' said the emperor. 'I left that part of the proposed comedy to my son-in-law, the Cæsar.'

But when the poor emperor had in some measure stopped one floodgate, he effectually opened another, and one which was more formidable. 'The more shame to your Imperial wisdom, my father!' exclaimed the Princess Anna Comnena; 'it is a shame that, with wisdom and a beard like yours, you should be meddling in such indecent follies as admit disturbance into private families, and that family your own daughter's! Who can say that the Cæsar, Nicephorus Briennius, ever looked astray towards another woman than his wife, till the Emperor taught him to do so, and involved him in a web of intrigue and treachery, in which he has endangered the life of his father-in-law?'

'Daughter! daughter! daughter!' said the empress;—'daughter of a she-wolf, I think, to goad her parent at such an unhappy time, when all the leisure he has is too little to defend his life!'

'Peace, I pray you, women both, with your senseless clamours,' answered Alexius, 'and let me at least swim for my life undisturbed with your folly. God knows if I am a man to encourage, I will not say the reality of wrong, but even its mere appearance!'

These words he uttered, crossing himself, with a devout groan. His wife Irene in the meantime stepped before him, and said, with a bitterness in her looks and accent which only long-concealed nuptial hatred breaking forth at once could convey,—'Alexius, terminate this affair how it will, you have lived a hypocrite, and thou wilt not fail to die one.' So saying, with an air of noble indignation, and carrying her daughter along with her, she swept out of the apartment.

The emperor looked after her in some confusion. He soon, however, recovered his self-possession, and, turning to Hereward with a look of injured majesty, said, 'Ah! my dear Edward,'—for the word had become rooted in his mind, instead of the less euphonic name of Hereward,—'thou seest how it is even with the greatest, and that the Emperor, in moments of difficulty, is a subject of misconstruction as well as the meanest burgess of Constantinople; nevertheless, my trust is so great in thee, Edward, that I would have thee believe that my daughter Anna Comnena is not of the temper of her mother, but rather of my own; honouring, thou mayst see, with religious fidelity the unworthy ties which I hope soon to break, and assort her with other fetters of Cupid which shall be borne more lightly. Edward, my main trust is in thee. Accident presents us with an opportunity, happy of the happiest so it be rightly improved, of having all the traitors before us assembled on one fair field. Think, *then*, on that day, as the Franks say at their tournaments, that fair eyes behold thee. Thou canst not devise a gift within my power, but I will gladly load thee with it.'

'It needs not,' said the Varangian, somewhat coldly; 'my highest ambition is to merit the epitaph upon my tomb, "Hereward was faithful." I am about, however, to demand a proof of your Imperial confidence, which perhaps you may think a startling one.'

'Indeed!' said the emperor. 'What, in one word, is thy demand?'

'Permission,' replied Hereward, 'to go to the Duke of Bouillon's encampment, and entreat his presence in the lists, to witness this extraordinary combat.'

'That he may return with his crusading madmen,' said the emperor, 'and sack Constantinople, under pretence of doing justice to his confederates? This, Varangian, is at least speaking thy mind openly.'

'No, by Heavens!' said Hereward suddenly; 'the Duke of Bouillon shall come with no more knights than may be a reasonable guard, should treachery be offered to the Countess of Paris.'

'Well, even in this,' said the emperor, 'will I be conformable; and if thou, Edward, betrayest my trust, think that thou forfeitest all that my friendship hast promised, and dost incur, besides, the damnation that is due to the traitor who betrays with a kiss.'

'For thy reward, noble sir,' answered the Varangian, 'I hereby renounce all claim to it. When the diadem is once more firmly fixed upon thy brow, and the sceptre in thy hand, if I am then alive, if my poor services should deserve so

much, I will petition thee for the means of leaving this court, and returning to the distant island in which I was born. Meanwhile, think me not unfaithful, because I have for a time the means of being so with effect. Your Imperial Highness shall learn that Hereward is as true as is your right hand to your left.'—So saying, he took his leave with a profound obeisance.

The emperor gazed after him with a countenance in which doubt was mingled with admiration.

'I have trusted him,' he said, 'with all he asked, and with the power of ruining me entirely, if such be his purpose. He has but to breathe a whisper, and the whole mad crew of Crusaders, kept in humour at the expense of so much current falsehood, and so much more gold, will return with fire and sword to burn down Constantinople, and sow with salt the place where it stood. I have done what I had resolved never to do—I have ventured kingdom and life on the faith of a man born of woman. How often have I said, nay, sworn, that I would not hazard myself on such peril, and yet, step by step, I have done so! I cannot tell—there is in that man's looks and words a good faith which overwhelms me; and what is almost incredible, my belief in him has increased in proportion to his showing me how slight my power was over him. I threw, like the wily angler, every bait I could devise, and some of them such as a king would scarcely have disdained; to none of these would he rise; but yet he gorges, I may say, the bare hook, and enters upon my service without a shadow of self-interest.—Can this be double-distilled treachery?—or can it be what men call disinterestedness?—If I thought him false, the moment is not yet past—he has not yet crossed the bridge—he has not passed the guards of the palace, who have no hesitation, and know no disobedience—But no—I were then alone in the land, and without a friend or confidant. I hear the sound of the outer gate unclose; the sense of danger certainly renders my ears more acute than usual.—It shuts again—the die is cast. He is at liberty—and Alexius Comnenus must stand or fall according to the uncertain faith of a mercenary Varangian.' He clapped his hands; a slave appeared, of whom he demanded wine. He drank, and his heart was cheered within him. 'I am decided,' he said, 'and will abide with resolution the cast of the throw, for good or for evil.'

So saying he retired to his apartment, and was not again seen during that night.

CHAPTER XXII.

And aye, as if for death, some lonely trumpet peal'd.
CAMPBELL.

THE Varangian, his head agitated with the weighty matters which were imposed on him, stopped from time to time as he journeyed through the moonlight streets, to arrest passing ideas as they shot through his mind, and consider them with accuracy in all their bearings. His thoughts were such as animated or alarmed him alternately, each followed by a confused throng of accompaniments which it suggested, and banished again in its turn by reflections of another description. It was one of those conjunctures when the minds of ordinary men feel themselves unable to support a burden which is suddenly flung upon them, and when, on the contrary, those of uncommon fortitude, and that best of Heaven's gifts, good sense, founded on presence of mind, feel their talents awakened and regulated for the occasion, like a good steed under the management of a rider of courage and experience.

As he stood in one of those fits of reverie, which repeatedly during that night arrested his stern military march, Hereward thought that his ear caught the note of a distant trumpet. This surprised him; a trumpet blown at that late hour, and in the streets of Constantinople, argued something extraordinary; for, as all military movements were the subject of special ordinance, the etiquette of the night could hardly have been transgressed without some great cause. The question was, what that cause could be?

Had the insurrection broken out unexpectedly, and in a different manner from what the conspirators proposed to themselves?—If so, his meeting with his plighted bride, after so many years' absence, was but a delusive preface to their separating for ever. Or had the Crusaders, a race of men upon whose motions it was difficult to calculate, suddenly taken arms and returned from the opposite shore to surprise the city? This might very possibly be the case: so numerous had been the different causes of complaint afforded to the Crusaders, that, when they were now for the first time assembled into one body, and had heard the stories which they could reciprocally tell concerning the perfidy of the Greeks, nothing was so likely, so natural, even perhaps so justifiable, as that they should study revenge.

But the sound rather resembled a point of war regularly blown, than the tumultuous blare of bugle-horns and trumpets, the accompaniments at once and the annunciation of a taken town, in which the horrid circumstances of storm had not yet given place to such stern peace as the victors' weariness of slaughter and rapine allows at length to the wretched inhabitants. Whatever it was, it was necessary that Hereward should learn its purport, and therefore he made his way into a broad street near the barracks, from which the sound seemed to come, to which point, indeed, his way was directed for other reasons.

The inhabitants of that quarter of the town did not appear violently startled by this military signal. The moonlight slept on the street, crossed by the gigantic shadowy towers of Sancta Sophia. No human being appeared in the streets, and such as for a instant looked from their doors or from their lattices, seemed to have their curiosity quickly satisfied, for they withdrew their heads, and secured the opening through which they had peeped.

Hereward could not help remembering the traditions which were recounted by the fathers of his tribe, in the deep woods of Hampshire, and which spoke of invisible huntsmen, who were heard to follow with viewless horses and hounds the unseen chase through the depths of the forests

f Germany. Such it seemed were the sounds ith which these haunted woods were wont to ing while the wild chase was up; and with uch apparent terror did the hearers listen to heir clamour.

'Fie!' he said, as he suppressed within him a endency to the same superstitious fears; 'do uch childish fancies belong to a man trusted ith so much, and from whom so much is xpected?' He paced down the street, there- ore, with his battle-axe over his shoulder, and he first person whom he saw venturing to look ut of his door, he questioned concerning the ause of this military music at such an unac- ustomed hour.

'I cannot tell, so please you, my lord,' said he citizen, unwilling, it appeared, to remain in he open air, or to enter into conversation, and greatly disposed to decline further questioning. This was the political citizen of Constantinople, whom he met with at the beginning of this history, and who, hastily stepping into his habitation, eschewed all further conversation.

The wrestler Stephanos showed himself at the next door, which was garlanded with oak and ivy leaves, in honour of some recent victory. He stood unshrinking, partly encouraged by the con- sciousness of personal strength, and partly by a rugged surliness of temper, which is often mis- taken among persons of this kind for real courage. His admirer and flatterer, Lysimachus, kept him- self ensconced behind his ample shoulders.

As Hereward passed, he put the same question as he did to the former citizen,—'Know you the meaning of these trumpets sounding so late?'

'You should know best yourself,' answered Stephanos doggedly; 'for, to judge by your axe and helmet, they are your trumpets, and not ours, which disturb honest men in their first sleep.'

'Varlet!' answered the Varangian, with an emphasis which made the prizer start,—'but— when that trumpet sounds, it is no time for a soldier to punish insolence as it deserves.'

The Greek started back and bolted into his house, nearly overthrowing, in the speed of his retreat, the artist Lysimachus, who was listening to what passed.

Hereward passed on to the barracks, where the military music had seemed to halt; but, on the Varangian crossing the threshold of the ample court-yard, it broke forth again with a tremendous burst, whose clamour almost stunned him, though well accustomed to the sounds. 'What is the meaning of this, Engelbrecht?' he said to the Varangian sentinel, who paced axe in hand before the entrance.

'The proclamation of a challenge and combat,' answered Engelbrecht. 'Strange things toward, comrade; the frantic Crusaders have bit the Grecians, and infected them with their humour of tilting, as they say dogs do each other with madness.'

Hereward made no reply to the sentinel's speech, but pressed forward into a knot of his fellow-soldiers who were assembled in the court, half-armed, or, more properly, in total disarray, as just arisen from their beds and huddled around the trumpets of their corps, which were drawn out in full pomp. He of the gigantic instrument, whose duty it was to intimate the express com- mands of the emperor, was not wanting in his place, and the musicians were supported by a band of the Varangians in arms, headed by Achilles Tatius himself. Hereward could also notice, on approaching nearer, as his comrades made way for him, that six of the Imperial heralds were on duty on this occasion; four of these (two acting at the same time) had already made proclamation, which was to be repeated for the third time by the two last, as was the usual fashion in Constantinople with Imperial mandates of great consequence. Achilles Tatius, the moment he saw his confidant, made him a sign, which Hereward understood as con- veying a desire to speak with him after the proclamation was over. The herald, after the flourish of trumpets was finished, commenced in these words:—

'By the authority of the resplendent and divine Prince Alexius Comnenus, Emperor of the most holy Roman Empire, his Imperial Majesty desires it to be made known to all and sundry the subjects of his empire, whatever their race of blood may be, or at whatever shrine of divinity they happen to bend—Know ye, therefore, that upon the second day after this is dated, our beloved son-in-law, the much- esteemed Cæsar, hath taken upon him to do battle with our sworn enemy, Robert, Count of Paris, on account of his insolent conduct, by presuming publicly to occupy our royal seat, and no less by breaking, in our Imperial presence, those curious specimens of art ornamenting our throne, called by tradition the Lions of Solomon. And that there may not remain a man in Europe who shall dare to say that the Grecians are behind other parts of the world in any of the manly exercises which Christian nations use, the said noble enemies, renouncing all assistance from falsehood, from spells, or from magic, shall debate this quarrel in three courses with grinded spears, and three passages of arms with sharpened swords; the field to be at the judgment of the honourable Emperor, and to be decided at his most gracious and unerring pleasure. And so God show the right!'

Another formidable flourish of the trumpets concluded the ceremony. Achilles then dis- missed the attendant troops, as well as the heralds and musicians, to their respective quarters; and, having got Hereward close to his side, inquired of him whether he had learned anything of the prisoner, Robert, Count of Paris.

'Nothing,' said the Varangian, 'save the tidings your proclamation contains.'

'You think, then,' said Achilles, 'that the Count has been a party to it?'

'He ought to have been so,' answered the Varangian. 'I know no one but himself en- titled to take burden for his appearance in the lists.'

'Why, look you,' said the Acolyte, 'my most excellent though blunt-witted Hereward, this Cæsar of ours hath had the extravagance to venture his tender wit in comparison to that of Achilles Tatius. He stands upon his honour, too, this ineffable fool, and is displeased with the idea of being supposed either to challenge a woman, or to receive a challenge at her hand. He has substituted, therefore, the name of the

lord instead of the lady. If the Count fail to appear, the Cæsar walks forward challenger and successful combatant at a cheap rate, since no one has encountered him, and claims that the lady should be delivered up to him as captive of his dreaded bow and spear. This will be the signal for a general tumult, in which, if the Emperor be not slain on the spot, he will be conveyed to the dungeon of his own Blacquernal, there to endure the doom which his cruelty has inflicted upon so many others.'

'But'——said the Varangian.

'But—but—but'——said his officer; 'but thou art a fool. Canst thou not see that this gallant Cæsar is willing to avoid the risk of encountering with this lady, while he earnestly desires to be supposed willing to meet her husband? It is our business to fix the combat in such a shape as to bring all who are prepared for insurrection together in arms to play their parts. Do thou only see that our trusty friends are placed near to the Emperor's person, and in such a manner as to keep from him the officious and meddling portion of guards who may be disposed to assist him; and whether the Cæsar fights a combat with lord or lady, or whether there be any combat at all or not, the revolution shall be accomplished, and the Tatii shall replace the Comneni upon the Imperial throne of Constantinople. Go, my trusty Hereward. Thou wilt not forget that the signal word of the insurrection is Ursel, who lives in the affections of the people, although his body, it is said, has long lain a corpse in the dungeons of the Blacquernal.'

'What was this Ursel,' said Hereward, 'of whom I hear men talk so variously?'

'A competitor for the crown with Alexius Comnenus—good, brave, and honest; but overpowered by the cunning, rather than the skill or bravery, of his foe. He died, as I believe, in the Blacquernal; though when, or how, there are few that can say. But, up and be doing, my Hereward! Speak encouragement to the Varangians; interest whomsoever thou canst to join us. Of the Immortals, as they are called, and of the discontented citizens, enough are prepared to fill up the cry, and follow in the wake of those on whom we must rely as the beginners of the enterprise. No longer shall Alexius's cunning, in avoiding popular assemblies, avail to protect him; he cannot, with regard to his honour, avoid being present at a combat to be fought beneath his own eye; and Mercury be praised for the eloquence which inspired him, after some hesitation, to determine for the proclamation!'

'You have seen him, then, this evening?' said the Varangian.

'Seen him! Unquestionably!' answered the Acolyte. 'Had I ordered these trumpets to be sounded without his knowledge, the blast had blown the head from my shoulders.'

'I had well-nigh met you at the palace,' said Hereward; while his heart throbbed almost as high as if he had actually had such a dangerous encounter.

'I heard something of it,' said Achilles; 'that you came to take the parting orders of him who now acts the sovereign. Surely, had I seen you there, with that steadfast, open, seemingly honest countenance, cheating the wily Greek by very dint of bluntness, I had not forborne laughing at the contrast between that and the thoughts of thy heart.'

'God alone,' said Hereward, 'knows the thoughts of our hearts; but I take him to witness that I am faithful to my promise, and will discharge the task entrusted to me.'

'Bravo, mine honest Anglo-Saxon!' said Achilles. 'I pray thee to call my slaves to unarm me; and when thou thyself doffest those weapons of an ordinary Life-guardsman, tell them they never shall above twice more enclose the limbs of one for whom fate has much more fitting garments in store.'

Hereward dared not entrust his voice with an answer to so critical a speech; he bowed profoundly, and retired to his own quarters in the building.

Upon entering the apartment, he was immediately saluted by the voice of Count Robert, in joyful accents, not suppressed by the fear of making himself heard, though prudence should have made that uppermost in his mind.

'Hast thou heard it, my dear Hereward,' he said—'hast thou heard the proclamation, by which this Greek antelope hath defied me to tilting with grinded spears, and fighting three passages of arms with sharpened swords? Yet there is something strange, too, that he should not think it safer to hold my lady to the encounter! He may think, perhaps, that the Crusaders would not permit such a battle to be fought. But, by Our Lady of the Broken Lances! he little knows that the men of the West hold their ladies' character for courage as jealously as they do their own. This whole night have I been considering in what armour I shall clothe me; what shift I shall make for a steed; and whether I shall not honour him sufficiently by using Tranchefer, as my only weapon, against his whole armour, offensive and defensive.'

'I shall take care, however,' said Hereward, 'that thou art better provided in case of need.—Thou knowest not the Greeks.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Varangian did not leave the Count of Paris until the latter had placed in his hands his signet-ring, *semée* (as the heralds express it) *with lances splintered*, and bearing the proud motto, 'Mine yet unscathed.' Provided with this symbol of confidence, it was now his business to take order for communicating the approaching solemnity to the leader of the crusading army, and demanding from him, in the name of Robert of Paris and the Lady Brenhilda, such a detachment of Western cavaliers as might insure strict observance of honour and honesty in the arrangement of the lists, and during the progress of the combat. The duties imposed on Hereward were such as to render it impossible for him to proceed personally to the camp of Godfrey; and though there were many of the Varangians in whose fidelity he could

have trusted, he knew of none among those under his immediate command whose intelligence on so novel an occasion might be entirely depended on. In this perplexity, he strolled, perhaps without well knowing why, to the gardens of Agelastes, where fortune once more produced him an interview with Bertha.

No sooner had Hereward made her aware of his difficulty, than the faithful bower-maiden's resolution was taken.

'I see,' said she, 'that the peril of this part of the adventure must rest with me; and wherefore should it not? My mistress, in the bosom of prosperity, offered herself to go forth into the wide world for my sake; I will for hers go to the camp of this Frankish lord. He is an honourable man and a pious Christian, and his followers are faithful pilgrims. A woman can have nothing to fear who goes to such men upon such an errand.'

The Varangian, however, was too well acquainted with the manners of camps to permit the fair Bertha to go alone. He provided, therefore, for her safeguard a trusty old soldier, bound to his person by long kindness and confidence; and, having thoroughly possessed her of the particulars of the message she was to deliver, and desired her to be in readiness without the enclosure at peep of dawn, returned once more to his barracks.

With the earliest light Hereward was again at the spot where he had parted overnight with Bertha, accompanied by the honest soldier to whose care he meant to confide her. In a short time he had seen them safely on board of a ferry-boat lying in the harbour, the master of which readily admitted them, after some examination of their licence, to pass to Scutari, which was forged in the name of the Acolyte, as authorized by that foul conspirator, and which agreed with the appearance of old Osmund and his young charge.

The morning was lovely; and ere long the town of Scutari opened on the view of the travellers, glittering, as now, with a variety of architecture, which, though it might be termed fantastical, could not be denied the praise of beauty. These buildings rose boldly out of a thick grove of cypresses and other huge trees, the larger, probably, as they were respected for filling the cemeteries, and being the guardians of the dead.

At the period we mention, another circumstance, no less striking than beautiful, rendered doubly interesting a scene which must have been at all times greatly so. A large portion of that miscellaneous army which came to regain the holy places of Palestine, and the blessed Sepulchre itself, from the infidels, had established themselves in a camp within a mile, or thereabouts, of Scutari. Although, therefore, the Crusaders were destitute in a great measure of the use of tents, the army (excepting the pavilions of some leaders of high rank) had constructed for themselves temporary huts, not unpleasing to the eye, being decorated with leaves and flowers, while the tall pennons and banners that floated over them with various devices, showed that the flower of Europe were assembled at that place. A loud and varied murmur, resembling that of a thronged hive, floated from the camp of the Crusaders to the neighbouring town of Scutari, and every now and then the deep tone was broken by some shriller sound, the note of some musical instrument, or the treble scream of some child or female, in fear or in gaiety.

The party at length landed in safety; and, as they approached one of the gates of the camp, there sallied forth a brisk array of gallant cavaliers, pages, and squires, exercising their masters' horses or their own. From the noise they made, conversing at the very top of their voices, galloping, curveting, and prancing their palfreys, it seemed as if their early discipline had called them to exercise ere the fumes of last night's revel were thoroughly dissipated by repose. So soon as they saw Bertha and her party, they approached them with cries which marked their country was Italy — '*Al'erta! al'erta! Roba de guadagno, cameradi!*'*

They gathered round the Anglo-Saxon maiden and her companions, repeating their cries in a manner which made Bertha tremble. Their general demand was, 'What was her business in their camp?'

'I would to the General-in-chief, cavaliers,' answered Bertha, 'having a secret message to his ear.'

'For whose ear?' said a leader of the party, a handsome youth of about eighteen years of age, who seemed either to have a sounder brain than his fellows, or to have overflowed it with less wine. 'Which of our leaders do you come hither to see?' he demanded.

'Godfrey of Bouillon.'

'Indeed!' said the page who had spoken first; 'can nothing of less consequence serve thy turn? Take a look amongst us; young are we all, and reasonably wealthy. My Lord of Bouillon is old, and if he has any sequins, he is not like to lavish them in this way.'

'Still I have a token to Godfrey of Bouillon,' answered Bertha, 'an assured one; and he will little thank any who obstructs my free passage to him;' and therewithal showing a little case, in which the signet of the Count of Paris was enclosed, 'I will trust it in your hands,' she said, 'if you promise not to open it, but to give me free access to the noble leader of the Crusaders.'

'I will,' said the youth; 'and if such be the Duke's pleasure, thou shalt be admitted to him.'

'Ernest the Apulian, thy dainty Italian wit is caught in a trap,' said one of his companions.

'Thou art an Ultramontane fool, Polydore,' returned Ernest; 'there may be more in this than either thy wit or mine is able to fathom. This maiden and one of her attendants wear a dress belonging to the Varangian Imperial Guard. They have perhaps been entrusted with a message from the Emperor, and it is not irreconcilable with Alexius's politics to send it through such messengers as these. Let us therefore convey them in all honour to the General's tent.'

'With all my heart,' said Polydore. 'A blue-eyed wench is a pretty thing, but I like not the

* That is—'Take heed! take heed! there is booty, comrades!

sauce of the camp-marshal, nor his taste in attiring men who give way to temptation.* Yet, ere I prove a fool like my companion, I would ask who or what this pretty maiden is, who comes to put noble princes and holy pilgrims in mind that they have in their time had the follies of men?'

Bertha advanced and whispered in the ear of Ernest. Meantime joke followed jest, among Polydore and the rest of the gay youths, in riotous and ribald succession, which, however characteristic of the rude speakers, may as well be omitted here. Their effect was to shake in some degree the fortitude of the Saxon maiden, who had some difficulty in mustering courage to address them. 'As you have mothers, gentlemen,' she said, 'as you have fair sisters, whom you would protect from dishonour with your best blood—as you love and honour those holy places which you are sworn to free from the infidel enemy, have compassion on me, that you may merit success in your undertaking!'

'Fear nothing, maiden,' said Ernest, 'I will be your protector; and you, my comrades, be ruled by me. I have, during your brawling, taken a view, though somewhat against my promise, of the pledge which she bears, and if she who presents it is affronted or maltreated, be assured Godfrey of Bouillon will severely avenge the wrong done her.'

'Nay, comrade, if thou canst warrant us so much,' said Polydore, 'I will myself be most anxious to conduct the young woman in honour and safety to Sir Godfrey's tent.'

'The princes,' said Ernest, 'must be nigh meeting there in Council. What I have said I will warrant and uphold with hand and life. More I might guess, but I conclude this sensible young maiden can speak for herself.'

'Now, Heaven bless thee, gallant squire,' said Bertha, 'and make thee alike brave and fortunate! Embarrass yourself no further about me, than to deliver me safe to your leader, Godfrey.'

'We spend time,' said Ernest, springing from his horse. 'You are no soft Eastern, fair maid, and I presume you will find yourself under no difficulty in managing a quiet horse?'

'Not the least,' said Bertha, as, wrapping herself in her cassock, she sprung from the ground, and alighted upon the spirited palfrey, as a linnet stoops upon a rose-bush. 'And now, sir, as my business really brooks no delay, I will be indebted to you to show me instantly to the tent of Duke Godfrey of Bouillon.'

By availing herself of this courtesy of the young Apulian, Bertha imprudently separated herself from the old Varangian; but the intentions of the youth were honourable, and he conducted her through the tents and huts to the pavilion of the celebrated General-in-chief of the Crusade.

'Here,' he said, 'you must tarry for a space, under the guardianship of my companions' (for two or three of the pages had accompanied them, out of curiosity to see the issue), 'and I will take the commands of the Duke of Bouillon upon the subject.'

* Persons among the Crusaders found guilty of certain offences did penance in a dress of tar and feathers, though it is supposed a punishment of modern invention.

To this nothing could be objected, and Bertha had nothing better to do than to admire the outside of the tent, which, in one of Alexius's fits of generosity and munificence, had been presented by the Greek emperor to the chief of the Franks. It was raised upon tall spear-shaped poles, which had the semblance of gold; its curtains were of a thick stuff, manufactured of silk, cotton, and gold thread. The warders who stood round were (at least during the time that the Council was held) old grave men, the personal squires of the body, most of them, of the sovereigns who had taken the Cross, and who could, therefore, be trusted as a guard over the assembly, without danger of their blabbing what they might overhear. Their appearance was serious and considerate, and they looked like men who had taken upon them the Cross, not as an idle adventure of arms, but as a purpose of the most solemn and serious nature. One of these stopped the Italian, and demanded what business authorized him to press forward into the Council of the Crusaders, who were already taking their seats. The page answered by giving his name, 'Ernest of Otranto, page of Prince Tancred;' and stated that he announced a young woman, who bore a token to the Duke of Bouillon, adding that it was accompanied by a message for his own ear.

Bertha meantime laid aside her mantle, or upper garment, and disposed the rest of her dress according to the Anglo-Saxon costume. She had hardly completed this task, before the page of Prince Tancred returned, to conduct her into the presence of the Council of the Crusade. She followed his signal; while the other young men who had accompanied her, wondering at the apparent ease with which she gained admittance, drew back to a respectful distance from the tent, and there canvassed the singularity of their morning's adventure.

In the meanwhile the ambassadress herself entered the council-chamber, exhibiting an agreeable mixture of shamefacedness and reserve, together with a bold determination to do her duty at all events. There were about fifteen of the principal Crusaders assembled in Council, with their chieftain Godfrey. He himself was a tall strong man, arrived at that period of life in which men are supposed to have lost none of their resolution, while they have acquired a wisdom and circumspection unknown to their earlier years. The countenance of Godfrey bespoke both prudence and boldness, and resembled his hair, where a few threads of silver were already mingled with his raven locks.

Tancred, the noblest knight of the Christian chivalry, sat at no great distance from him, with Hugh, Earl of Vermandois, generally called the Great Count, the selfish and wily Bohemond, the powerful Raymond of Provence, and others of the principal Crusaders, all more or less completely sheathed in armour.

Bertha did not allow her courage to be broken down, but, advancing with a timid grace towards Godfrey, she placed in his hands the signet which had been restored to her by the young page, and, after a deep obeisance, spoke these words: 'Godfrey, Count of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine the Lower, chief of the Holy Enter-

prise called the Crusade, and you, his gallant comrades, peers, and companions, by whatever titles you may be honoured, I, an humble maiden of England, daughter of Engelred, originally a franklin of Hampshire, and since chieftain of the Foresters, or free Anglo-Saxons, under the command of the celebrated Edric, do claim what credence is due to the bearer of the true pledge which I put into your hand, on the part of one not the least considerable of your own body, Count Robert of Paris'——

'Our most honourable confederate,' said Godfrey, looking at the ring. 'Most of you, my lords, must, I think, know this signet—a field sown with the fragments of many splintered lances.'—The signet was handed from one of the assembly to another, and generally recognised.

When Godfrey had signified so much, the maiden resumed her message. 'To all true Crusaders, therefore, comrades of Godfrey of Bouillon, and especially to the Duke himself,—to all, I say, excepting Bohemond of Tarentum, whom he counts unworthy of his notice'——

'Hah! me unworthy of his notice!' said Bohemond. 'What mean you by that, damsel?—But the Count of Paris shall answer it to me.'

'Under your favour, Sir Bohemond,' said Godfrey, 'no. Our articles renounce the sending of challenges among ourselves, and the matter, if not dropped betwixt the parties, must be referred to the voice of this honourable Council.'

'I think I guess the business now, my lord,' said Bohemond. 'The Count of Paris is disposed to turn and tear me, because I offered him good counsel on the evening before we left Constantinople, when he neglected to accept or be guided by it'——

'It will be the more easily explained when we have heard his message,' said Godfrey.—'Speak forth Lord Robert of Paris's charge, damsel, that we may take some order with that which now seems a perplexed business.'

Bertha resumed her message; and, having briefly narrated the recent events, thus concluded:—'The battle is to be done to-morrow about two hours after daybreak, and the Count entreats of the noble Duke of Lorraine that he will permit some fifty of the lances of France to attend the deed of arms, and secure that fair and honourable conduct which he has otherwise some doubts of receiving at the hands of his adversary. Or if any young and gallant knight should, of his own free will, wish to view the said combat, the Count will feel his presence as an honour; always he desires that the name of such knight be numbered carefully with the armed Crusaders who shall attend in the lists, and that the whole shall be limited, by Duke Godfrey's own inspection, to fifty lances only, which are enough to obtain the protection required, while more would be considered as a preparation for aggression upon the Grecians, and occasion the revival of disputes which are now happily at rest.'

Bertha had no sooner finished delivering her manifesto, and made with great grace her obeisance to the Council, than a sort of whisper took place in the assembly, which soon assumed a more lively tone.

Their solemn vow not to turn their back upon Palestine, now that they had set their hands to the plough, was strongly urged by some of the elder knights of the Council, and two or three high prelates, who had by this time entered to take share in the deliberations. The young knights, on the other hand, were fired with indignation on hearing the manner in which their comrade had been trepanned; and few of them could think of missing a combat in the lists in a country in which such sights were so rare, and where one was to be fought so near them.

Godfrey rested his brow on his hand, and seemed in great perplexity. To break with the Greeks, after having suffered so many injuries in order to maintain the advantage of keeping the peace with them, seemed very impolitic, and a sacrifice of all he had obtained by a long course of painful forbearance towards Alexius Comnenus. On the other hand, he was bound as a man of honour to resent the injury offered to Count Robert of Paris, whose reckless spirit of chivalry made him the darling of the army. It was the cause, too, of a beautiful lady, and a brave one: every knight in the host would think himself bound, by his vow, to hasten to her defence. When Godfrey spoke, it was to complain of the difficulty of the determination, and the short time there was to consider the case.

'With submission to my lord Duke of Lorraine,' said Tancred, 'I was a knight ere I was a Crusader, and took on me the vows of chivalry ere I placed this blessed sign upon my shoulder; the vow first made must be first discharged. I will therefore do penance for neglecting, for a space, the obligations of the second vow, while I observe that which recalls me to the first duty of knighthood,—the relief of a distressed lady in the hands of men whose conduct towards her, and towards this host, in every respect entitles me to call them treacherous faitours.'

'If my kinsman Tancred,' said Bohemond, 'will check his impetuosity, and you, my lords, will listen, as you have sometimes deigned to do, to my advice, I think I can direct you how to keep clear of any breach of your oath, and yet fully to relieve our distressed fellow-pilgrims.—I see some suspicious looks are cast towards me, which are caused perhaps by the churlish manner in which this violent, and, in this case, almost insane young warrior has protested against receiving my assistance. My great offence is the having given him warning, by precept and example, of the treachery which was about to be practised against him, and instructed him to use forbearance and temperance. My warning he altogether contemned—my example he neglected to follow, and fell into the snare which was spread, as it were, before his very eyes. Yet the Count of Paris, in rashly contemning me, has acted only from a temper which misfortune and disappointment have rendered irrational and frantic. I am so far from bearing him ill-will, that, with your lordship's permission, and that of the present Council, I will haste to the place of rendezvous with fifty lances, making up the retinue which attends upon each to at least ten men, which will make the stipulated auxiliary force equal to five hundred; and

with these I can have little doubt of rescuing the Count and his lady.'

'Nobly proposed,' said the Duke of Bouillon; 'and with a charitable forgiveness of injuries which becomes our Christian expedition. But thou hast forgot the main difficulty, brother Bohemond, that we are sworn never to turn back upon the sacred journey.'

'If we can elude that oath upon the present occasion,' said Bohemond, 'it becomes our duty to do so. Are we such bad horsemen, or are our steeds so awkward, that we cannot rein them back from this to the landing-place at Scutari? We can get them on shipboard in the same retrograde manner, and when we arrive in Europe, where our vow binds us no longer, the Count and Countess of Paris are rescued, and our vow remains entire in the chancery of Heaven.'

A general shout arose — 'Long life to the gallant Bohemond!—shame to us if we do not fly to the assistance of so valiant a knight and a lady so lovely, since we can do so without breach of our vow.'

'The question,' said Godfrey, 'appears to me to be eluded rather than solved; yet such evasions have been admitted by the most learned and scrupulous clerks; nor do I hesitate to admit of Bohemond's expedient, any more than if the enemy had attacked our rear, which might have occasioned our countermarching to be a case of absolute necessity.'

Some there were in the assembly, particularly the churchmen, inclined to think that the oath by which the Crusaders had solemnly bound themselves ought to be as literally obeyed. But Peter the Hermit, who had a place in the Council, and possessed great weight, declared it as his opinion, 'that since the precise observance of their vow would tend to diminish the forces of the Crusade, it was in fact unlawful, and should not be kept according to the literal meaning, if, by a fair construction, it could be eluded.'

He offered himself to back the animal which he bestrode—that is, his ass; and though he was diverted from showing this example by the remonstrances of Godfrey of Bouillon, who was afraid of his becoming a scandal in the eyes of the heathen, yet he so prevailed by his arguments, that the knights, far from scrupling to countermarch, eagerly contended which should have the honour of making one of the party which should retrograde to Constantinople, see the combat, and bring back to the host in safety the valorous Count of Paris, of whose victory no one doubted, and his Amazonian countess.

This emulation was also put an end to by the authority of Godfrey, who himself selected the fifty knights who were to compose the party. They were chosen from different nations, and the command of the whole was given to young Tancred of Otranto. Notwithstanding the claim of Bohemond, Godfrey detained the latter, under the pretext that his knowledge of the country and people was absolutely necessary to enable the Council to form the plan of the campaign in Syria; but in reality he dreaded the selfishness of a man of great ingenuity as well as military skill, who, finding himself in a separate command, might be tempted, should opportunities arise, to enlarge his own power and dominion at the expense of the pious purposes of the Crusade in general. The younger men of the expedition were chiefly anxious to procure such horses as had been thoroughly trained, and could go through with ease and temper the manœuvre of equitation by which it was designed to render legitimate the movement which they had recourse to. The selection was at length made, and the detachment ordered to draw up in the rear, or upon the eastward line of the Christian encampment. In the meanwhile Godfrey charged Bertha with a message for the Count of Paris, in which, slightly censuring him for not observing more caution in his intercourse with the Greeks, he informed him that he had sent a detachment of fifty lances, with the corresponding squires, pages, men-at-arms, and cross-bows, five hundred in number, commanded by the valiant Tancred, to his assistance. The duke also informed him that he had added a suit of armour of the best temper Milan could afford, together with a trusty war-horse, which he entreated him to use upon the field of battle; for Bertha had not omitted to intimate Count Robert's want of the means of knightly equipment. The horse was brought before the pavilion accordingly, completely barbed or armed in steel, and laden with armour for the knight's body. Godfrey himself put the bridle into Bertha's hand.

'Thou need'st not fear to trust thyself with this steed; he is as gentle and docile as he is fleet and brave. Place thyself on his back, and take heed thou stir not from the side of the noble Prince Tancred of Otranto, who will be the faithful defender of a maiden that has this day shown dexterity, courage, and fidelity.'

Bertha bowed low, as her cheeks glowed at praise from one whose talents and worth were in such general esteem, as to have raised him to the distinguished situation of leader of a host which numbered in it the bravest and most distinguished captains of Christendom.

'Who are yon two persons?' continued Godfrey, speaking of the companions of Bertha, whom he saw in the distance before the tent.

'The one,' answered the damsel, 'is the master of the ferry-boat which brought me over; and the other an old Varangian who came hither as my protector.'

'As they may come to employ their eyes here, and their tongues on the opposite side,' returned the general of the Crusaders, 'I do not think it prudent to let them accompany you. They shall remain here for some short time. The citizens of Scutari will not comprehend for some space what our intention is; and I could wish Prince Tancred and his attendants to be the first to announce their own arrival.'

Bertha accordingly intimated the pleasure of the French general to the parties, without naming his motives; when the ferryman began to exclaim on the hardship of intercepting him in his trade, and Osmund to complain of being detained from his duties. But Bertha, by the orders of Godfrey, left them, with the assurance that they would be soon at liberty. Finding themselves thus abandoned, each applied himself to his favourite amusement. The ferryman occupied himself in staring about at all that was new;

and Osmund, having in the meantime accepted an offer of breakfast from some of the domestics, was presently engaged with a flask of such red wine as would have reconciled him to a worse lot than that which he at present experienced.

The detachment of Tancred, fifty spears and their armed retinue, which amounted fully to five hundred men, after having taken a short and hasty refreshment, were in arms and mounted before the sultry hour of noon. After some manœuvres, of which the Greeks of Scutari, whose curiosity was awakened by the preparations of the detachment, were at a loss to comprehend the purpose, they formed into a single column, having four men in front. When the horses were in this position, the whole riders at once began to rein back. The action was one to which both the cavaliers and their horses were well accustomed; nor did it at first afford much surprise to the spectators; but when the same retrograde evolution was continued, and the body of Crusaders seemed about to enter the town of Scutari in so extraordinary a fashion, some idea of the truth began to occupy the citizens. The cry at length was general, when Tancred and a few others, whose horses were unusually well trained, arrived at the port, and possessed themselves of a galley, into which they led their horses, and, disregarding all opposition from the Imperial officers of the haven, pushed the vessel off from the shore.

Other cavaliers did not accomplish their purpose so easily; the riders, or the horses, were less accustomed to continue in the constrained pace for such a considerable length of time, so that many of the knights, having retrograded for one or two hundred yards, thought their vow was sufficiently observed by having so far deferred to it, and, riding in the ordinary manner into the town, seized without further ceremony on some vessels, which, notwithstanding the orders of the Greek emperor, had been allowed to remain on the Asiatic side of the strait. Some less able horsemen met with various accidents; for though it was a proverb of the time, that nothing was so bold as a blind horse, yet from this mode of equitation, where neither horse nor rider saw the way he was going, some steeds were overthrown, others backed upon dangerous obstacles; and the bones of the cavaliers themselves suffered much more than would have been the case in an ordinary march.

Those horsemen, also, who met with falls, incurred the danger of being slain by the Greeks, had not Godfrey, surmounting his religious scruples, despatched a squadron to extricate them—a task which they performed with great ease. The greater part of Tancred's followers succeeded in embarking, as was intended, nor was there more than a score or two finally amissing. To accomplish their voyage, however, even the Prince of Otranto himself, and most of his followers, were obliged to betake themselves to the unknightly labours of the oar. This they found extremely difficult, as well from the state both of the tide and the wind, as from the want of practice at the exercise. Godfrey in person viewed their progress anxiously from a neighbouring height, and perceived with regret the difficulty which they found in making their way, which was still more increased by the necessity for their keeping in a body, and waiting for the slowest and worst manned vessels, which considerably detained those that were more expeditious. They made some progress, however; nor had the commander-in-chief the least doubt that before sunset they would safely reach the opposite side of the strait.

He retired at length from his post of observation, having placed a careful sentinel in his stead, with directions to bring him word the instant that the detachment reached the opposite shore. This the soldier could easily discern by the eye, if it was daylight at the time; if, on the contrary, it was night before they could arrive, the Prince of Otranto had orders to show certain lights, which, in case of their meeting resistance from the Greeks, should be arranged in a peculiar manner, so as to indicate danger.

Godfrey then explained to the Greek authorities of Scutari, whom he summoned before him, the necessity there was that he should keep in readiness such vessels as could be procured, with which, in case of need, he was determined to transport a strong division from his army to support those who had gone before. He then rode back to his camp, the confused murmurs of which, rendered more noisy by the various discussions concerning the events of the day, rolled off from the numerous host of the Crusaders, and mingled with the hoarse sound of the many-billowed Hellespont.

CHAPTER XXIV.

All is prepared—the chambers of the mine
Are cramm'd with the combustible, which, harmless,
While yet unkindled, as the sable sand,
Needs but a spark to change its nature so,
That he who wakes it from its slumbrous mood,
Dreads scarce the explosion less than he who knows
That 'tis his towers which meet its fury.

ANONYMOUS.

WHEN the sky is darkened suddenly, and the atmosphere grows thick and stifling, the lower ranks of creation entertain the ominous sense of a coming tempest. The birds fly to the thickets, the wild creatures retreat to the closest covers which their instinct gives them the habit of frequenting, and domestic animals show their apprehension of the approaching thunderstorm by singular actions and movements inferring fear and disturbance.

It seems that human nature, when its original habits are cultivated and attended to, possesses, on similar occasions, something of that prescient foreboding which announces the approaching tempest to the inferior ranks of creation. The cultivation of our intellectual powers goes perhaps too far, when it teaches us entirely to suppress and disregard those natural feelings, which were originally designed as sentinels by which nature warned us of impending danger.

Something of the kind, however, still remains, and that species of feeling which announces to us sorrowful or alarming tidings, may be said, like the prophecies of the weird sisters, to come over us like a sudden cloud.

During the fatal day which was to precede the

combat of the Cæsar with the Count of Paris, there were current through the city of Constantinople the most contradictory, and at the same time the most terrific reports. Privy conspiracy, it was alleged, was on the very eve of breaking out; open war, it was reported by others, was about to shake her banners over the devoted city; the precise cause was not agreed upon, any more than the nature of the enemy. Some said that the barbarians from the borders of Thracia, the Hungarians, as they were termed, and the Comani,* were on their march from the frontiers to surprise the city; another report stated that the Turks, who during this period were established in Asia, had resolved to prevent the threatened attack of the Crusaders upon Palestine, by surprising not only the Western pilgrims, but the Christians of the East, by one of their innumerable invasions, executed with their characteristic rapidity.

Another report, approaching more near to the truth, declared that the Crusaders themselves, having discovered their various causes of complaint against Alexius Comnenus, had resolved to march back their united forces to the capital, with a view of dethroning or chastising him; and the citizens were dreadfully alarmed for the consequences of the resentment of men so fierce in their habits and so strange in their manners. In short, although they did not all agree on the precise cause of danger, it was yet generally allowed that something of a dreadful kind was impending, which appeared to be in a certain degree confirmed by the motions that were taking place among the troops. The Varangians, as well as the Immortals, were gradually assembled, and placed in occupation of the strongest parts of the city, until at length the fleet of galleys, row-boats, and transports, occupied by Tancred and his party, were observed to put themselves in motion from Scutari, and attempt to gain such a height on the narrow sea, as upon the turn of the tide should transport them to the port of the capital.

Alexius Comnenus was himself struck at this unexpected movement on the part of the Crusaders. Yet, after some conversation with Hereward, on whom he had determined to repose his confidence, and had now gone too far to retreat, he became reassured, the more especially by the limited size of the detachment which seemed to meditate so bold a measure as an attack upon his capital. To those around him he said with carelessness, that it was hardly to be supposed that a trumpet could blow to the charge, within hearing of the Crusaders' camp, without some out of so many knights coming forth to see the cause and the issue of the conflict.

The conspirators also had their secret fears when the little armament of Tancred had been seen on the straits. Agelastes mounted a mule, and went to the shore of the sea, at the place now called Galata. He met Bertha's old ferryman, whom Godfrey had set at liberty, partly in contempt, and partly that the report he was likely to make might serve to amuse the conspirators in the city. Closely examined by Agelastes, he confessed that the present detachment, so far as he understood, was despatched at the instance of Bohemond, and was under the command of his kinsman Tancred, whose well-known banner was floating from the headmost vessel. This gave courage to Agelastes, who, in the course of his intrigues, had opened a private communication with the wily and ever mercenary Prince of Antioch. The object of the philosopher had been to obtain from Bohemond a body of his followers to co-operate in the intended conspiracy, and fortify the party of insurgents. It is true that Bohemond had returned no answer, but the account now given by the ferryman, and the sight of Tancred the kinsman of Bohemond's banner displayed on the straits, satisfied the philosopher that his offers, his presents, and his promises had gained to his side the avaricious Italian, and that this band had been selected by Bohemond, and were coming to act in his favour.

As Agelastes turned to go off, he almost jostled a person, as much muffled up, and apparently as unwilling to be known, as the philosopher himself. Alexius Comnenus, however—for it was the emperor himself—knew Agelastes, though rather from his stature and gestures than his countenance; and could not forbear whispering in his ear, as he passed, the well-known lines, to which the pretended sage's various acquisitions gave some degree of point:—

> Grammaticus, rhetor, geometres, pictor, aliptes,
> Augur, schœnobates, medicus, magus; omnia novit.
> Græculus esuriens, in cœlum, jusseris, ibit.*

Agelastes first started at the unexpected sound of the emperor's voice, yet immediately recovered presence of mind, the want of which had made him suspect himself betrayed; and, without taking notice of the rank of the person to whom he spoke, he answered by a quotation which should return the alarm he had received. The speech that suggested itself was said to be that which the phantom of Cleonice† dinned into the ears of the tyrant who murdered her:—

> Tu cole justitiam; teque atque alios manet ultor.‡

The sentence, and the recollections which accompanied it, thrilled through the heart of the emperor, who walked on, however, without any notice or reply.

'The vile conspirator,' he said, 'had his associates around him, otherwise he had not hazarded that threat. Or it may have been worse—Agelastes himself, on the very brink of this world, may have obtained that singular glance into futurity proper to that situation and perhaps speaks less from his own reflection than from a strange spirit of prescience which dictates his words. Have I then in earnest sinned so far in my Imperial duty, as to make it just to apply to me the warning used by the injured Cleonice to her ravisher and murderer?

* [A tribe of Turks, dwelling, at the time of this story, in what is now Roumania and southern Russia.]

* The lines of Juvenal [Sat. iii. 76] imitated by Johnson in his *London*—

> All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,
> And bid him go to hell—to hell he goes.

† [The young Byzantine maiden who was stabbed by Pausanius, the Spartan.]

‡ 'Do thou cultivate justice: for thee and for others there remains an avenger.'—Ovid. *Met.*

Methinks I have not. Methinks that at less expense than that of a just severity, I could ill have kept my seat in the high place where Heaven has been pleased to seat me, and where, as a ruler, I am bound to maintain my station. Methinks the sum of those who have experienced my clemency may be well numbered with that of such as have sustained the deserved punishments of their guilt—But has that vengeance, however deserved in itself, been always taken in a legal or justifiable manner? My conscience, I doubt, will hardly answer so home a question; and where is the man, had he the virtues of Antoninus himself, that can hold so high and responsible a place, yet sustain such an interrogation as is implied in that sort of warning which I have received from this traitor? *Tu cole justitiam*—we all need to use justice to others—*Teque atque alios manet ultor*—we are all amenable to an avenging being.—I will see the Patriarch—instantly will I see him; and, by confessing my transgressions to the Church, I will, by her plenary indulgence, acquire the right of spending the last day of my reign in a consciousness of innocence, or at least of pardon—a state of mind rarely the lot of those whose lines have fallen in lofty places.'

So saying, he passed to the palace of Zosimus the Patriarch, to whom he could unbosom himself with more safety, because he had long considered Agelastes as a private enemy to the Church, and a man attached to the ancient doctrines of heathenism. In the councils of the state they were also opposed to each other, nor did the emperor doubt that, in communicating the secret of the conspiracy to the Patriarch, he was sure to attain a loyal and firm supporter in the defence which he proposed to himself. He therefore gave a signal by a low whistle, and a confidential officer, well mounted, approached him, who attended him in his ride, though unostentatiously, and at some distance.

In this manner, therefore, Alexius Comnenus proceeded to the palace of the Patriarch, with as much speed as was consistent with his purpose of avoiding to attract any particular notice as he passed through the street. During the whole ride the warning of Agelastes repeatedly occurred to him, and his conscience reminded him of too many actions of his reign which could only be justified by necessity, emphatically said to be the tyrant's plea, and which were of themselves deserving the dire vengeance so long delayed.

When he came in sight of the splendid towers which adorned the front of the patriarchal palace, he turned aside from the lofty gates, repaired to a narrow court, and again giving his mule to his attendant, he stopped before a postern, whose low arch and humble architrave seemed to exclude the possibility of its leading to any place of importance. On knocking, however, a priest of an inferior order opened the door, who, with a deep reverence, received the emperor so soon as he had made himself known, and conducted him into the interior of the palace. Demanding a secret interview with the Patriarch, Alexius was then ushered into his private library, where he was received by the aged priest with the deepest respect, which the nature of his communication soon changed into horror and astonishment.

Although Alexius was supposed by many of his own court, and particularly by some members of his own family, to be little better than a hypocrite in his religious professions, yet such severe observers were unjust in branding him with a name so odious. He was indeed aware of the great support which he received from the good opinion of the clergy, and to them he was willing to make sacrifices for the advantage of the Church, or of individual prelates who manifested fidelity to the crown; but though, on the one hand, such sacrifices were rarely made by Alexius without a view to temporal policy, yet, on the other, he regarded them as recommended by his devotional feelings, and took credit to himself for various grants and actions, as dictated by sincere piety, which, in another aspect, were the fruits of temporal policy. His mode of looking on these measures was that of a person with oblique vision, who sees an object in a different manner according to the point from which he chances to contemplate it.

The emperor placed his own errors of government before the Patriarch in his confession, giving due weight to every breach of morality as it occurred, and stripping from them the lineaments and palliative circumstances which had in his own imagination lessened their guilt. The Patriarch heard, to his astonishment, the real thread of many a court intrigue, which had borne a very different appearance, till the emperor's narrative either justified his conduct upon the occasion, or left it totally unjustifiable. Upon the whole, the balance was certainly more in favour of Alexius than the Patriarch had supposed likely in that more distant view he had taken of the intrigues of the court, when, as usual, the ministers and the courtiers endeavoured to make up for the applause which they had given in council to the most blameable actions of the absolute monarch, by elsewhere imputing to his motives greater guilt than really belonged to them. Many men who had fallen sacrifices, it was supposed, to the personal spleen or jealousy of the emperor, appeared to have been in fact removed from life, or from liberty, because their enjoying either was inconsistent with the quiet of the state and the safety of the monarch.

Zosimus also learned, what he perhaps already suspected, that amidst the profound silence of despotism, which seemed to pervade the Grecian Empire, it heaved frequently with convulsive throes, which ever and anon made obvious the existence of a volcano under the surface. Thus, while smaller delinquencies, or avowed discontent with the Imperial government, seldom occurred, and were severely punished when they did, the deepest and most mortal conspiracies against the life and the authority of the emperor were cherished by those nearest to his person; and he was often himself aware of them, though it was not until they approached an explosion that he dared act upon his knowledge, and punish the conspirators.

The whole treason of the Cæsar, with his associates, Agelastes and Achilles Tatius, was heard by the Patriarch with wonder and astonish-

ment, and he was particularly surprised at the dexterity with which the emperor, knowing the existence of so dangerous a conspiracy at home, had been able to parry the danger from the Crusaders occurring at the same moment.

'In that respect,' said the emperor, to whom, indeed, the churchman hinted his surprise, 'I have been singularly unfortunate. Had I been secure of the forces of my own empire, I might have taken one out of two manly and open courses with these frantic warriors of the West—I might, my reverend father, have devoted the sums paid to Bohemond and other of the more selfish among the Crusaders, to the honest and open support of the army of Western Christians, and safely transported them to Palestine, without exposing them to the great loss which they are likely to sustain by the opposition of the infidels; their success would have been in fact my own, and a Latin kingdom in Palestine, defended by its steel-clad warriors, would have been a safe and unexpugnable barrier of the empire against the Saracens. Or, if it was thought more expedient for the protection of the empire and the Holy Church, over which you are ruler, we might at once, and by open force, have defended the frontiers of our States against a host commanded by so many different and discording chiefs, and advancing upon us with such equivocal intentions. If the first swarm of these locusts, under him whom they called Walter the Penniless, was thinned by the Hungarians, and totally destroyed by the Turks, as the pyramids of bones on the frontiers of the country still keep in memory, surely the united forces of the Grecian Empire would have had little difficulty in scattering this second flight, though commanded by these Godfreys, Bohemonds, and Tancreds.'

The Patriarch was silent, for, though he disliked, or rather detested, the Crusaders, as members of the Latin Church, he yet thought it highly doubtful that in feats of battle they could have been met and overcome by the Grecian forces.

'At any rate,' said Alexius, rightly interpreting his silence, 'if vanquished, I had fallen under my shield as a Greek emperor should, nor had I been forced into these mean measures of attacking men by stealth, and with forces disguised as infidels; while the lives of the faithful soldiers of the empire, who have fallen in obscure skirmishes, had better, both for them and me, been lost bravely in their ranks, avowedly fighting for their native Emperor and their native country. Now, and as the matter stands, I shall be handed down to posterity as a wily tyrant, who engaged his subjects in fatal feuds for the safety of his own obscure life. Patriarch! these crimes rest not with me, but with the rebels whose intrigues compelled me into such courses—What, reverend father, will be my fate hereafter?—and in what light shall I descend to posterity, the author of so many disasters?'

'For futurity,' said the Patriarch, 'your Grace hath referred yourself to the Holy Church, which hath power to bind and to loose; your means of propitiating her are ample, and I have already indicated such as she may reasonably expect, in consequence of your repentance and forgiveness.'

'They shall be granted,' replied the emperor, 'in their fullest extent; nor will I injure you in doubting their effect in the next world. In this present state of existence, however, the favourable opinion of the Church may do much for me during this important crisis. If we understand each other, good Zosimus, her doctors and bishops are to thunder in my behalf, nor is my benefit from her pardon to be deferred till the funeral monument closes upon me?'

'Certainly not,' said Zosimus; 'the conditions which I have already stipulated being strictly attended to.'

'And my memory in history,' said Alexius, 'in what manner is that to be preserved?'

'For that,' answered the Patriarch, 'your Imperial Majesty must trust to the filial piety and literary talents of your accomplished daughter, Anna Comnena.'

The emperor shook his head. 'This unhappy Cæsar,' he said, 'is like to make a quarrel between us; for I shall scarce pardon so ungrateful a rebel as he is, because my daughter clings to him with a woman's fondness. Besides, good Zosimus, it is not, I believe, the page of a historian such as my daughter that is most likely to be received without challenge by posterity. Some Procopius,* some philosophical slave, starving in a garret, aspires to write the life of an emperor whom he durst not approach; and although the principal merit of his production be, that it contains particulars upon the subject which no man durst have promulgated while the prince was living, yet no man hesitates to admit such as true when he has passed from the scene.'

'On that subject,' said Zosimus, 'I can neither afford your Imperial Majesty relief nor protection. If, however, your memory is unjustly slandered upon earth, it will be a matter of indifference to your Highness, who will be then, I trust, enjoying a state of beatitude which idle slander cannot assail. The only way, indeed, to avoid it while on this side of time, would be to write your Majesty's own memoirs while you are yet in the body; so convinced am I that it is in your power to assign legitimate excuses for those actions of your life, which, without your doing so, would seem most worthy of censure.'

'Change we the subject,' said the emperor; 'and since the danger is imminent, let us take care for the present, and leave future ages to judge for themselves.—What circumstance is it, reverend father, in your opinion, which encourages these conspirators to make so audacious an appeal to the populace and the Grecian soldiers?'

'Certainly,' answered the Patriarch, 'the most irritating incident of your Highness's reign was the fate of Ursel, who, submitting, it is said, upon capitulation, for life, limb, and liberty, was starved to death by your orders, in the dungeons of the Blacquernal, and whose courage, liberality, and other popular virtues are still fondly remembered by the citizens of this metropolis, and by the soldiers of the guard called Immortal.'

* [The historian of the reign of the great Byzantine Emperor Justinian.]

'And this,' said the emperor, fixing his eye pon his confessor, 'your reverence esteems ctually the most dangerous point of the popular umult?'

'I cannot doubt,' said the Patriarch, 'that is very name, boldly pronounced and artfully epeated, will be the watchword, as has been lotted, of a horrible tumult.'

'I thank Heaven!' said the emperor; 'on hat particular I will be on my guard. Good-ight to your reverence! and, believe me, that ll in this scroll, to which I have set my hand, hall be with the utmost fidelity accomplished. Be not, however, over impatient in this business; uch a shower of benefits falling at once upon the Church would make men suspicious that the prelates and ministers proceeded rather as act-ng upon a bargain between the Emperor and Patriarch, than as paying or receiving an atone-ment offered by a sinner in excuse of his crimes. This would be injurious, father, both to yourself and me.'

'All regular delay,' said the Patriarch, 'shall be interposed at your Highness's pleasure; and we shall trust to you for recollection that the bargain, if it could be termed one, was of your own seeking, and that the benefit to the Church was contingent upon the pardon and the support which she has afforded to your Majesty.'

'True,' said the emperor—'most true—nor shall I forget it. Once more adieu, and forget not what I have told thee. This is a night, Zosimus, in which the Emperor must toil like a slave, if he means not to return to the humble Alexius Comnenus, and even then there were no resting-place.'

So saying, he took leave of the Patriarch, who was highly gratified with the advantages he had obtained for the Church, which many of his predecessors had struggled for in vain. He resolved, therefore, to support the staggering Alexius.

CHAPTER XXV.

> Heaven knows its time; the bullet has its billet,
> Arrow and javelin each its destined purpose;
> The fated beasts of Nature's lower strain
> Have each their separate task.
>
> OLD PLAY.

AGELASTES, after crossing the emperor in the manner we have already described, and after having taken such measures as occurred to him to insure the success of the conspiracy, returned to the lodge of his garden, where the lady of the Count of Paris still remained, her only companion being an old woman named Vexhelia, the wife of the soldier who accompanied Bertha to the camp of the Crusaders; the kind-hearted maiden having stipulated that, during her absence, her mistress was not to be left without an attendant, and that attendant connected with the Varangian Guard. He had been all day playing the part of the ambitious politician, the selfish time-server, the dark and subtle conspirator; and now it seemed as if, to exhaust the catalogue of his various parts in the human drama, he chose to exhibit himself in the character of the wily sophist, and justify, or seem to justify, the arts by which he had risen to wealth and eminence, and hoped even now to arise to royalty itself.

'Fair Countess,' he said, 'what occasion is there for your wearing this veil of sadness over a countenance so lovely?'

'Do you suppose me,' said Brenhilda, 'a stock, a stone, or a creature without the feelings of a sensitive being, that I should endure mortification, imprisonment, danger, and distress, without expressing the natural feelings of humanity? Do you imagine that to a lady like me, as free as the unreclaimed falcon, you can offer the insult of captivity, without my being sensible to the disgrace, or incensed against the authors of it? And dost thou think that I will receive consolation at thy hands—at thine—one of the most active artificers in this web of treachery in which I am so basely entangled?'

'Not entangled certainly by my means,' answered Agelastes; 'clap your hands, call for what you wish, and the slave who refuses instant obedience had better been unborn. Had I not, with reference to your safety and your honour, agreed for a short time to be your keeper, that office would have been usurped by the Cæsar, whose object you know, and may partly guess the modes by which it would be pursued. Why then dost thou childishly weep at being held for a short space in an honourable restraint, which the renowned arms of your husband will probably put an end to long ere to-morrow at noon?'

'Canst thou not comprehend,' said the countess, 'thou man of many words but of few honourable thoughts, that a heart like mine, which has been trained in the feelings of reliance upon my own worth and valour, must be necessarily affected with shame at being obliged to accept, even from the sword of a husband, that safety which I would gladly have owed only to my own?'

'Thou art misled, Countess,' answered the philosopher, 'by thy pride, a failing predominant in woman. Thinkest thou there has been no offensive assumption in laying aside the character of a mother and a wife, and adopting that of one of those brain-sick female fools, who, like the bravoes of the other sex, sacrifice everything that is honourable or useful to a frantic and insane affectation of courage? Believe me, fair lady, that the true system of virtue consists in filling thine own place gracefully in society, breeding up thy children, and delighting those of the other sex; and anything beyond this may well render thee hateful or terrible, but can add nothing to thy amiable qualities.'

'Thou pretendest,' said the countess, 'to be a philosopher; methinks thou shouldst know that the fame which hangs its chaplet on the tomb of a brave hero or heroine is worth all the petty engagements in which ordinary persons spend the current of their time. One hour of life, crowded to the full with glorious action, and filled with noble risks, is worth whole years of those mean observances of paltry decorum, in which men steal through existence, like sluggish waters through a marsh, without either honour or observation.'

'Daughter,' said Agelastes, approaching nearer to the lady, 'it is with pain I see you bewildered in errors which a little calm reflection might

remove. We may flatter ourselves, and human vanity usually does so, that beings infinitely more powerful than those belonging to mere humanity are employed daily in measuring out the good and evil of this world, the termination of combats, or the fate of empires, according to their own ideas of what is right or wrong, or, more properly, according to what we ourselves conceive to be such. The Greek heathens, renowned for their wisdom, and glorious for their actions, explained to men of ordinary minds the supposed existence of Jupiter and his Pantheon,* where various deities presided over various virtues and vices, and regulated the temporal fortune and future happiness of such as practised them. The more learned and wise of the ancients rejected such a vulgar interpretation, and wisely, although affecting a deference to the public faith, denied before their disciples in private the gross fallacies of Tartarus and Olympus,† the vain doctrines concerning the gods themselves, and the extravagant expectations which the vulgar entertained of an immortality, supposed to be possessed by creatures who were in every respect mortal, both in the conformation of their bodies and in the internal belief of their souls. Of these wise and good men some granted the existence of the supposed deities, but denied that they cared about the actions of mankind any more than those of the inferior animals. A merry, jovial, careless life, such as the followers of Epicurus ‡ would choose for themselves, was what they assigned for those gods whose being they admitted. Others, more bold or more consistent, entirely denied the existence of deities who apparently had no proper object or purpose, and believed that such of them whose being and attributes were proved to us by no supernatural appearances, had in reality no existence whatever.'

'Stop, wretch!' said the countess, 'and know that thou speakest not to one of those blinded heathens, of whose abominable doctrines you are detailing the result. Know that if an erring, I am nevertheless a sincere daughter of the Church, and this cross displayed on my shoulder is a sufficient emblem of the vows I have undertaken in its cause. Be therefore wary, as thou art wily; for believe me, if thou scoffest or utterest reproach against my holy religion, what I am unable to answer in language, I will reply to, without hesitation, with the point of my dagger.'

'To that argument,' said Agelastes, drawing back from the neighbourhood of Brenhilda, 'believe me, fair lady, I am very unwilling to urge your gentleness. But although I shall not venture to say anything of those superior and benevolent powers to whom you ascribe the management of the world, you will surely not take offence at my noticing those base superstitions which have been adopted in explanation of what is called by the Magi § the Evil Principle. Was there ever received into a human creed a being so mean—almost so ridiculous—as the Christian Satan? A goatish figure and limbs, with grotesque features, formed to express the most execrable passions; a degree of power scarce inferior to that of the Deity; and a talent at the same time scarce equal to that of the stupidest of the lowest order! What is he, this being, who is at least the second arbiter of the human race, save an immortal spirit, with the petty spleen and spite of a vindictive old man or old woman?'

Agelastes made a singular pause in this part of his discourse. A mirror of considerable size hung in the apartment, so that the philosopher could see in its reflection the figure of Brenhilda, and remark the change of her countenance, though she had averted her face from him in hatred of the doctrines which he promulgated. On this glass the philosopher had his eyes naturally fixed, and he was confounded at perceiving a figure glide from behind the shadow of a curtain, and glare at him with the supposed mien and expression of the Satan of monkish mythology, or a satyr of the heathen age.

'Man!' said Brenhilda, whose attention was attracted by this extraordinary apparition, as it seemed, of the Fiend, 'have thy wicked words, and still more wicked thoughts, brought the devil amongst us? If so, dismiss him instantly, else, by Our Lady of the Broken Lances! thou shalt know better than at present what is the temper of a Frankish maiden, when in presence of the Fiend himself, and those who pretend skill to raise him! I wish not to enter into a contest unless compelled; but if I am obliged to join battle with an enemy so horrible, believe me, no one shall say that Brenhilda feared him.'

Agelastes, after looking with surprise and horror at the figure as reflected in the glass, turned back his head to examine the substance, of which the reflection was so strange. The object, however, had disappeared behind the curtain, under which it probably lay hid, and it was after a minute or two that the half-gibing, half-scowling countenance showed itself again in the same position in the mirror.

'By the gods!' said Agelastes——

'In whom but now,' said the countess, 'you professed unbelief.'

'By the gods!' repeated Agelastes, in part recovering himself, 'it is Sylvan! that singular mockery of humanity, who was said to have been brought from Taprobana.‖ I warrant he also believes in his jolly god Pan, or the veteran Sylvanus. He is to the uninitiated a creature whose appearance is full of terrors, but he shrinks before the philosopher like ignorance before knowledge.' So saying, he with one hand pulled down the curtain, under which the animal had nestled itself when it entered from the garden window of the pavilion, and with the other, in which he had a staff uplifted, threatened to chastise the creature, with the words—'How now, Sylvanus! what insolence is this?—to your place!'

As, in uttering these words, he struck the animal, the blow unluckily lighted upon his

* [The entire assemblage of gods in the religious system of the ancient Greeks.]

† [The hell and heaven of that system.]

‡ [A Greek philosopher, who affirmed that enjoyment is the main end of human existence.]

§ [The priests of the ancient religion of Persia taught by Zoroaster.]

‖ [Sometimes identified with Ceylon; at all events, some island or country in the south-east of Asia.]

wounded hand, and recalled its bitter smart. The wild temper of the creature returned, unsubdued for the moment by any awe of man; uttering a fierce, and at the same time stifled cry, it flew on the philosopher, and clasped its strong and sinewy arms about his throat with the utmost fury. The old man twisted and struggled to deliver himself from the creature's grasp, but in vain. Sylvan kept hold of his prize, compressed his sinewy arms, and abode by his purpose of not quitting his hold of the philosopher's throat until he had breathed his last. Two more bitter yells, accompanied each with a desperate contortion of the countenance, and squeeze of the hands, concluded, in less than five minutes, the dreadful strife.

Agelastes lay dead upon the ground, and his assassin Sylvan, springing from the body as if terrified and alarmed at what he had done, made his escape by the window. The countess stood in astonishment, not knowing exactly whether she had witnessed a supernatural display of the judgment of Heaven, or an instance of its vengeance by mere mortal means. Her new attendant Vexhelia was no less astonished, though her acquaintance with the animal was considerably more intimate.

'Lady,' she said, 'that gigantic creature is an animal of great strength, resembling mankind in form, but huge in its size, and, encouraged by its immense power, sometimes malevolent in its intercourse with mortals. I have heard the Varangians often talk of it as belonging to the Imperial museum. It is fitting we remove the body of this unhappy man, and hide it in a plot or shrubbery in the garden. It is not likely that he will be missed to-night, and to-morrow there will be other matter astir, which will probably prevent much inquiry about him.' The Countess Brenhilda assented, for she was not one of those timorous females to whom the countenances of the dead are objects of terror.

Trusting to the parole which she had given, Agelastes had permitted the countess and her attendant the freedom of his gardens, of that part at least adjacent to the pavilion. They therefore were in little risk of interruption as they bore forth the dead body between them, and without much trouble disposed of it in the thickest part of one of the bosquets with which the garden was studded.

As they returned to their place of abode or confinement, the countess, half speaking to herself, half addressing Vexhelia, said, 'I am sorry for this; not that the infamous wretch did not deserve the full punishment of Heaven coming upon him in the very moment of blasphemy and infidelity, but because the courage and truth of the unfortunate Brenhilda may be brought into suspicion, as his slaughter took place when he was alone with her and her attendant, and as no one was witness of the singular manner in which the old blasphemer met his end.—Thou knowest,' she added, addressing herself to Heaven—'thou! blessed Lady of the Broken Lances, the protectress both of Brenhilda and her husband, well knowest that whatever faults may be mine, I am free from the slightest suspicion of treachery; and into thy hands I put my cause, with a perfect reliance upon thy wisdom and bounty to bear evidence in my favour.' So saying, they returned to the lodge unseen, and with pious and submissive prayers the countess closed that eventful evening.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Will you hear of a Spanish lady,
How she wooed an Englishman?
Garments gay, as rich as may be,
Deck'd with jewels, she had on.
Of a comely countenance and grace was she,
And by birth and parentage of high degree.
OLD BALLAD.

WE left Alexius Comnenus after he had unloaded his conscience in the ears of the Patriarch, and received from him a faithful assurance of the pardon and patronage of the national Church. He took leave of the dignitary with some exulting exclamations, so unexplicitly expressed, however, that it was by no means easy to conceive the meaning of what he said. His first inquiry, when he reached the Blacquernal, being for his daughter, he was directed to the room encrusted with beautifully-carved marble, from which she herself, and many of her race, derived the proud appellation of *Porphyrogenita*, or born in the purple. Her countenance was clouded with anxiety, which, at the sight of her father, broke out into open and uncontrollable grief.

'Daughter,' said the emperor, with a harshness little common to his manner, and a seriousness which he sternly maintained, instead of sympathizing with his daughter's affliction, 'as you would prevent the silly fool with whom you are connected from displaying himself to the public both as an ungrateful monster and a traitor, you will not fail to exhort him, by due submission, to make his petition for pardon, accompanied with a full confession of his crimes, or, by my sceptre and my crown, he shall die the death! Nor will I pardon any who rushes upon his doom in an open tone of defiance, under such a standard of rebellion as my ungrateful son-in-law has hoisted.'

'What can you require of me, father?' said the princess. 'Can you expect that I am to dip my own hands in the blood of this unfortunate man? or wilt thou seek a revenge yet more bloody than that which was exacted by the deities of antiquity, upon those criminals who offended against their divine power?'

'Think not so, my daughter!' said the emperor; 'but rather believe that thou hast the last opportunity afforded by my filial affection, of rescuing, perhaps from death, that silly fool thy husband, who has so richly deserved it.'

'My father,' said the princess, 'God knows it is not at your risk that I would wish to purchase the life of Nicephorus; but he has been the father of my children, though they are now no more, and women cannot forget that such a tie has existed, even though it has been broken by fate. Permit me only to hope that the unfortunate culprit shall have an opportunity of retrieving his errors; nor shall it, believe me, be my fault, if he resumes those practices, treasonable at once and unnatural, by which his life is at present endangered.'

'Follow me, then, daughter,' said the emperor, 'and know that to thee alone I am about to entrust a secret, upon which the safety of my life and crown, as well as the pardon of my son-in-law's life, will be found eventually to depend.'

He then assumed in haste the garment of a slave of the seraglio, and commanded his daughter to arrange her dress in a more succinct form, and to take in her hand a lighted lamp.

'Whither are we going, my father?' said Anna Comnena.

'It matters not,' replied her father, 'since my destiny calls me, and since thine ordains thee to be my torch-bearer. Believe it, and record it, if thou darest, in thy book, that Alexius Comnenus does not, without alarm, descend into those awful dungeons which his predecessors built for men, even when his intentions are innocent and free from harm. Be silent, and should we meet any inhabitant of those inferior regions, speak not a word, nor make any observation upon his appearance.'

Passing through the intricate apartments of the palace, they now came to that large hall through which Hereward had passed on the first night of his introduction to the place of Anna's recitation, called the Temple of the Muses. It was constructed, as we have said, of black marble, dimly illuminated. At the upper end of the apartment was a small altar, on which was laid some incense, while over the smoke were suspended, as if projecting from the wall, two imitations of human hands and arms, which were but imperfectly seen.

At the bottom of this hall, a small iron door led to a narrow and winding staircase, resembling a draw-well in shape and size, the steps of which were excessively steep, and which the emperor, after a solemn gesture to his daughter commanding her attendance, began to descend with the imperfect light, and by the narrow and difficult steps by which those who visited the under regions of the Blacquernal seemed to bid adieu to the light of day. Door after door they passed in their descent, leading, it was probable, to different ranges of dungeons, from which was obscurely heard the stifled voice of groans and sighs, such as attracted Hereward's attention on a former occasion. The emperor took no notice of these signs of human misery, and three storeys or ranges of dungeons had been already passed, ere the father and daughter arrived at the lowest storey of the building, the base of which was the solid rock, roughly carved, upon which were erected the side-walls and arches of solid but unpolished marble.

'Here,' said Alexius Comnenus, 'all hope, all expectation takes farewell, at the turn of a hinge or the grating of a lock. Yet shall not this be always the case—the dead shall revive and resume their right, and the disinherited of these regions shall again prefer their claim to inhabit the upper world. If I cannot entreat Heaven to my assistance, be assured, my daughter, that rather than be the poor animal which I have stooped to be thought, and even to be painted in thy history, I would sooner brave every danger of the multitude which now erect themselves betwixt me and safety. Nothing is resolved save that I will live and die an Emperor; and thou, Anna, be assured, that if there is power in the beauty or in the talents of which so much has been boasted, that power shall be this evening exercised to the advantage of thy parent, from whom it is derived.'

'What is it that you mean, Imperial father?—Holy Virgin! is this the promise you made me to save the life of the unfortunate Nicephorus?'

'And so I will,' said the emperor; 'and I am now about that action of benevolence. But think not I will once more warm in my bosom the household snake which had so nearly stung me to death. No, daughter; I have provided for thee a fitting husband, in one who is able to maintain and defend the rights of the Emperor thy father;—and beware how thou opposest an obstacle to what is my pleasure! for behold these walls of marble, though unpolished, and recollect it is as possible to die within the marble as to be born there.'

The Princess Anna Comnena was frightened at seeing her father in a state of mind entirely different from any which she had before witnessed. 'O Heaven! that my mother were here!' she ejaculated, in the terror of something she hardly knew what.

'Anna,' said the emperor, 'your fears and your screams are alike in vain. I am one of those who, on ordinary occasions, hardly nourish a wish of my own, and account myself obliged to those who, like my wife and daughter, take care to save me all the trouble of free judgment. But when the vessel is among the breakers, and the master is called to the helm, believe that no meaner hand shall be permitted to interfere with him, nor will the wife and daughter, whom he indulged in prosperity, be allowed to thwart his will while he can yet call it his own. Thou couldst scarcely fail to understand that I was almost prepared to have given thee, as a mark of my sincerity, to yonder obscure Varangian, without asking question of either birth or blood. Thou mayst hear when I next promise thee to a three-years' inhabitant of these vaults, who shall be Cæsar in Briennius's stead, if I can move him to accept a princess for his bride, and an Imperial crown for his inheritance, in place of a starving dungeon.'

'I tremble at your words, father,' said Anna Comnena; 'how canst thou trust a man who has felt thy cruelty?—How canst thou dream that aught can ever in sincerity reconcile thee to one whom thou hast deprived of his eyesight?'

'Care not for that,' said Alexius; 'he becomes mine, or he shall never know what it is to be again his own.—And thou, girl, mayst rest assured that, if I will it, thou art next day the bride of my present captive, or thou retirest to the most severe nunnery, never again to mix with society. Be silent, therefore, and await thy doom, as it shall come, and hope not that thy utmost endeavours can avert the current of thy destiny.'

As he concluded this singular dialogue, in which he had assumed a tone to which his daughter was a stranger, and before which she trembled, he passed on through more than one strictly fastened door, while his daughter, with

a faltering step, illuminated him on the obscure road. At length he found admittance by another passage into the cell in which Ursel was confined, and found him reclining in hopeless misery—all those expectations having faded from his heart which the Count of Paris had by his indomitable gallantry for a time excited. He turned his sightless eyes towards the place where he heard the moving of bolts and the approach of steps.

'A new feature,' he said, 'in my imprisonment—a man comes with a heavy and determined step, and a woman or a child with one that scarcely presses the floor!—Is it my death that you bring?—Believe me, that I have lived long enough in these dungeons to bid my doom welcome.'

'It is not thy death, noble Ursel,' said the emperor, in a voice somewhat disguised. 'Life, liberty, whatever the world has to give, is placed by the Emperor Alexius at the feet of his noble enemy, and he trusts that many years of happiness and power, together with the command of a large share of the empire, will soon obliterate the recollection of the dungeons of the Blacquernal.

'It cannot be,' said Ursel, with a sigh. 'He upon whose eyes the sun has set even at middle day, can have nothing left to hope from the most advantageous change of circumstances.'

'You are not entirely assured of that,' said the emperor; 'allow us to convince you that what is intended towards you is truly favourable and liberal, and I hope you will be rewarded by finding that there is more possibility of amendment in your case, than your first apprehensions are willing to receive. Make an effort, and try whether your eyes are not sensible of the light of the lamp.'

'Do with me,' said Ursel, 'according to your pleasure; I have neither strength to remonstrate, nor the force of mind equal to make me set your cruelty at defiance. Of something like light I am sensible; but whether it is reality or illusion, I cannot determine. If you are come to deliver me from this living sepulchre, I pray God to requite you; and if, under such deceitful pretence, you mean to take my life, I can only commend my soul to Heaven, and the vengeance due to my death to Him who can behold the darkest places in which injustice can shroud itself.'

So saying, and the revulsion of his spirits rendering him unable to give almost any other signs of existence, Ursel sank back upon his seat of captivity, and spoke not another word during the time that Alexius disembarrassed him of those chains which had so long hung about him, that they almost seemed to make a part of his person.

'This is an affair in which thy aid can scarce be sufficient, Anna,' said the emperor; 'it would have been well if you and I could have borne him into the open air by our joint strength, for there is little wisdom in showing the secrets of this prison-house to those to whom they are not yet known; nevertheless go, my child, and at a short distance from the head of the staircase which we descended, thou wilt find Edward, the bold and trusty Varangian, who, on your communicating to him my orders, will come hither and render his assistance; and see that you send also the experienced leech Douban.'

Terrified, half-stifled, and half struck with horror, the lady yet felt a degree of relief from the somewhat milder tone in which her father addressed her. With tottering steps, yet in some measure encouraged by the tenor of her instructions, she ascended the staircase which yawned upon these infernal dungeons. As she approached the top, a large and strong figure threw its broad shadow between the lamp and the opening of the hall. Frightened nearly to death at the thoughts of becoming the wife of a squalid wretch like Ursel, a moment of weakness seized upon the princess's mind, and, when she considered the melancholy option which her father had placed before her, she could not but think that the handsome and gallant Varangian, who had already rescued the royal family from such imminent danger, was a fitter person with whom to unite herself, if she must needs make a second choice, than the singular and disgusting being whom her father's policy had raked from the bottom of the Blacquernal dungeons.

I will not say of poor Anna Comnena, who was a timid but not an unfeeling woman, that she would have embraced such a proposal, had not the life of her present husband, Nicephorus Briennius, been in extreme danger; and it was obviously the determination of the emperor, that if he spared him, it should be on the sole condition of unloosing his daughter's hand, and binding her to some one of better faith, and possessed of a greater desire to prove an affectionate son-in-law. Neither did the plan of adopting the Varangian as a second husband enter decidedly into the mind of the princess. The present was a moment of danger, in which her rescue, to be successful, must be sudden; and perhaps, if once achieved, the lady might have had an opportunity of freeing herself both from Ursel and the Varangian, without disjoining either of them from her father's assistance, or of herself losing it. At any rate, the surest means of safety were to secure, if possible, the young soldier, whose features and appearance were of a kind which rendered the task no way disagreeable to a beautiful woman. The schemes of conquest are so natural to the fair sex, and the whole idea passed so quickly through Anna Comnena's mind, that, having first entered while the soldier's shadow was interposed between her and the lamp, it had fully occupied her quick imagination, when, with deep reverence, and great surprise at her sudden appearance on the ladder of Acheron,* the Varangian, advancing, knelt down, and lent his arm to the assistance of the fair lady, in order to help her out of the dreary staircase.

'Dearest Hereward,' said the lady, with a degree of intimacy which seemed unusual, 'how much do I rejoice, in this dreadful night, to have fallen under your protection! I have been in places which the spirit of hell appears to have contrived for the human race.' The alarm of the princess, the familiarity of a beautiful woman, who, while in mortal fear, seeks refuge,

* [A river of the infernal regions, or the world of spirits, in ancient classic mythology.]

like a frightened dove, in the bosom of the strong and the brave, must be the excuse of Anna Comnena for the tender epithet with which she greeted Hereward; nor, if he had chosen to answer in the same tone, which, faithful as he was, might have proved the case if the meeting had chanced before he saw Bertha, would the daughter of Alexius have been, to say the truth, irreconcilably offended. Exhausted as she was, she suffered herself to repose upon the broad breast and shoulder of the Anglo-Saxon; nor did she make an attempt to recover herself, although the decorum of her sex and station seemed to recommend such an exertion. Hereward was obliged himself to ask her, with the unimpassioned and reverential demeanour of a private soldier to a princess, whether he ought to summon her female attendants; to which she faintly uttered a negative. 'No, no,' said she; 'I have a duty to execute for my father, and I must not summon eye-witnesses. He knows me to be in safety, Hereward, since he knows I am with thee; and if I am a burden to you in my present state of weakness, I shall soon recover, if you will set me down upon the marble steps.'

'Heaven forbid, lady,' said Hereward, 'that I were thus neglectful of your Highness's gracious health! I see your two young ladies, Astarte and Violante, are in quest of you—Permit me to summon them hither, and I will keep watch upon you if you are unable to retire to your chamber, where, methinks, the present disorder of your nerves will be most properly treated.'

'Do as thou wilt, barbarian,' said the princess, rallying herself, with a certain degree of pique, arising perhaps from her not thinking more *dramatis personæ* were appropriate to the scene, than the two who were already upon the stage. Then, as if for the first time, appearing to recollect the message with which she had been commissioned, she exhorted the Varangian to repair instantly to her father.

On such occasions the slightest circumstances have their effect on the actors. The Anglo-Saxon was sensible that the princess was somewhat offended, though whether she was so on account of her being actually in Hereward's arms, or whether the cause of her anger was the being nearly discovered there by the two young maidens, the sentinel did not presume to guess, but departed for the gloomy vaults to join Alexius, with the never-failing double-edged axe, the bane of many a Turk, glittering upon his shoulder.

Astarte and her companion had been despatched by the Empress Irene in search of Anna Comnena, through those apartments of the palace which she was wont to inhabit. The daughter of Alexius could nowhere be found, although the business on which they were seeking her was described by the empress as of the most pressing nature. Nothing, however, in a palace passes altogether unespied, so that the empress's messengers at length received information that their mistress and the emperor had been seen to descend that gloomy access to the dungeons, which, by allusion to the classical infernal regions, was termed the Pit of Acheron. They came thither accordingly, and we have related the consequences. Hereward thought it necessary to say that her Imperial Highness had swooned upon being suddenly brought into the upper air. The princess, on the other part, briskly shook off her juvenile attendants, and declared herself ready to proceed to the chamber of her mother. The obeisance which she made Hereward at parting had something in it of haughtiness, yet evidently qualified by a look of friendship and regard. As she passed an apartment in which some of the royal slaves were in waiting, she addressed to one of them, an old respectable man of medical skill, a private and hurried order, desiring him to go to the assistance of her father, whom he would find at the bottom of the staircase called the Pit of Acheron, and to take his scimitar along with him. To hear, as usual, was to obey, and Douban, for that was his name, only replied by that significant sign which indicates immediate acquiescence. In the meantime, Anna Comnena herself hastened onward to her mother's apartments, in which she found the empress alone.

'Go hence, maidens,' said Irene, 'and do not let any one have access to these apartments, even if the Emperor himself should command it. Shut the door,' she said, 'Anna Comnena; and if the jealousy of the stronger sex do not allow us the masculine privileges of bolts and bars, to secure the insides of our apartments, let us avail ourselves, as quickly as may be, of such opportunities as are permitted us; and remember, Princess, that however implicit your duty to your father, it is yet more so to me, who am of the same sex with thyself, and may truly call thee, even according to the letter, blood of my blood and bone of my bone. Be assured thy father knows not, at this moment, the feelings of a woman. Neither he nor any man alive can justly conceive the pangs of the heart which beats under a woman's robe. These men, Anna, would tear asunder without scruple the tenderest ties of affection, the whole structure of domestic felicity, in which lie a woman's cares, her joy, her pain, her love, and her despair. Trust, therefore, to me, my daughter! and believe me, I will at once save thy father's crown and thy happiness. The conduct of thy husband has been wrong, most cruelly wrong; but, Anna, he is a man—and in calling him such, I lay to his charge, as natural frailties, thoughtless treachery, wanton infidelity, every species of folly and inconsistency, to which his race is subject. You ought not, therefore, to think of his faults, unless it be to forgive them.'

'Madam,' said Anna Comnena, 'forgive me if I remind you that you recommend to a princess, born in the purple itself, a line of conduct which would hardly become the female who carries the pitcher for the needful supply of water to the village well. All who are around me have been taught to pay me the obeisance due to my birth, and while this Nicephorus Briennius crept on his enees to your daughter's hand, which you extended towards him, he was rather receiving the yoke of a mistress than accepting a household alliance with a wife. He has incurred his doom, without a touch even of that temptation which may be pled by lesser culprits in his condition; and if it is the will of my father that he should die, or suffer banishment, or imprisonment, for

the crime he has committed, it is not the business of Anna Comnena to interfere, she being the most injured among the Imperial family, who have in so many, and such gross respects, the right to complain of his falsehood.'

'Daughter,' replied the empress, 'so far I agree with you, that the treason of Nicephorus towards your father and myself has been in a great degree unpardonable; nor do I easily see on what footing, save that of generosity, his life could be saved. But still you are yourself in different circumstances from me, and may, as an affectionate and fond wife, compare the intimacies of your former habits with the bloody change which is so soon to be the consequence and the conclusion of his crimes. He is possessed of that person and of those features which women most readily recall to their memory, whether alive or dead. Think what it will cost you to recollect that the rugged executioner received his last salute,—that the shapely neck had no better repose than the rough block,—that the tongue, the sound of which you used to prefer to the choicest instruments of music, is silent in the dust!'

Anna, who was not insensible to the personal graces of her husband, was much affected by this forcible appeal. 'Why distress me thus, mother?' she replied in a weeping accent. 'Did I not feel as acutely as you would have me to do, this moment, however awful, would be easily borne. I had but to think of him as he is, to contrast his personal qualities with those of the mind, by which they are more than overbalanced, and resign myself to his deserved fate with unresisting submission to my father's will.'

'And that,' said the empress, 'would be to bind thee, by his sole fiat, to some obscure wretch, whose habits of plotting and intriguing had, by some miserable chance, given him the opportunity of becoming of importance to the Emperor, and who is, therefore, to be rewarded by the hand of Anna Comnena.'

'Do not think so meanly of me, madam,' said the princess—'I know, as well as ever Grecian maiden did, how I should free myself from dishonour; and, you may trust me, you shall never blush for your daughter.'

'Tell me not that,' said the empress, 'since I shall blush alike for the relentless cruelty which gives up a once beloved husband to an ignominious death, and for the passion, for which I want a name, which would replace him by an obscure barbarian from the extremity of Thule, or some wretch escaped from the Blacquernal dungeons.'

The princess was astonished to perceive that her mother was acquainted with the purposes, even the most private, which her father had formed for his governance during this emergency. She was ignorant that Alexius and his royal consort, in other respects living together with a decency ever exemplary in people of their rank, had sometimes, on interesting occasions, family debates, in which the husband, provoked by the seeming unbelief of his partner, was tempted to let her guess more of his real purposes than he would have coolly imparted of his own calm choice.

The princess was affected at the anticipation of the death of her husband, nor could this have been reasonably supposed to be otherwise; but she was still more hurt and affronted by her mother taking it for granted that she designed upon the instant to replace the Cæsar by an uncertain, and at all events an unworthy successor. Whatever considerations had operated to make Hereward her choice, their effect was lost when the match was placed in this odious and degrading point of view; besides which is to be remembered, that women almost instinctively deny their first thoughts in favour of a suitor, and seldom willingly reveal them, unless time and circumstance concur to favour them. She called Heaven therefore passionately to witness, while she repelled the charge.

'Bear witness,' she said, 'Our Lady, Queen of Heaven! Bear witness, saints and martyrs all, ye blessed ones, who are, more than ourselves, the guardians of our mental purity! that I know no passion which I dare not avow, and that if Nicephorus's life depended on my entreaty to God and men, all his injurious acts towards me disregarded and despised, it should be as long as Heaven gave to those servants whom it snatched from the earth without suffering the pangs of mortality!'

'You have sworn boldly,' said the empress. 'See, Anna Comnena, that you keep your word, for believe me it will be tried.'

'What will be tried, mother?' said the princess; 'or what have I to do to pronounce the doom of the Cæsar, who is not subject to my power?'

'I will show you,' said the empress gravely; and, leading her towards a sort of wardrobe, which formed a closet in the wall, she withdrew a curtain which hung before it, and placed before her her unfortunate husband, Nicephorus Briennius, half-attired, with his sword drawn in his hand. Looking upon him as an enemy, and conscious of some schemes with respect to him which had passed through her mind in the course of these troubles, the princess screamed faintly, upon perceiving him so near her with a weapon in his hand.

'Be more composed,' said the empress, 'or this wretched man, if discovered, falls no less a victim to thy idle fears than to thy baneful revenge.'

Nicephorus at this speech seemed to have adopted his cue, for, dropping the point of his sword, and falling on his knees before the princess, he clasped his hands to entreat for mercy.

'What hast thou to ask from me?' said his wife, naturally assured, by her husband's prostration, that the stronger force was upon her own side—'what hast thou to ask from me, that outraged gratitude, betrayed affection, the most solemn vows violated, and the fondest ties of nature torn asunder like the spider's broken web, will permit thee to put in words for very shame?'

'Do not suppose, Anna,' replied the suppliant, 'that I am at this eventful period of my life to play the hypocrite, for the purpose of saving the wretched remnant of a dishonoured existence. I am but desirous to part in charity with thee, to make my peace with Heaven, and to nourish the

last hope of making my way, though burdened with many crimes, to those regions in which alone I can find thy beauty, thy talents, equalled at least, if not excelled.'

'You hear him, daughter?' said Irene; 'his boon is for forgiveness alone; thy condition is the more godlike, since thou mayst unite the safety of his life with the pardon of his offences.'

'Thou art deceived, mother,' answered Anna. 'It is not mine to pardon his guilt, far less to remit his punishment. You have taught me to think of myself as future ages shall know me; what will they say of me, those future ages, when I am described as the unfeeling daughter, who pardoned the intended assassin of her father, because she saw in him her own unfaithful husband?'

'See there,' said the Cæsar, 'is not that, most serene Empress, the very point of despair? and have I not in vain offered my life-blood to wipe out the stain of parricide and ingratitude? Have I not also vindicated myself from the most unpardonable part of the accusation, which charged me with attempting the murder of the godlike Emperor? Have I not sworn by all that is sacred to man, that my purpose went no farther than to sequestrate Alexius for a little time from the fatigues of empire, and place him where he should quietly enjoy ease and tranquillity? while, at the same time, his empire should be as implicitly regulated by himself, his sacred pleasure being transmitted through me, as in any respect, or at any period, it had ever been?'

'Erring man!' said the princess, 'hast thou approached so near to the footstool of Alexius Comnenus, and durst thou form so false an estimate of him, as to conceive it possible that he would consent to be a mere puppet by whose intervention you might have brought his empire to submission? Know that the blood of Comnenus is not so poor; my father would have resisted the treason in arms; and by the death of thy benefactor only couldst thou have gratified the suggestions of thy criminal ambition.'

'Be such your belief,' said the Cæsar; 'I have said enough for a life which is not and ought not to be dear to me. Call your guards, and let them take the life of the unfortunate Briennius, since it has become hateful to his once beloved Anna Comnena. Be not afraid that any resistance of mine shall render the scene of my apprehension dubious or fatal. Nicephorus Briennius is Cæsar no longer, and he thus throws at the feet of his princess and spouse the only poor means which he has of resisting the just doom which is therefore at her pleasure to pass.'

He cast his sword before the feet of the princess, while Irene exclaimed, weeping, or seeming to weep bitterly, 'I have indeed read of such scenes! but could I ever have thought that my own daughter would have been the principal actress in one of them—could I ever have thought that her mind, admired by every one as a palace for the occupation of Apollo and the Muses, should not have had room enough for the humbler but more amiable virtue of feminine charity and compassion, which builds itself a nest in the bosom of the lowest village girl? Do thy gifts, accomplishments, and talents spread hardness as well as polish over thy heart? If so, a hundred times better renounce them all, and retain in their stead those gentle and domestic virtues, which are the first honours of the female heart. A woman who is pitiless is a worse monster than one who is unsexed by any other passion.'

'What would you have me do?' said Anna. You, mother, ought to know better than I, that the life of my father is hardly consistent with the existence of this bold and cruel man. O, I am sure he still meditates his purpose of conspiracy! He that could deceive a woman in the manner he has done me, will not relinquish a plan which is founded upon the death of his benefactor.'

'You do me injustice, Anna,' said Briennius, starting up and imprinting a kiss upon her lips ere she was aware. 'By this caress, the last that will pass between us, I swear that, if in my life I have yielded to folly, I have, notwithstanding, never been guilty of a treason of the heart towards a woman as superior to the rest of the female world in talents and accomplishments, as in personal beauty.'

The princess, much softened, shook her head, as she replied—'Ah, Nicephorus!—such were once your words! such, perhaps, were then your thoughts! But who, or what, shall now warrant to me the veracity of either?'

'Those very accomplishments, and that very beauty itself,' replied Nicephorus.

'And if more is wanting,' said Irene, 'thy mother will enter her security for him. Deem her not an insufficient pledge in this affair; she is thy mother, and the wife of Alexius Comnenus, interested beyond all human beings in the growth and increase of the power and dignity of her husband and her child; and one who sees on this occasion an opportunity for exercising generosity, for soldering up the breaches of the Imperial House, and reconstructing the frame of government upon a basis which, if there be faith and gratitude in man, shall never be again exposed to hazard.'

'To the reality of that faith and gratitude, then,' said the princess, 'we must trust implicitly, as it is your will, mother; although even my own knowledge of the subject, both through study and experience of the world, has called me to observe the rashness of such confidence. But although we two may forgive Nicephorus's errors, the Emperor is still the person to whom the final reference must be had, both as to pardon and favour.'

'Fear not Alexius,' answered her mother; 'he will speak determinedly and decidedly; but if he acts not in the very moment of forming the resolution, it is no more to be relied on than an icicle in time of thaw. Do thou apprise me, if thou canst, what the Emperor is at present doing, and take my word I will find means to bring him round to our opinion.'

'Must I then betray secrets which my father has entrusted to me?' said the princess; 'and to one who has so lately held the character of his avowed enemy?'

'Call it not betray,' said Irene, 'since it is written thou shalt betray no one, least of all thy father, and the father of the empire. Yet

again it is written, by the holy Luke, that men shall be betrayed, both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolk and friends, and therefore surely also by daughters; by which I only mean thou shalt discover to us thy father's secrets, so far as may enable us to save the life of thy husband. The necessity of the case excuses whatever may be otherwise considered as irregular.'

'Be it so, then, mother. Having yielded my consent perhaps too easily, to snatch this malefactor from my father's justice, I am sensible I must secure his safety by such means as are in my power. I left my father at the bottom of those stairs, called the Pit of Acheron, in the cell of a blind man, to whom he gave the name of Ursel.'

'Holy Mary!' exclaimed the empress, 'thou hast named a name which has been long unspoken in the open air.'

'Has the Emperor's sense of his danger from the living,' said the Cæsar, 'induced him to invoke the dead?—for Ursel has been no living man for the space of three years.'

'It matters not,' said Anna Comnena; 'I tell you true. My father even now held conference with a miserable-looking prisoner, whom he so named.'

'It is a danger the more,' said the Cæsar; 'he cannot have forgotten the zeal with which I embraced the cause of the present Emperor against his own; and so soon as he is at liberty, he will study to avenge it. For this we must endeavour to make some provision, though it increases our difficulties.—Sit down, then, my gentle, my beneficent mother; and thou, my wife, who hast preferred thy love for an unworthy husband to the suggestions of jealous passion and of headlong revenge, sit down, and let us see in what manner it may be in our power, consistently with your duty to the Emperor, to bring our broken vessel securely into port.'

He employed much natural grace of manner in handing the mother and daughter to their seats; and, taking his place confidentially between them, all were soon engaged in concerting what measures should be taken for the morrow, not forgetting such as should at once have the effect of preserving the Cæsar's life, and at the same time of securing the Grecian Empire against the conspiracy of which he had been the chief instigator. Briennius ventured to hint that perhaps the best way would be to suffer the conspiracy to proceed as originally intended, pledging his own faith that the rights of Alexius should be held inviolate during the struggle; but his influence over the empress and her daughter did not extend to obtaining so great a trust. They plainly protested against permitting him to leave the palace, or taking the least share in the confusion which to-morrow was certain to witness.

'You forget, noble ladies,' said the Cæsar, 'that my honour is concerned in meeting the Count of Paris.'

'Pshaw! tell me not of your honour, Briennius,' said Anna Comnena; 'do I not well know that although the honour of the Western knights be a species of Moloch, a flesh-devouring, blood-quaffing demon, yet that which is the god of idolatry to the Eastern warriors, though equally loud and noisy in the hall, is far less implacable in the field? Believe not that I have forgiven great injuries and insults, in order to take such false coin as *honour* in payment; your ingenuity is but poor, if you cannot devise some excuse which will satisfy the Greeks; and in good sooth, Briennius, to this battle you go not, whether for your good or for your ill. Believe not that I will consent to your meeting either Count or Countess whether in warlike combat or amorous parley. So you may at a word count upon remaining prisoner here until the hour appointed for such gross folly be past and over.'

The Cæsar, perhaps, was not in his heart angry that his wife's pleasure was so bluntly and resolutely expressed against the intended combat. 'If,' said he, 'you are determined to take my honour into your own keeping, I am here for the present your prisoner, nor have I the means of interfering with your pleasure. When once at liberty, the free exercise of my valour and my lance is once more my own.'

'Be it so, Sir Paladin,' said the princess, very composedly. 'I have good hope that neither of them will involve you with any of yon dare-devils of Paris, whether male or female, and that we will regulate the pitch to which your courage soars, by the estimation of Greek philosophy, and the judgment of Our blessed Lady of Mercy, not her of the Broken Lances.'

At this moment an authoritative knock at the door alarmed the consultation of the Cæsar and the ladies.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Physician. Be comforted, good madam; the great rage,
You see, is cured in him: and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in: trouble him no more,
Till further settling.

KING LEAR.

WE left the Emperor Alexius Comnenus at the bottom of a subterranean vault, with a lamp expiring, and having charge of a prisoner, who seemed himself nearly reduced to the same extremity. For the first two or three moments he listened after his daughter's retiring footsteps. He grew impatient, and began to long for her return before it was possible she could have traversed the path betwixt him and the summit of these gloomy stairs. A minute or two he endured with patience the absence of the assistance which he had sent her to summon; but strange suspicions began to cross his imagination. Could it be possible? Had she changed her purpose on account of the hard words which he had used towards her? Had she resolved to leave her father to his fate in his hour of utmost need? and was he to rely no longer upon the assistance which he had implored her to send?

The short time which the princess trifled away in a sort of gallantry with the Varangian Hereward, was magnified tenfold by the impatience of the emperor, who began to think that she was gone to fetch the accomplices of

the Cæsar to assault their prince in his defenceless condition, and carry into effect their half-disconcerted conspiracy.

After a considerable time, filled up with this feeling of agonizing uncertainty, he began at length, more composedly, to recollect the little chance there was that the princess would, even for her own sake, resentful as she was in the highest degree of her husband's ill behaviour, join her resources to his, to the destruction of one who had so generally showed himself an indulgent and affectionate father. When he had adopted this better mood, a step was heard upon the staircase, and, after a long and unequal descent, Hereward, in his heavy armour, at length coolly arrived at the bottom of the steps. Behind him, panting and trembling, partly with cold and partly with terror, came Douban, the slave well skilled in medicine.

'Welcome, good Edward! Welcome, Douban!' he said, 'whose medical skill is sufficiently able to counterbalance the weight of years which hang upon him.'

'Your Highness is gracious,' said Douban—but what he would have further said was cut off by a violent fit of coughing, the consequence of his age, of his feeble habit, of the damps of the dungeon, and the rugged exercise of descending the long and difficult staircase.

'Thou art unaccustomed to visit thy patients in so rough an abode,' said Alexius; 'and, nevertheless, to the damps of these dreary regions state necessity obliges us to confine many, who are no less our beloved subjects in reality than they are in title.'

The medical man continued his cough, perhaps as an apology for not giving that answer of assent, with which his conscience did not easily permit him to reply to an observation which, though stated by one who should know the fact, seemed not to be in itself altogether likely.

'Yes, my Douban,' said the emperor, 'in this strong case of steel and adamant have we found it necessary to enclose the redoubted Ursel, whose fame is spread through the whole world, both for military skill, political wisdom, personal bravery, and other noble gifts, which we have been obliged to obscure for a time, in order that we might, at the fittest conjuncture, which is now arrived, restore them to the world in their full lustre. Feel his pulse, therefore, Douban—consider him as one who hath suffered severe confinement, with all its privations, and is about to be suddenly restored to the full enjoyment of life, and whatever renders life valuable.'

'I will do my best,' said Douban; 'but your Majesty must consider that we work upon a frail and exhausted subject, whose health seems already well-nigh gone, and may perhaps vanish in an instant—like this pale and trembling light, whose precarious condition the life-breath of this unfortunate patient seems closely to resemble.'

'Desire, therefore, good Douban, one or two of the mutes who serve in the interior, and who have repeatedly been thy assistants in such cases—or stay—Edward, thy motions will be more speedy; do thou go for the mutes—make them bring some kind of litter to transport the patient; and, Douban, do thou superintend the whole. Transport him instantly to a suitable apartment, only taking care that it be secret, and let him enjoy the comforts of the bath, and whatever else may tend to restore his feeble animation—keeping in mind that he must, if possible, appear to-morrow in the field.'

'That will be hard,' said Douban, 'after having been, it would appear, subjected to such fare and such usage as his fluctuating pulse intimates but too plainly.'

''Twas a mistake of the dungeon-keeper, the inhuman villain, who should not go without his reward,' continued the emperor, 'had not Heaven already bestowed it by the strange means of a sylvan man, or native of the woods, who yesterday put to death the jailor who meditated the death of his prisoner—Yes, my dear Douban, a private sentinel of our guards called the Immortal, had well-nigh annihilated this flower of our trust, whom for a time we were compelled to immure in secret. Then, indeed, a rude hammer had dashed to pieces an unparalleled brilliant, but the fates have arrested such a misfortune.'

The assistance having arrived, the physician, who seemed more accustomed to act than to speak, directed a bath to be prepared with medicated herbs, and gave it as his opinion that the patient should not be disturbed till to-morrow's sun was high in the heavens. Ursel accordingly was assisted to the bath, which was employed according to the directions of the physician; but without affording any material symptoms of recovery. From thence he was transferred to a cheerful bedchamber, opening by an ample window to one of the terraces of the palace, which commanded an extensive prospect. These operations were performed upon a frame so extremely stupefied by previous suffering, so dead to the usual sensations of existence, that it was not till the sensibility should be gradually restored by friction of the stiffened limbs, and other means, that the leech hoped the mists of the intellect should at length begin to clear away.

Douban readily undertook to obey the commands of the emperor, and remained by the bed of the patient until the dawn of morning, ready to support nature as far as the skill of leechcraft admitted.

From the mutes, much more accustomed to be the executioners of the emperor's displeasure than of his humanity, Douban selected one man of milder mood, and, by Alexius's order, made him understand that the task in which he was engaged was to be kept most strictly secret, while the hardened slave was astonished to find that the attentions paid to the sick were to be rendered with yet more mystery than the bloody offices of death and torture.

The passive patient received the various acts of attention which were rendered to him in silence; and if not totally without consciousness, at least without a distinct comprehension of their object. After the soothing operation of the bath, and the voluptuous exchange of the rude and musty pile of straw, on which he had stretched himself for years, for a couch of the softest down, Ursel was presented with a sedative draught, slightly tinctured with an opiate.

The balmy restorer of nature came thus invoked, and the captive sunk into a delicious slumber long unknown to him, and which seemed to occupy equally his mental faculties and his bodily frame, while the features were released from their rigid tenor, and the posture of the limbs, no longer disturbed by fits of cramp, and sudden and agonizing twists and throes, seemed changed for a placid state of the most perfect ease and tranquillity.

The morn was already colouring the horizon, and the freshness of the breeze of dawn had insinuated itself into the lofty halls of the Palace of the Blacquernal, when a gentle tap at the door of the chamber awakened Douban, who, undisturbed from the calm state of his patient, had indulged himself in a brief repose. The door opened, and a figure appeared, disguised in the robes worn by an officer of the palace, and concealed, beneath an artificial beard of great size, and of a white colour, the features of the emperor himself. 'Douban,' said Alexius, 'how fares it with thy patient, whose safety is this day of such consequence to the Grecian State?'

'Well, my lord,' replied the physician, 'excellently well; and if he is not now disturbed, I will wager whatever skill I possess, that nature, assisted by the art of the physician, will triumph over the damps and the unwholesome air of the impure dungeon. Only be prudent, my lord, and let not an untimely haste bring this Ursel forward into the contest ere he has arranged the disturbed current of his ideas, and recovered, in some degree, the spring of his mind, and the powers of his body.'

'I will rule my impatience,' said the emperor, 'or rather, Douban, I will be ruled by thee. Thinkest thou he is awake?'

'I am inclined to think so,' said the leech; 'but he opens not his eyes, and seems to me as if he absolutely resisted the natural impulse to rouse himself and look around him.'

'Speak to him,' said the emperor, 'and let us know what is passing in his mind.'

'It is at some risk,' replied the physician, 'but you shall be obeyed.—Ursel,' he said, approaching the bed of his blind patient, and then, in a louder tone, he repeated again, 'Ursel! Ursel!'

'Peace — Hush!' muttered the patient; 'disturb not the blest in their ecstasy—nor again recall the most miserable of mortals to finish the draught of bitterness which his fate had compelled him to commence.'

'Again, again,' said the emperor, aside to Douban; 'try him yet again; it is of importance for me to know in what degree he possesses his senses, or in what measure they have disappeared from him.'

'I would not, however,' said the physician, 'be the rash and guilty person, who, by an ill-timed urgency, should produce a total alienation of mind, and plunge him back either into absolute lunacy, or produce a stupor, in which he might remain for a long period.'

'Surely not,' replied the emperor; 'my commands are those of one Christian to another, nor do I wish them further obeyed than as they are consistent with the laws of God and man.'

He paused for a moment after this declaration, and yet but few minutes had elapsed ere he again urged the leech to pursue the interrogation of his patient. 'If you hold me not competent,' said Douban, somewhat vain of the trust necessarily reposed in him, 'to judge of the treatment of my patient, your Imperial Highness must take the risk and the trouble upon yourself.'

'Marry, I shall,' said the emperor; 'for the scruples of leeches are not to be indulged, when the fate of kingdoms and the lives of monarchs are placed against them in the scales.—Rouse thee, my noble Ursel! hear a voice, with which thy ears were once well acquainted, welcome thee back to glory and command! Look around thee, and see how the world smiles to welcome thee back from imprisonment to empire!'

'Cunning fiend!' said Ursel, 'who usest the most wily baits in order to augment the misery of the wretched! Know, tempter, that I am conscious of the whole trick of the soothing images of last night—thy baths—thy beds—and thy bowers of bliss.—But sooner shalt thou be able to bring a smile upon the cheek of Saint Anthony the Eremite, than induce me to curl mine after the fashion of earthly voluptuaries.'

'Try it, foolish man,' insisted the emperor, 'and trust to the evidence of thy senses for the reality of the pleasures by which thou art now surrounded; or, if thou art obstinate in thy lack of faith, tarry as thou art for a single moment, and I will bring with me a being so unparalleled in her loveliness, that a single glance of her were worth the restoration of thine eyes, were it only to look upon her for a moment.' So saying, he left the apartment.

'Traitor,' said Ursel, 'and deceiver of old, bring no one hither! and strive not, by shadowy and ideal forms of beauty, to increase the delusion that gilds my prison-house for a moment, in order, doubtless, to destroy totally the spark of reason, and then exchange this earthly hell for a dungeon in the infernal regions themselves.'

'His mind is somewhat shattered,' mused the physician, 'which is often the consequence of a long solitary confinement. I marvel much,' was his further thought, 'if the Emperor can shape out any rational service which this man can render him, after being so long immured in so horrible a dungeon.—Thou thinkest, then,' continued he, addressing the patient, 'that the seeming release of last night, with its baths and refreshments, was only a delusive dream, without any reality?'

'Ay—what else?' answered Ursel.

'And that the arousing thyself, as we desire thee to do, would be but a resigning to a vain temptation, in order to wake to more unhappiness than formerly?'

'Even so,' returned the patient.

'What, then, are thy thoughts of the Emperor by whose command thou sufferest so severe a restraint?'

Perhaps Douban wished he had forborne this question, for in the very moment when he put it, the door of the chamber opened, and the emperor entered, with his daughter hanging upon his arm, dressed with simplicity, yet with becoming splendour. She had found time, it seems, to change her dress for a white robe, which resembled a kind of mourning, the chief

ornament of which was a diamond chaplet, of inestimable value, which surrounded and bound the long sable tresses that reached from her head to her waist. Terrified almost to death, she had been surprised by her father in the company of her husband the Cæsar, and her mother; and the same thundering mandate had at once ordered Briennius, in the character of a more than suspected traitor, under the custody of a strong guard of Varangians, and commanded her to attend her father to the bedchamber of Ursel, in which she now stood; resolved, however, that she would stick by the sinking fortunes of her husband, even in the last extremity, yet no less determined that she would not rely upon her own entreaties or remonstrances, until she should see whether her father's interference was likely to reassume a resolved and positive character. Hastily as the plans of Alexius had been formed, and hastily as they had been disconcerted by accident, there remained no slight chance that he might be forced to come round to the purpose on which his wife and daughter had fixed their heart, the forgiveness, namely, of the guilty Nicephorus Briennius. To his astonishment, and not perhaps greatly to his satisfaction, he heard the patient deeply engaged with the physician in canvassing his own character.

'Think not,' said Ursel in reply to him, 'that though I am immured in this dungeon, and treated as something worse than an outcast of humanity—and although I am, moreover, deprived of my eyesight, the dearest gift of Heaven—think not, I say, though I suffer all this by the cruel will of Alexius Comnenus, that therefore I hold him to be mine enemy; on the contrary, it is by his means that the blinded and miserable prisoner has been taught to seek a liberty far more unconstrained than this poor earth can afford, and a vision far more clear than any Mount Pisgah on this wretched side of the grave can give us. Shall I therefore account the Emperor among mine enemies? He who has taught me the vanity of earthly things—the nothingness of earthly enjoyments—and the pure hope of a better world, as a certain exchange for the misery of the present? No!'

The emperor had stood somewhat disconcerted at the beginning of this speech, but hearing it so very unexpectedly terminate, as he was willing to suppose, much in his own favour, he threw himself into an attitude which was partly that of a modest person listening to his own praises, and partly that of a man highly struck with the commendations heaped upon him by a generous adversary.

'My friend,' he said aloud, 'how truly do you read my purpose, when you suppose that the knowledge which men of your disposition can extract from evil, was all the experience which I wished you to derive from a captivity protracted by adverse circumstances, far, very far, beyond my wishes! Let me embrace the generous man who knows so well how to construe the purpose of a perplexed, but still faithful friend.'

The patient raised himself in his bed.

'Hold there!' he said; 'methinks my faculties begin to collect themselves. Yes,' he muttered, 'that is the treacherous voice which first bade me welcome as a friend, and then commanded fiercely that I should be deprived of the sight of my eyes!—Increase thy rigour if thou wilt, Comnenus—add, if thou canst, to the torture of my confinement—but since I cannot see thy hypocritical and inhuman features, spare me, in mercy, the sound of a voice more distressing to mine ear than toads, than serpents,—than whatever nature has most offensive and disgusting!'

This speech was delivered with so much energy, that it was in vain that the emperor strove to interrupt its tenor; although he himself, as well as Douban and his daughter, heard a great deal more of the language of unadorned and natural passion than he had counted upon.

'Raise thy head, rash man,' he said, 'and charm thy tongue, ere it proceed in a strain which may cost thee dear. Look at me, and see if I have not reserved a reward capable of atoning for all the evil which thy folly may charge to my account.'

Hitherto the prisoner had remained with his eyes obstinately shut, regarding the imperfect recollection he had of sights which had been before his eyes the foregoing evening, as the mere suggestion of a deluded imagination, if not actually presented by some seducing spirit. But now, when his eyes fairly encountered the stately figure of the emperor, and the graceful form of his lovely daughter, painted in the tender rays of the morning dawn, he ejaculated faintly, 'I see!—I see!'—and with that ejaculation fell back on the pillow in a swoon, which instantly found employment for Douban and his restoratives.

'A most wonderful cure indeed!' exclaimed the physician; 'and the height of my wishes would be to possess such another miraculous restorative.'

'Fool!' said the emperor; 'canst thou not conceive that what has never been taken away is restored with little difficulty? He was made,' he said, lowering his voice, 'to undergo a painful operation, which led him to believe that the organs of sight were destroyed; and as light scarcely ever visited him, and when it did, only in doubtful and almost invisible glimmerings, the prevailing darkness, both physical and mental, that surrounded him, prevented him from being sensible of the existence of that precious faculty, of which he imagined himself bereft. Perhaps thou wilt ask my reason for inflicting upon him so strange a deception?—Simply, it was, that, being by it conceived incapable of reigning, his memory might pass out of the minds of the public, while, at the same time, I reserved his eyesight, that, in case occasion should call, it might be in my power once more to liberate him from his dungeon, and employ, as I now propose to do, his courage and talents in the service of the empire, to counterbalance those of other conspirators.'

'And can your Imperial Highness,' said Douban, 'hope that you have acquired this man's duty and affection by the conduct you have observed to him?'

'I cannot tell,' answered the emperor; 'that must be as futurity shall determine. All I know is, that it is no fault of mine if Ursel

does not reckon freedom and a long course of empire,—perhaps sanctioned by an alliance with our own blood,—and the continued enjoyment of the precious organs of eyesight, of which a less scrupulous man would have deprived him, against a maimed and darkened existence.'

'Since such is your Highness's opinion and resolution,' said Douban, 'it is for me to aid, and not to counteract it. Permit me, therefore, to pray your Highness and the princess to withdraw, that I may use such remedies as may confirm a mind which has been so strangely shaken, and restore to him fully the use of those eyes, of which he has been so long deprived.'

'I am content, Douban,' said the emperor; 'but take notice, Ursel is not totally at liberty until he has expressed the resolution to become actually mine. It may behove both him and thee to know that, although there is no purpose of remitting him to the dungeons of the Blacquernal Palace, yet if he, or any on his part, should aspire to head a party in these feverish times,—by the honour of a gentleman, to swear a Frankish oath, he shall find that he is not out of the reach of the battle-axes of my Varangians. I trust to thee to communicate this fact, which concerns alike him and all who have interest in his fortunes.—Come, daughter, we will withdraw, and leave the leech with his patient—Take notice, Douban, it is of importance that you acquaint me the very first moment when the patient can hold rational communication with me.'

Alexius and his accomplished daughter departed accordingly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Bears yet a precious jewel in its head.
> AS YOU LIKE IT.

FROM a terraced roof of the Blacquernal Palace, accessible by a sash-door, which opened from the bedchamber of Ursel, there was commanded one of the most lovely and striking views which the romantic neighbourhood of Constantinople afforded.

After suffering him to repose and rest his agitated faculties, it was to this place that the physician led his patient; for, when somewhat composed, he had of himself requested to be permitted to verify the truth of his restored eyesight, by looking out once more upon the majestic face of nature.

On the one hand, the scene which he beheld was a masterpiece of human art. The proud city, ornamented with stately buildings, as became the capital of the world, showed a succession of glittering spires and orders of architecture, some of them chaste and simple, like those the capitals of which were borrowed from baskets-full of acanthus; some deriving the fluting of their shafts from the props made originally to support the lances of the earlier Greeks—forms simple, yet more graceful in their simplicity than any which human ingenuity has been able since to invent. With the most splendid specimens which ancient art could afford of those strictly classical models, were associated those of a later age, where more modern taste had endeavoured at improvement, and, by mixing the various orders, had produced such as were either composite, or totally out of rule. The size of the buildings in which they were displayed, however, procured them respect; nor could even the most perfect judge of architecture avoid being struck by the grandeur of their extent and effect, although hurt by the incorrectness of the taste in which they were executed. Arches of triumph, towers, obelisks, and spires, designed for various purposes, rose up into the air in confused magnificence; while the lower view was filled by the streets of the city, the domestic habitations forming long narrow alleys, on either side of which the houses arose to various and unequal heights, but, being generally finished with terraced coverings, thick set with plants and flowers and fountains, had, when seen from an eminence, a more noble and interesting aspect than is ever afforded by the sloping and uniform roofs of streets in the capitals of the north of Europe.

It has taken us some time to give, in words, the idea which was at a single glance conveyed to Ursel, and affected him at first with great pain. His eyeballs had been long strangers to that daily exercise, which teaches us the habit of correcting the scenes as they appear to our sight, by the knowledge which we derive from the use of our other senses. His idea of distance was so confused, that it seemed as if all the spires, turrets, and minarets which he beheld were crowded forward upon his eyeballs, and almost touching them. With a shriek of horror, Ursel turned himself to the farther side, and cast his eyes upon a different scene. Here also he saw towers, steeples, and turrets, but they were those of the churches and public buildings beneath his feet, reflected from the dazzling piece of water which formed the harbour of Constantinople, and which, from the abundance of wealth which it transported to the city, was well termed the Golden Horn. In one place, this superb basin was lined with quays, where stately dromonds and argosies unloaded their wealth, while, by the shore of the haven, galleys, feluccas, and other small craft idly flapped the singularly shaped and snow-white pinions which served them for sails. In other places the Golden Horn lay shrouded in a verdant mantle of trees, where the private gardens of wealthy or distinguished individuals, or places of public recreation, shot down upon and were bounded by the glassy waters.

On the Bosphorus, which might be seen in the distance, the little fleet of Tancred was lying in the same station they had gained during the night, which was fitted to command the opposite landing; this their general had preferred to a midnight descent upon Constantinople, not knowing whether, so coming, they might be received as friends or enemies. This delay, however, had given the Greeks an opportunity, either by the orders of Alexius, or the equally powerful mandates of some of the conspirators, to tow six ships of war, full of armed men, and provided with the maritime offensive

weapons peculiar to the Greeks at that period, which they had moored so as exactly to cover the place where the troops of Tancred must necessarily land.

This preparation gave some surprise to the valiant Tancred, who did not know that such vessels had arrived in the harbour from Lemnos* on the preceding night. The undaunted courage of that prince was, however, in no respect to be shaken by the degree of unexpected danger with which his adventure now appeared to be attended.

This splendid view, from the description of which we have in some degree digressed, was seen by the physician and Ursel from a terrace, the loftiest almost on the Palace of the Blacquernal. To the cityward, it was bounded by a solid wall, of considerable height, giving a resting-place for the roof of a lower building, which, sloping outward, broke to the view the vast height, unobscured otherwise save by a high and massy balustrade, composed of bronze, which, to the havenward, sunk sheer down upon an uninterrupted precipice.

No sooner, therefore, had Ursel turned his eyes that way, than, though placed far from the brink of the terrace, he exclaimed, with a shriek, 'Save me—save me! if you are not indeed the destined executors of the Emperor's will.'

'We are indeed such,' said Douban, 'to save, and if possible to bring you to complete recovery; but by no means to do you injury, or to suffer it to be offered by others.'

'Guard me then from myself,' said Ursel, 'and save me from the reeling and insane desire which I feel to plunge myself into the abyss, to the edge of which you have guided me.'

'Such a giddy and dangerous temptation is,' said the physician, 'common to those who have not for a long time looked down from precipitous heights, and are suddenly brought to them. Nature, however bounteous, hath not provided for the cessation of our faculties for years, and for their sudden resumption in full strength and vigour. An interval, longer or shorter, must needs intervene. Can you not believe this terrace a safe station while you have my support and that of this faithful slave?'

'Certainly,' said Ursel; 'but permit me to turn my face towards this stone wall, for I cannot bear to look at the flimsy piece of wire, which is the only battlement of defence that interposes betwixt me and the precipice.' He spoke of the bronze balustrade, six feet high, and massive in proportion. Thus saying, and holding fast by the physician's arm, Ursel, though himself a younger and more able man, trembled, and moved his feet as slowly as if made of lead, until he reached the sashed door, where stood a kind of balcony-seat, in which he placed himself.—'Here,' he said, 'will I remain.'

'And here,' said Douban, 'will I make the communication of the Emperor, which it is necessary you should be prepared to reply to. It places you, you will observe, at your own disposal for liberty or captivity, but it conditions for your resigning that sweet but sinful morsel termed revenge, which, I must not conceal from you, chance appears willing to put into your hand. You know the degree of rivalry in which you have been held by the Emperor, and you know the measure of evil you have sustained at his hand. The question is, Can you forgive what has taken place?'

'Let me wrap my head round with my mantle,' said Ursel, 'to dispel this dizziness which still oppresses my poor brain, and as soon as the power of recollection is granted me, you shall know my sentiments.'

He sunk upon the seat, muffled in the way which he described, and, after a few minutes' reflection, with a trepidation which argued the patient still to be under the nervous feeling of extreme horror mixed with terror, he addressed Douban thus:—'The operation of wrong and cruelty, in the moment when they are first inflicted, excites, of course, the utmost resentment of the sufferer; nor is there, perhaps, a passion which lives so long in his bosom as the natural desire of revenge. If, then, during the first month, when I lay stretched upon my bed of want and misery, you had offered me an opportunity of revenge upon my cruel oppressor, the remnant of miserable life which remained to me should have been willingly bestowed to purchase it. But a suffering of weeks, or even months, must not be compared in effect with that of years. For a short space of endurance, the body, as well as the mind, retains that vigorous habit which holds the prisoner still connected with life, and teaches him to thrill at the long-forgotten chain of hopes, of wishes, of disappointments, and mortifications, which affected his former existence. But the wounds become callous as they harden, and other and better feelings occupy their place, while they gradually die away in forgetfulness. The enjoyments, the amusements of this world, occupy no part of his time upon whom the gates of despair have once closed. I tell thee, my kind physician, that for a season, in an insane attempt to effect my liberty, I cut through a large portion of the living rock. But Heaven cured me of so foolish an idea; and if I did not actually come to love Alexius Comnenus—for how could that have been a possible effect in any rational state of my intellects?—yet, as I became convinced of my own crimes, sins, and follies, the more and more I was also persuaded that Alexius was but the agent through whom Heaven exercised a dearly-purchased right of punishing me for my manifold offences and transgressions; and that it was not, therefore, upon the Emperor that my resentment ought to visit itself. And I can now say to thee, that, so far as a man who has undergone so dreadful a change can be supposed to know his own mind, I feel no desire either to rival Alexius in a race for empire, or to avail myself of any of the various proffers which he proposes to me as the price of withdrawing my claim. Let him keep unpurchased the crown, for which he has paid, in my opinion, a price which it is not worth.'

'This is extraordinary stoicism, noble Ursel,' answered the physician Douban. 'Am I then to understand that you reject the fair offers

* [An island in the Ægean Sea.]

of Alexius, and desire, instead of all which he is willing—nay, anxious to bestow—to be committed safely back to thy old blinded dungeon in the Blacquernal, that you may continue at ease those pietistic meditations which have already conducted thee to so extravagant a conclusion?'

'Physician,' said Ursel, while a shuddering fit that affected his whole body testified his alarm at the alternative proposed—'one would imagine thine own profession might have taught thee that no mere mortal man, unless predestined to be a glorified saint, could ever prefer darkness to the light of day; blindness itself to the enjoyment of the power of sight; the pangs of starving to competent sustenance; or the damps of a dungeon to the free air of God's creation. No!—it may be virtue to do so, but to such a pitch mine does not soar. All I require of the Emperor for standing by him with all the power my name can give him at this crisis is, that he will provide for my reception as a monk in some of those pleasant and well-endowed seminaries of piety, to which his devotion, or his fears, have given rise. Let me not be again the object of his suspicion, the operation of which is more dreadful than that of being the object of his hate. Forgotten by power, as I have myself lost the remembrance of those that wielded it, let me find my way to the grave unnoticed, unconstrained, at liberty, in possession of my dim and disused organs of sight, and, above all, at peace.'

'If such be thy serious and earnest wish, noble Ursel,' said the physician, 'I myself have no hesitation to warrant to thee the full accomplishment of thy religious and moderate desires. But bethink thee, thou art once more an inhabitant of the court, in which thou mayst obtain what thou wilt to-day; while to-morrow, shouldst thou regret thy indifference, it may be thy utmost entreaty will not suffice to gain for thee the slightest extension of thy present conditions.'

'Be it so,' said Ursel; 'I will then stipulate for another condition, which indeed has only reference to this day. I will solicit his Imperial Majesty, with all humility, to spare me the pain of a personal treaty between himself and me, and that he will be satisfied with the solemn assurance that I am most willing to do in his favour all that he is desirous of dictating; while, on the other hand, I desire only the execution of those moderate conditions of my future aliment which I have already told thee at length.'

'But wherefore,' said Douban, 'shouldst thou be afraid of announcing to the Emperor thy disposition to an agreement, which cannot be esteemed otherwise than extremely moderate on thy part? Indeed, I fear the Emperor will insist on a brief personal conference.'

'I am not ashamed,' said Ursel, 'to confess the truth. It is true that I have, or think I have, renounced what the Scripture calls the pride of life; but the old Adam still lives within us, and maintains against the better part of our nature an inextinguishable quarrel, easy to be aroused from its slumber, but as difficult to be again couched in peace. While last night I but half understood that mine enemy was in my presence, and while my faculties performed but half their duty in recalling his deceitful and hated accents, did not my heart throb in my bosom with all the agitation of a taken bird; and shall I again have to enter into a personal treaty with the man who, be his general conduct what it may, has been the constant and unprovoked cause of my unequalled misery? Douban, no!—to listen to his voice again, were to hear an alarm sounded to every violent and vindictive passion of my heart; and though, may Heaven so help me, as my intentions towards him are upright, yet it is impossible for me to listen to his professions with a chance of safety either to him or to myself.'

'If you be so minded,' replied Douban, 'I shall only repeat to him your stipulation, and you must swear to him that you will strictly observe it. Without this being done, it must be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to settle the league of which both are desirous.'

'Amen!' said Ursel; 'and as I am pure in my purpose, and resolved to keep it to the uttermost, so may Heaven guard me from the influence of precipitate revenge, ancient grudge, or new quarrel!'

An authoritative knock at the door of the sleeping-chamber was now heard, and Ursel, relieved by more powerful feelings from the giddiness of which he had complained, walked firmly into the bedroom, and, seating himself, waited with averted eyes the entrance of the person who demanded admittance, and who proved to be no other than Alexius Comnenus.

The emperor appeared at the door in a warlike dress, suited for the decoration of a prince who was to witness a combat in the lists fought out before him.

'Sage Douban,' he said, 'has our esteemed prisoner Ursel made his choice between our peace and enmity?'

'He hath, my lord,' replied the physician, 'embraced the lot of that happy portion of mankind, whose hearts and lives are devoted to the service of your Majesty's government.'

'He will then this day,' continued the emperor, 'render me the office of putting down all those who may pretend to abet insurrection in his name, and under pretext of his wrongs?'

'He will, my lord,' replied the physician, 'act to the fullest the part which you require.'

'And in what way,' said the emperor, adopting his most gracious tone of voice, 'would our faithful Ursel desire that services like these, rendered in the hour of extreme need, should be acknowledged by the Emperor?'

'Simply,' answered Douban, 'by saying nothing upon the subject. He desires only that all jealousies between you and him may be henceforth forgotten, and that he may be admitted into one of your Highness's monastic institutions, with leave to dedicate the rest of his life to the worship of Heaven and its saints.'

'Hath he persuaded thee of this, Douban?' said the emperor, in a low and altered voice. 'By Heaven! when I consider from what prison he was brought, and in what guise he inhabited it, I cannot believe in this gall-less disposition.

He must at least speak to me himself, ere I can believe, in some degree, the transformation of the fiery Ursel into a being so little capable of feeling the ordinary impulses of mankind.'

'Hear me, Alexius Comnenus,' said the prisoner; 'and so may thine own prayers to Heaven find access and acceptation, as thou believest the words which I speak to thee in simplicity of heart. If thine empire of Greece were made of coined gold, it would hold out no bait for my acceptance; nor, I thank Heaven, have even the injuries I have experienced at thy hand, cruel and extensive as they have been, impressed upon me the slightest desire of requiting treachery with treachery. Think of me as thou wilt, so thou seek'st not again to exchange words with me; and believe me, that when thou hast put me under the most rigid of thy ecclesiastical foundations, the discipline, the fare, and the vigils will be far superior to the existence falling to the share of those whom the king delights to honour, and who therefore must afford the king their society whenever they are summoned to do so.'

'It is hardly for me,' said the physician, 'to interpose in so high a matter; yet, as trusted both by the noble Ursel and by his Highness the Emperor, I have made a brief abstract of these short conditions to be kept by the high parties towards each other, *sub crimine falsi*.'

The emperor protracted the intercourse with Ursel until he more fully explained to him the occasion which he should have that very day for his services. When they parted, Alexius, with a great show of affection, embraced his late prisoner, while it required all the self-command and stoicism of Ursel to avoid expressing in plain terms the extent to which he abhorred the person who thus caressed him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

O Conspiracy!
Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O then, by day,
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, Conspiracy;
Hide it in smiles and affability:
For if thou path thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE important morning at last arrived, on which, by the Imperial proclamation, the combat between the Cæsar and Robert Count of Paris was appointed to take place. This was a circumstance in a great measure foreign to the Grecian manners, and to which, therefore, the people annexed different ideas from those which were associated with the same solemn decision of God, as the Latins called it, by the Western nations. The consequence was a vague, but excessive agitation among the people, who connected the extraordinary strife which they were to witness, with the various causes which had been whispered abroad as likely to give occasion to some general insurrection of a great and terrible nature.

By the Imperial order, regular lists had been prepared for the combat, with opposite gates, or entrances, as was usual, for the admittance of the two champions; and it was understood that the appeal was to be made to the Divinity by each, according to the forms prescribed by the Church of which the combatants were respectively members. The situation of these lists was on the side of the shore adjoining on the west to the continent. At no great distance, the walls of the city were seen, of various architecture, composed of lime and of stone, and furnished with no less than four-and-twenty gates, or posterns, five of which regarded the land and nineteen the water. All this formed a beautiful prospect, much of which is still visible. The town itself is about nineteen miles in circumference; and as it is on all sides surrounded with lofty cypresses, its general appearance is that of a city arising out of a stately wood of these magnificent trees, partly shrouding the pinnacles, obelisks, and minarets, which then marked the site of many noble Christian temples; but now, generally speaking, intimate the position of as many Mahomedan mosques.

These lists, for the convenience of spectators, were surrounded on all sides by long rows of seats, sloping downwards. In the middle of these seats, and exactly opposite the centre of the lists, was a high throne, erected for the emperor himself; and which was separated from the more vulgar galleries by a circuit of wooden barricades, which, an experienced eye could perceive, might, in case of need, be made serviceable for purposes of defence.

The lists were sixty yards in length, by perhaps about forty in breadth, and these afforded ample space for the exercise of the combat, both on horseback and on foot. Numerous bands of the Greek citizens began, with the very break of day, to issue from the gates and posterns of the city, to examine and wonder at the construction of the lists, pass their criticisms upon the purposes of the peculiar parts of the fabric, and occupy places, to secure them for the spectacle. Shortly after arrived a large band of those soldiers who were called the Roman Immortals. These entered without ceremony, and placed themselves on either hand of the wooden barricade which fenced the emperor's seat. Some of them took even a greater liberty; for, affecting to be pressed against the boundary, there were individuals who approached the partition itself, and seemed to meditate climbing over it, and placing themselves on the same side with the emperor. Some old domestic slaves of the household now showed themselves, as if for the purpose of preserving this sacred circle for Alexius and his court; and, in proportion as the Immortals began to show themselves encroaching and turbulent, the strength of the defenders of the prohibited precincts seemed gradually to increase.

There was, though scarcely to be observed, besides the grand access to the Imperial seat from without, another opening also from the outside, secured by a very strong door, by which different persons received admission beneath the

seats destined for the Imperial party. These persons, by their length of limb, breadth of shoulders, by the fur of their cloaks, and especially by the redoubted battle-axes which all of them bore, appeared to be Varangians; but although neither dressed in their usual habit of pomp, nor in their more effectual garb of war, still, when narrowly examined, they might be seen to possess their usual offensive weapons. These men, entering in separate and straggling parties, might be observed to join the slaves of the interior of the palace in opposing the intrusion of the Immortals upon the seat of the emperor and the benches around. Two or three Immortals, who had actually made good their frolic, and climbed over the division, were flung back again, very unceremoniously, by the barbaric strength and sinewy arms of the Varangians.

The people around, and in the adjacent galleries, most of whom had the air of citizens in their holiday dresses, commented a good deal on these proceedings, and were inclined strongly to make part with the Immortals. 'It was a shame to the Emperor,' they said, 'to encourage these British barbarians to interpose themselves by violence between his person and the Immortal cohorts of the city, who were in some sort his own children.'

Stephanos, the gymnastic, whose bulky strength and stature rendered him conspicuous amid this party, said, without hesitation, 'If there are two people here who will join in saying that the Immortals are unjustly deprived of their right of guarding the Emperor's person, here is the hand that shall place them beside the Imperial chair.'

'Not so,' quoth a centurion of the Immortals, whom we have already introduced to our readers by the name of Harpax; 'not so, Stephanos: that happy time may arrive, but it is not yet come, my gem of the circus. Thou knowest that on this occasion it is one of these Counts, or Western Franks, who undertakes the combat; and the Varangians, who call these people their enemies, have some reason to claim a precedency in guarding the lists, which it might not at this moment be convenient to dispute with them. Why, man, if thou wert half so witty as thou art long, thou wouldst be sensible that it were bad woodmanship to raise the hollo upon the game, ere it had been driven within compass of the nets.'

While the athlete rolled his huge grey eyes as if to conjure out the sense of this intimation, his little friend Lysimachus, the artist, putting himself to pain to stand upon his tiptoe, and look intelligent, said, approaching as near as he could to Harpax's ear, 'Thou mayest trust me, gallant centurion, that this man of mould and muscle shall neither start like a babbling hound on a false scent, nor become mute and inert, when the general signal is given. But tell me,' said he, speaking very low, and for that purpose mounting a bench, which brought him on a level with the centurion's ear, 'would it not have been better that a strong guard of the valiant Immortals had been placed in this wooden citadel, to insure the object of the day?'

'Without question,' said the centurion, 'it was so meant; but these strolling Varangians have altered their station of their own authority.'

'Were it not well,' said Lysimachus, 'that you, who are greatly more numerous than the barbarians, should begin a fray before more of these strangers arrive.'

'Content ye, friend,' said the centurion coldly; 'we know our time. An attack commenced too early would be worse than thrown away, nor would an opportunity occur of executing our project in the fitting time, if an alarm were prematurely given at this moment.'

So saying, he shuffled off among his fellow-soldiers, so as to avoid suspicious intercourse with such persons as were only concerned with the civic portion of the conspirators.

As the morning advanced, and the sun took a higher station in the horizon, the various persons whom curiosity, or some more decided motive, brought to see the proposed combat, were seen streaming from different parts of the town, and rushing to occupy such accommodation as the circuit round the lists afforded them. In their road to the place where preparation for combat was made, they had to ascend a sort of cape, which, in the form of a small hill, projected into the Hellespont, and the butt of which, connecting it with the shore, afforded a considerable ascent, and of course a more commanding view of the strait between Europe and Asia, than either the immediate vicinity of the city, or the still lower ground upon which the lists were erected. In passing this height, the earlier visitants of the lists made little or no halt; but after a time, when it became obvious that those who had hurried forward to the place of combat were lingering there without any object or occupation, they that followed them in the same route, with natural curiosity, paid a tribute to the landscape, bestowing some attention on its beauty, and paused to see what auguries could be collected from the water, which were likely to have any concern in indicating the fate of the events that were to take place. Some straggling seamen were the first who remarked that a squadron of the Greek small craft (being that of Tancred) were in the act of making their way from Asia, and threatening a descent upon Constantinople.

'It is strange,' said a person, by rank the captain of a galley, 'that these small vessels, which were ordered to return to Constantinople as soon as they disembarked the Latins, should have remained so long at Scutari, and should not be rowing back to the Imperial city until this time on the second day after their departure from thence.'

'I pray to Heaven,' said another of the same profession, 'that these seamen may come alone. It seems to me as if their ensign-staffs, bowsprits, and topmasts were decorated with the same ensigns, or nearly the same, with those which the Latins displayed upon them, when, by the Emperor's order, they were transported towards Palestine; so methinks the voyage back again resembles that of a fleet of merchant vessels, who have been prevented from discharging their cargo at the place of their destination.'

'There is little good,' said one of the politicians whom we formerly noticed, 'in dealing with such

commodities, whether they are imported or exported. Yon ample banner which streams over the foremost galley, intimates the presence of a chieftain of no small rank among the Counts, whether it be for valour or for nobility.'

The seafaring leader added, with the voice of one who hints alarming tidings, 'They seem to have got to a point in the straits as high as will enable them to run down with the tide, and clear the cape which we stand on, although with what purpose they aim to land so close beneath the walls of the city, he is a wiser man than I who pretends to determine.'

'Assuredly,' returned his comrade, 'the intention is not a kind one. The wealth of the city has temptations to a poor people, who only value the iron which they possess as affording them the means of procuring the gold which they covet.'

'Ay, brother,' answered Demetrius the politician; 'but see you not, lying at anchor within this bay which is formed by the cape, and at the very point where these heretics are likely to be carried by the tide, six strong vessels, having the power of sending forth, not merely showers of darts and arrows, but of Grecian fire, as it is called, from their hollow decks? If these Frank gentry continue directing their course upon the Imperial city, being, as they are,

——— sed et illa propago
Contemptrix Superûm, sævæque avidissima cædis,
Et violenta fuit;*

we shall speedily see a combat better worth witnessing than that announced by the great trumpet of the Varangians. If you love me, let us sit down here for a moment, and see how this matter is to end.'

'An excellent motion, my ingenious friend,' said Lascaris, which was the name of the other citizen; 'but bethink you, shall we not be in danger from the missiles with which the audacious Latins will not fail to return the Greek fire, if, according to your conjecture, it shall be poured upon them by the Imperial squadron?'

'That is not ill argued, my friend,' said Demetrius; 'but know that you have to do with a man who has been in such extremities before now; and if such a discharge should open from the sea, I would propose to you to step back some fifty yards inland, and thus to interpose the very crest of the cape between us and the discharge of missiles; a mere child might thus learn to face them without any alarm.'

'You are a wise man, neighbour,' said Lascaris, 'and possess such a mixture of valour and knowledge as becomes a man whom a friend might be supposed safely to risk his life with. There be those, for instance, who cannot show you the slightest glimpse of what is going on, without bringing you within peril of your life; whereas you, my worthy friend Demetrius, between your accurate knowledge of military affairs, and your regard for your friend, are sure to show him all that is to be seen without the least risk to a person who is naturally unwilling to think of exposing himself to injury. But, Holy Virgin! what is the meaning of that red flag which the Greek Admiral has this instant hoisted?'

'Why, you see, neighbour,' answered Demetrius, 'yonder Western heretic continues to advance without minding the various signs which our Admiral has made to him to desist, and now he hoists the bloody colours, as if a man should clench his fist and say, "If you persevere in your uncivil intention, I will do so and so."'

'By Saint Sophia,' said Lascaris, 'and that is giving him fair warning. But what is it the Imperial Admiral is about to do?'

'Run! run! friend Lascaris,' said Demetrius, 'or you will see more of that than perchance you have any curiosity for.'

Accordingly, to add the strength of example to precept, Demetrius himself girt up his loins, and retreated with the most edifying speed to the opposite side of the ridge, accompanied by the greater part of the crowd, who had tarried there to witness the contest which the newsmonger promised, and were determined to take his word for their own safety. The sound and sight which had alarmed Demetrius was the discharge of a large portion of Greek fire, which perhaps may be best compared to one of those immense Congreve rockets of the present day, which takes on its shoulders a small grapnel or anchor, and proceeds groaning through the air like a fiend overburdened by the mandate of some inexorable magician, and of which the operation was so terrifying, that the crews of the vessels attacked by this strange weapon frequently forsook every means of defence, and ran themselves ashore. One of the principal ingredients of this dreadful fire was supposed to be naphtha, or the bitumen which is collected on the banks of the Dead Sea, and which, when in a state of ignition, could only be extinguished by a very singular mixture, and which it was not likely to come in contact with. It produced a thick smoke and loud explosion, and was capable, says Gibbon, of communicating its flames with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress.† In sieges, it was poured from the ramparts, or launched like our bombs, in red-hot balls of stone or iron, or it was darted in flax twisted round arrows and in javelins. It was considered as a state secret of the greatest importance; and for well-nigh four centuries it was unknown to the Mahomedans. But at length the composition was discovered by the Saracens, and used by them for repelling the Crusaders and overpowering the Greeks, upon whose side it had at one time been the most formidable implement of defence. Some exaggeration we must allow for a barbarous period; but there seems no doubt that the general description of the Crusader Joinville should be admitted as correct:—'It came flying through the air,' says that good knight, 'like a winged dragon, about the thickness of a hogshead, with the report of thunder and the speed of lightning,

* Ovid. Met. [Lib. i. 160.]
['That godless generation, greedy of slaughter and full of violence.']

† For a full account of the Greek fire, see Gibbon, chapter liii.

and the darkness of the night was dispelled by this horrible illumination.'

Not only the bold Demetrius and his pupil Lascaris, but all the crowd whom they influenced, fled manfully when the commodore of the Greeks fired the first discharge; and as the other vessels in the squadron followed his example, the heavens were filled with the unusual and outrageous noise, while the smoke was so thick as to darken the very air. As the fugitives passed the crest of the hill, they saw the seaman, whom we formerly mentioned as a spectator, snugly reclining under cover of a dry ditch, where he managed so as to secure himself as far as possible from any accident. He could not, however, omit breaking his jest on the politicians.

'What ho!' he cried, 'my good friends,' without raising himself above the counterscarp of his ditch, 'will you not remain upon your station long enough to finish that hopeful lecture upon battle by sea and land, which you had so happy an opportunity of commencing? Believe me, the noise is more alarming than hurtful; the fire is all pointed in a direction opposite to yours, and if one of those dragons which you see does happen to fly landward instead of seaward, it is but the mistake of some cabin-boy, who has used his linstock with more willingness than ability.'

Demetrius and Lascaris just heard enough of the naval hero's harangue, to acquaint them with the new danger with which they might be assailed by the possible misdirection of the weapons, and, rushing down towards the lists at the head of a crowd half-desperate with fear, they hastily propagated the appalling news that the Latins were coming back from Asia with the purpose of landing in arms, pillaging, and burning the city.

The uproar, in the meantime, of this unexpected occurrence was such as altogether to vindicate, in public opinion, the reported cause, however exaggerated. The thunder of the Greek fire came successively, one hard upon the other, and each, in its turn, spread a blot of black smoke upon the face of the landscape, which, thickened by so many successive clouds, seemed at last, like that raised by a sustained fire of modern artillery, to overshadow the whole horizon.

The small squadron of Tancred were completely hid from view in the surging volumes of darkness, which the breath of the weapons of the enemy had spread around him; and it seemed by a red light, which began to show itself among the thickest of the veil of darkness, that one of the flotilla at least had caught fire. Yet the Latins resisted, with an obstinacy worthy of their own courage, and the fame of their celebrated leader. Some advantage they had, on account of their small size, and their lowness in the water, as well as the clouded state of the atmosphere, which rendered them difficult marks for the fire of the Greeks.

To increase these advantages, Tancred, as well by boats as by the kind of rude signals made use of at the period, dispersed orders to his fleet, that each bark, disregarding the fate of the others, should press forward individually, and that the men from each should be put on shore wheresoever and howsoever they could effect that manœuvre. Tancred himself set a noble example; he was on board a stout vessel, fenced in some degree against the effect of the Greek fire by being in a great measure covered with raw hides, which hides had also been recently steeped in water. This vessel contained upwards of a hundred valiant warriors, several of them of knightly order, who had all night toiled at the humble labours of the oar, and now in the morning applied their chivalrous hands to the arblast and to the bow, which were in general accounted the weapons of persons of a lower rank. Thus armed, and thus manned, Prince Tancred bestowed upon his bark the full velocity which wind, and tide, and oar could enable her to obtain, and, placing her in the situation to profit by them as much as his maritime skill could direct, he drove with the speed of lightning among the vessels of Lemnos, plying, on either side, bows, cross-bows, javelins, and military missiles of every kind, with the greater advantage that the Greeks, trusting to their artificial fire, had omitted arming themselves with other weapons; so that when the valiant Crusader bore down on them with so much fury, repaying the terrors of their fire with a storm of bolts and arrows no less formidable, they began to feel that their own advantage was much less than they had supposed, and that, like most other dangers, the maritime fire of the Greeks, when undauntedly confronted, lost at least one-half of its terrors. The Grecian sailors, too, when they observed the vessels approach so near, filled with the steel-clad Latins, began to shrink from a contest to be maintained hand to hand with so terrible an enemy.

By degrees smoke began to issue from the sides of the great Grecian argosy, and the voice of Tancred announced to his soldiers that the Grecian Admiral's vessel had taken fire, owing to negligence in the management of the means of destruction she possessed, and that all they had now to do was to maintain such a distance as to avoid sharing her fate. Sparkles and flashes of flame were next seen leaping from place to place on board of the great hulk, as if the element had had the sense and purpose of spreading wider the consternation, and disabling the few who still paid attention to the commands of their Admiral, and endeavoured to extinguish the fire. The consciousness of the combustible nature of the freight began to add despair to terror; from the boltsprit, the rigging, the yards, the sides, and every part of the vessel, the unfortunate crew were seen dropping themselves, to exchange for the most part a watery death for one by the more dreadful agency of fire. The crew of Tancred's bark, ceasing, by that generous prince's commands, to offer any additional annoyance to an enemy who was at once threatened by the perils of the ocean and of conflagration, ran their vessel ashore in a smooth part of the bay, and, jumping into the shallow sea, made the land without difficulty; many of their steeds being, by the exertions of the owners and the docility of the animals, brought ashore at the same time with their masters. Their commander lost no time in forming their serried ranks into a phalanx of

lancers, few indeed at first, but perpetually increasing as ship after ship of the little flotilla ran ashore, or, having more deliberately moored their barks, landed their men, and joined their companions.

The cloud which had been raised by the conflict was now driven to leeward before the wind, and the strait exhibited only the relics of the combat. Here tossed upon the billows the scattered and broken remains of one or two of the Latin vessels which had been burnt at the commencement of the combat, though their crews, by the exertions of their comrades, had in general been saved. Lower down were seen the remaining five vessels of the Lemnos squadron, holding a disorderly and difficult retreat, with the purpose of gaining the harbour of Constantinople. In the place so late the scene of combat lay moored the hulk of the Grecian Admiral, burnt to the water's edge, and still sending forth a black smoke from its scathed beams and planks. The flotilla of Tancred, busied in discharging its troops, lay irregularly scattered along the bay, the men making ashore as they could, and taking their course to join the standard of their leader. Various black substances floated on the surface of the water, nearer, or more distant to the shore; some proved to be the wreck of the vessels which had been destroyed, and others, more ominous still, the lifeless bodies of mariners who had fallen in the conflict.

The standard had been borne ashore by the prince's favourite page, Ernest of Apulia, so soon as the keel of Tancred's galley had grazed upon the sand. It was then pitched on the top of that elevated cape between Constantinople and the lists, where Lascaris, Demetrius, and other gossips had held their station at the commencement of the engagement, but from which all had fled, between the mingled dread of the Greek fire and the missiles of the Latin Crusaders.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHEATHED in complete armour, and supporting with his right hand the standard of his fathers, Tancred remained with his handful of warriors, like so many statues of steel, expecting some sort of attack from the Grecian party which had occupied the lists, or from the numbers whom the city gates began now to pour forth—soldiers some of them, and others citizens, many of whom were arrayed as if for conflict. These persons, alarmed by the various accounts which were given of the combatants, and the progress of the fight, rushed towards the standard of Prince Tancred, with the intention of beating it to the earth, and dispersing the guards who owed it homage and defence. But if the reader shall have happened to have ridden at any time through a pastoral country, with a dog of a noble race following him, he must have remarked, in the deference ultimately paid to the high-bred animal by the shepherd's cur as he crosses the lonely glen, of which the latter conceives himself the lord and guardian, something very similar to the demeanour of the incensed Greeks, when they approached near to the little band of Franks. At the first symptom of the intrusion of a stranger, the dog of the shepherd starts from his slumbers, and rushes towards the noble intruder with a clamorous declaration of war; but when the diminution of distance between them shows to the aggressor the size and strength of his opponent, he becomes like a cruiser, who, in a chase, has, to his surprise and alarm, found two tier of guns opposed to him instead of one. He haltss, uspends his clamorous yelping, and, in fine, ingloriously retreats to his master, with all the dishonourable marks of positively declining the combat.

It was in this manner that the troops of the noisy Greeks, with much hallooing and many a boastful shout, hastened both from the town and from the lists, with the apparent intention of sweeping from the field the few companions of Tancred. As they advanced, however, within the power of remarking the calm and regular order of those men who had landed, and arranged themselves under this noble chieftain's banner, their minds were altogether changed as to the resolution of instant combat; their advance became an uncertain and staggering gait, their heads were more frequently turned back to the point from which they came, than towards the enemy; and their desire to provoke an instant scuffle vanished totally, when there did not appear the least symptom that their opponents cared about the matter.

It added to the extreme confidence with which the Latins kept their ground, that they were receiving frequent, though small reinforcements from their comrades, who were landing by detachments all along the beach; and that, in the course of a short hour, their amount had been raised, on horseback and foot, to a number, allowing for a few casualties, not much less than that which set sail from Scutari.

Another reason why the Latins remained unassailed was certainly the indisposition of the two principal armed parties on shore to enter into a quarrel with them. The Guards of every kind, who were faithful to the emperor, and more especially the Varangians, had their orders to remain firm at their posts, some in the lists, and others at various places of rendezvous in Constantinople, where their presence was necessary to prevent the effects of the sudden insurrection which Alexius knew to be meditated against him. These, therefore, made no hostile demonstration towards the band of Latins, nor was it the purpose of the emperor they should do so.

On the other hand, the greater part of the Immortal Guards, and those citizens who were prepared to play a part in the conspiracy, had been impressed by the agents of the deceased Agelastes with the opinion that this band of Latins, commanded by Tancred, the relative of Bohemond, had been despatched by the latter to their assistance. These men, therefore, stood still, and made no attempt to guide or direct the popular efforts of such as inclined to attack these unexpected visitors; in which purpose, therefore, no very great party were united, while the majority were willing enough to find an apology for remaining quiet.

In the meantime the emperor, from his Palace of Blacquernal, observed what passed upon the straits, and beheld his navy from Lemnos totally foiled in their attempt, by means of the Greek fire, to check the intended passage of Tancred and his men. He had no sooner seen the leading ship of the squadron begin to beacon the darkness with its own fire, than the emperor formed a secret resolution to disown the unfortunate admiral, and make peace with the Latins, if that should be absolutely necessary, by sending them his head. He had hardly, therefore, seen the flames burst forth, and the rest of the vessels retreat from their moorings, than in his own mind the doom of the unfortunate Phraortes, for such was the name of the admiral, was signed and sealed.

Achilles Tatius at the same instant, determining to keep a close eye upon the emperor at this important crisis, came precipitately into the palace, with an appearance of great alarm.

'My lord!—my Imperial lord! I am unhappy to be the messenger of such unlucky news; but the Latins have in great numbers succeeded in crossing the strait from Scutari. The Lemnos squadron endeavoured to stop them, as was last night determined upon in the Imperial Council of War. By a heavy discharge of the Greek fire, one or two of the Crusaders' vessels were consumed, but by far the greater number of them pushed on their course, burned the leading ship of the unfortunate Phraortes, and it is strongly reported he has himself perished, with almost all his men. The rest have cut their cables, and abandoned the defence of the passage of the Hellespont.'

'And you, Achilles Tatius,' said the emperor, 'with what purpose is it that you now bring me this melancholy news, at a period so late, when I cannot amend the consequences?'

'Under favour, most gracious Emperor,' replied the conspirator, not without colouring and stammering, 'such was not my intention—I had hoped to submit a plan, by which I might easily have prepared the way for correcting this little error.'

'Well, your plan, sir?' said the emperor dryly.

'With your sacred Majesty's leave,' said the Acolyte, 'I would myself have undertaken instantly to lead against this Tancred and his Italians the battle-axes of the faithful Varangian Guard, who will make no more account of the small number of Franks who have come ashore, than the farmer holds of the hordes of rats and mice, and such-like mischievous vermin, who have harboured in his granaries.'

'And what mean you,' said the emperor, 'that I am to do, while my Anglo-Saxons fight for my sake?'.

'Your Majesty,' replied Achilles, not exactly satisfied with the dry and caustic manner in which the emperor addressed him, 'may put yourself at the head of the Immortal cohorts of Constantinople; and I am your security, that you may either perfect the victory over the Latins, or at least redeem the most distant chance of a defeat, by advancing at the head of this choice body of domestic troops, should the day appear doubtful.'

'You yourself, Achilles Tatius,' returned the emperor, 'have repeatedly assured us that these Immortals retain a perverse attachment to our rebel Ursel. How is it, then, you would have us entrust our defence to these bands, when we have engaged our valiant Varangians in the proposed conflict with the flower of the Western army?—Did you think of this risk, Sir Follower?'

Achilles Tatius, much alarmed at an intimation indicative of his purpose being known, answered, 'That in his haste he had been more anxious to recommend the plan which should expose his own person to the greater danger, than that perhaps which was most attended with personal safety to his Imperial master.'

'I thank you for so doing,' said the emperor; 'you have anticipated my wishes, though it is not in my power at present to follow the advice you have given me. I would have been well contented, undoubtedly, had these Latins measured their way over the strait again, as suggested by last night's Council; but since they have arrived, and stand embattled on our shores, it is better that we pay them with money and with spoil, than with the lives of our gallant subjects. We cannot, after all, believe that they come with any serious intention of doing us injury; it is but the insane desire of witnessing feats of battle and single combat, which is to them the breath of their nostrils, that can have impelled them to this partial countermarch. I impose upon you, Achilles Tatius, combining the Protospathaire in the same commission with you, the duty of riding up to yonder standard, and learning of their chief, called the Prince Tancred, if he is there in person, the purpose of his return, and the cause of his entering into debate with Phraortes and the Lemnos squadron. If they send us any reasonable excuse, we shall not be averse to receive it at their hands; for we have not made so many sacrifices for the preservation of peace, to break forth into war, if, after all, so great an evil can be avoided. Thou wilt receive, therefore, with a candid and complacent mind, such apologies as they may incline to bring forward; and be assured that the sight of this puppet-show of a single combat will be enough of itself to banish every other consideration from the reflection of these giddy Crusaders.'

A knock was at this moment heard at the door of the emperor's apartment; and upon the word being given to enter, the Protospathaire made his appearance. He was arrayed in a splendid suit of ancient Roman fashioned armour. The want of a visor left his countenance entirely visible; which, pale and anxious as it was, did not well become the martial crest and dancing plume with which it was decorated. He received the commission already mentioned with the less alacrity, because the Acolyte was added to him as his colleague; for, as the reader may have observed, these two officers were of separate factions in the army, and on indifferent terms with each other. Neither did the Acolyte consider his being united in commission with the Protospathaire as a mark either of the emperor's confidence or of his own safety. He was, however, in the meantime, in the Blacquernal, where the slaves of the interior made not the least hesitation, when ordered, to execute any officer of the court. The two generals had

therefore no other alternative than that which is allowed to two greyhounds who are reluctantly coupled together.' The hope of Achilles Tatius was, that he might get safely through his mission to Tancred, after which he thought the successful explosion of the conspiracy might take place and have its course, either as a matter desired and countenanced by those Latins, or passed over as a thing in which they took no interest on either side.

By the parting order of the emperor, they were to mount on horseback at the sounding of the great Varangian trumpet, put themselves at the head of those Anglo-Saxon Guards in the court-yard of their barrack, and await the emperor's further orders.

There was something in this arrangement which pressed hard on the conscience of Achilles Tatius, yet he was at a loss to justify his apprehensions to himself, unless from a conscious feeling of his own guilt. He felt, however, that in being detained, under pretence of an honourable mission, at the head of the Varangians, he was deprived of the liberty of disposing of himself, by which he had hoped to communicate with the Cæsar and Hereward, whom he reckoned upon as his active accomplices, not knowing that the first was at this moment a prisoner in the Blacquernal, where Alexius had arrested him in the apartments of the empress, and that the second was the most important support of Comnenus during the whole of that eventful day.

When the gigantic trumpet of the Varangian Guards sent forth its deep signal through the city, the Protospathaire hurried Achilles along with him to the rendezvous of the Varangians, and on the way said to him, in an easy and indifferent tone, 'As the Emperor is in the field in person, you, his representative, or Follower, will of course transmit no orders to the Body-guard, except such as shall receive their origin from himself, so that you will consider your authority as this day suspended.'

'I regret,' said Achilles, 'that there should have seemed any cause for such precautions; I had hoped my own truth and fidelity—but—I am obsequious to his Imperial pleasure in all things.'

'Such are his orders,' said the other officer, 'and you know under what penalty obedience is enforced.'

'If I did not,' said Achilles, 'the composition of this body of guards would remind me, since it comprehends not only great part of those Varangians who are the immediate defenders of the Emperor's throne, but those slaves of the interior who are the executioners of his pleasure.'

To this the Protospathaire returned no answer, while the more closely the Acolyte looked upon the guard which attended, to the unusual number of nearly three thousand men, the more had he reason to believe that he might esteem himself fortunate, if, by the intervention of either the Cæsar, Agelastes, or Hereward, he could pass to the conspirators a signal to suspend the intended explosion, which seemed to be provided against by the emperor with unusual caution. He would have given the full dream of empire, with which he had been for a short time lulled asleep, to have seen but a glimpse of the azure plume of Nicephorus, the white mantle of the philosopher, or even a glimmer of Hereward's battle-axe. No such objects could be seen anywhere; and not a little was the faithless Follower displeased to see that, whichever way he turned his eyes, those of the Protospathaire, but especially of the trusty domestic officers of the empire, seemed to follow and watch their occupation.

Amidst the numerous soldiers whom he saw on all sides, his eye did not recognise a single man with whom he could exchange a friendly or confidential glance, and he stood in all that agony of terror, which is rendered the more discomfiting, because the traitor is conscious that, beset by various foes, his own fears are the most likely of all to betray him. Internally, as the danger seemed to increase, and as his alarmed imagination attempted to discern new reasons for it, he could only conclude that either one of the three principal conspirators, or at least some of the inferiors, had turned informers; and his doubt was, whether he should not screen his own share of what had been premeditated, by flinging himself at the feet of the emperor and making a full confession. But still the fear of being premature in having recourse to such a base means of saving himself, joined to the absence of the emperor, united to keep within his lips a secret, which concerned not only all his future fortunes, but life itself. He was in the meantime, therefore, plunged as it were in a sea of trouble and uncertainty, while the specks of land, which seemed to promise him refuge, were distant, dimly seen, and extremely difficult of attainment.

CHAPTER XXXI.

To-morrow—O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him:
He's not prepared to die.
SHAKESPEARE.

At the moment when Achilles Tatius, with a feeling of much insecurity, awaited the unwinding of the perilous skein of state politics, a private council of the Imperial family was held in the hall termed the Temple of the Muses, repeatedly distinguished as the apartment in which the Princess Anna Comnena was wont to make her evening recitations to those who were permitted the honour of hearing prelections of her history. The council consisted of the Empress Irene, the princess herself, and the emperor, with the Patriarch of the Greek Church, as a sort of mediator between a course of severity and a dangerous degree of lenity.

'Tell not me, Irene,' said the emperor, 'of the fine things attached to the praise of mercy. Here have I sacrificed my just revenge over my rival Ursel, and what good do I obtain by it? Why, the old obstinate man, instead of being tractable, and sensible of the generosity which has spared his life and eyes, can be with difficulty brought to exert himself in favour of the prince to whom he owes them. I used to think that eyesight and the breath of life were things which one would preserve at any sacrifice; but, on the contrary, I now believe men value them like mere toys. Talk not to me, therefore, of the gratitude to be excited by saving this ungrateful

cub; and believe me, girl,' turning to Anna, 'that not only will all my subjects, should I follow your advice, laugh at me for sparing a man so predetermined to work my ruin, but even thou thyself wilt be the first to upbraid me with the foolish kindness thou art now so anxious to extort from me.'

'Your Imperial pleasure, then,' said the Patriarch, 'is fixed that your unfortunate son-in-law shall suffer death for his accession to this conspiracy, deluded by that heathen villain Agelastes, and the traitorous Achilles Tatius?'

'Such is my purpose,' said the emperor; 'and in evidence that I mean not again to pass over a sentence of this kind with a seeming execution only, as in the case of Ursel, this ungrateful traitor of ours shall be led from the top of the staircase, or ladder of Acheron, as it is called, through the large chamber named the Hall of Judgment, at the upper end of which are arranged the apparatus for execution, by which I swear'——

'Swear not at all!' said the Patriarch; 'I forbid thee, in the name of that Heaven whose voice (though unworthy) speaks in my person, to quench the smoking flax, or destroy the slight hope which there may remain, that you may finally be persuaded to alter your purpose respecting your misguided son-in-law, within the space allotted to him to sue for your mercy. Remember, I pray you, the remorse of Constantine.'

'What means your reverence?' said Irene.

'A trifle,' replied the emperor, 'not worthy being quoted from such a mouth as the Patriarch's, being, as it probably is, a relic of paganism.'

'What is it?' exclaimed the females anxiously, in the hope of hearing something which might strengthen their side of the argument, and something moved, perhaps, by curiosity, a motive which seldom slumbers in a female bosom, even when the stronger passions are in arms.

'The Patriarch will tell you,' answered Alexius, 'since you must needs know; though I promise you, you will not receive any assistance from a silly legendary tale.'

'Hear it, however,' said the Patriarch; 'for though it is a tale of the olden time, and sometimes supposed to refer to the period when heathenism predominated, it is no less true that it was a vow made and registered in the chancery of the rightful Deity, by an Emperor of Greece.

'What I am now to relate to you,' continued he, 'is, in truth, a tale not only of a Christian Emperor, but of him who made the whole empire Christian; and of that very Constantine, who was also the first who declared Constantinople to be the metropolis of the empire. This hero, remarkable alike for his zeal for religion and for his warlike achievements, was crowned by Heaven with repeated victory, and with all manner of blessings, save that unity in his family which wise men are most ambitious to possess. Not only was the blessing of concord among brethren denied to the family of this triumphant Emperor, but a deserving son of mature age, who had been supposed to aspire to share the throne with his father, was suddenly and at midnight called upon to enter his defence against a capital charge of treason. You will readily excuse my referring to the arts by which the son was rendered guilty in the eyes of the father. Be it enough to say that the unfortunate young man fell a victim to the guilt of his stepmother Fausta, and that he disdained to exculpate himself from a charge so gross and so erroneous. It is said that the anger of the Emperor was kept up against his son by the sycophants, who called upon Constantine to observe that the culprit disdained even to supplicate for mercy, or vindicate his innocence from so foul a charge.

'But the death-blow had no sooner struck the innocent youth, than his father obtained proof of the rashness with which he had acted. He had at this period been engaged in constructing the subterranean parts of the Blacquernal Palace, which his remorse appointed to contain a record of his paternal grief and contrition. At the upper part of the staircase, called the Pit of Acheron, he caused to be constructed a large chamber, still called the Hall of Judgment, for the purpose of execution. A passage through an archway in the upper wall leads from the hall to the place of misery, where the axe, or other engine, is disposed for the execution of state prisoners of consequence. Over this archway was placed a species of marble altar, surmounted by an image of the unfortunate Crispus—the materials were gold, and it bore the memorable inscription, "TO MY SON, WHOM I RASHLY CONDEMNED, AND TOO HASTILY EXECUTED." When constructing this passage, Constantine made a vow that he himself and his posterity, being reigning emperors, would stand beside the statue of Crispus, at the time when any individual of their family should be led to execution, and before they suffered him to pass from the Hall of Judgment to the Chamber of Death, that they should themselves be personally convinced of the truth of the charge under which he suffered.

'Time rolled on—the memory of Constantine was remembered almost like that of a saint, and the respect paid to it threw into shadow the anecdote of his son's death. The exigencies of the state rendered it difficult to keep so large a sum in specie invested in a statue, which called to mind the unpleasant failings of so great a man. Your Imperial Highness's predecessors applied the metal which formed the statue to support the Turkish wars; and the remorse and penance of Constantine died away in an obscure tradition of the Church or of the palace. Still, however, unless your Imperial Majesty has strong reasons to the contrary, I should give it as my opinion, that you will hardly achieve what is due to the memory of the greatest of your predecessors, unless you give this unfortunate criminal, being so near a relation of your own, an opportunity of pleading his cause before passing by the Altar of Refuge; being the name which is commonly given to the monument of the unfortunate Crispus, son of Constantine, although now deprived both of the golden letters which composed the inscription, and the golden image which represented the royal sufferer.'

A mournful strain of music was now heard to ascend the stair so often mentioned.

'If I must hear the Cæsar, Nicephorus Briennius, ere he pass the Altar of Refuge, there must be no loss of time,' said the emperor; 'for these melancholy sounds announce that he has already approached the Hall of Judgment.'

Both the Imperial ladies began instantly, with the utmost earnestness, to deprecate the execution of the Cæsar's doom, and to conjure Alexius, as he hoped for quiet in his household, and the everlasting gratitude of his wife and daughter, that he would listen to their entreaties in behalf of an unfortunate man, who had been seduced into guilt, but not from his heart.

'I will at least see him,' said the emperor, 'and the holy vow of Constantine shall be in the present instance strictly observed. But remember, you foolish women, that the state of Crispus and the present Cæsar is as different as guilt from innocence, and that their fates, therefore, may be justly decided upon opposite principles, and with opposite results. But I will confront this criminal; and you, Patriarch, may be present to render what help is in your power to a dying man; for you, the wife and mother of the traitor, you will, methinks, do well to retire to the church, and pray God for the soul of the deceased, rather than disturb his last moments with unavailing lamentations.'

'Alexius,' said the Empress Irene, 'I beseech you to be contented; be assured that we will not leave you in this dogged humour of blood-shedding, lest you make such materials for history as are fitter for the time of Nero than of Constantine.'

The emperor, without reply, led the way into the Hall of Judgment, where a much stronger light than usual was already shining up the stair of Acheron, from which were heard to sound, by sullen and intermitted fits, the penitential psalms which the Greek Church has appointed to be sung at executions. Twenty mute slaves, the pale colour of whose turbans gave a ghastly look to the withered cast of their features and the glaring whiteness of their eyeballs, ascended two by two, as it were from the bowels of the earth, each of them bearing in one hand a naked sabre, and in the other a lighted torch. After these came the unfortunate Nicephorus; his looks were those of a man half-dead from the terror of immediate dissolution, and what he possessed of remaining attention was turned successively to two black-stoled monks, who were anxiously repeating religious passages to him alternately from the Greek Scripture, and the form of devotion adopted by the court of Constantinople. The Cæsar's dress also corresponded to his mournful fortunes. His legs and arms were bare, and a simple white tunic, the neck of which was already open, showed that he had assumed the garments which were to serve his last turn. A tall muscular Nubian slave, who considered himself obviously as the principal person in the procession, bore on his shoulder a large heavy headsman's axe, and, like a demon waiting on a sorcerer, stalked step for step after his victim. The rear of the procession was closed by a band of four priests, each of whom chanted from time to time the devotional psalm which was thundered forth on the occasion; and another of slaves, armed with bows and quivers, and with lances, to resist any attempt at rescue, if such should be offered.

It would have required a harder heart than that of the unlucky princess to have resisted this gloomy apparatus of fear and sorrow, surrounding, at the same time directed against, a beloved object, the lover of her youth, and the husband of her bosom, within a few minutes of the termination of his mortal career.

As the mournful train approached towards the Altar of Refuge, half-encircled as it now was by the two great and expanded arms which projected from the wall, the emperor, who stood directly in the passage, threw upon the flame of the altar some chips of aromatic wood, steeped in spirit of wine, which, leaping at once into a blaze, illuminated the doleful procession, the figure of the principal culprit, and the slaves, who had most of them extinguished their flambeaux so soon as they had served the purpose of lighting them up the staircase.

The sudden light spread from the altar failed not to make the emperor and the princesses visible to the mournful group which approached through the hall. All halted—all were silent. It was a meeting, as the princess has expressed herself in her historical work, such as took place betwixt Ulysses and the inhabitants of the other world, who, when they tasted of the blood of his sacrifices, recognised him indeed, but with empty lamentations and gestures feeble and shadowy. The hymn of contrition sunk also into silence; and, of the whole group, the only figure rendered more distinct was the gigantic executioner, whose high and furrowed forehead, as well as the broad steel of his axe, caught and reflected back the bright gleam from the altar. Alexius saw the necessity of breaking the silence which ensued, lest it should give the intercessors for the prisoner an opportunity of renewing their entreaties.

'Nicephorus Briennius,' he said, with a voice which, although generally interrupted by a slight hesitation, which procured him, among his enemies, the nickname of the Stutterer, yet, upon important occasions like the present, was so judiciously tuned and balanced in its sentences, that no such defect was at all visible—'Nicephorus Briennius,' he said, 'late Cæsar, the lawful doom hath been spoken, that, having conspired against the life of thy rightful sovereign and affectionate father, Alexius Comnenus, thou shalt suffer the appropriate sentence, by having thy head struck from thy body. Here, therefore, at the last Altar of Refuge I meet thee, according to the vow of the immortal Constantine, for the purpose of demanding whether thou hast anything to allege why this doom should not be executed? Even at this eleventh hour, thy tongue is unloosed to speak with freedom what may concern thy life. All is prepared in this world and in the next. Look forward beyond yon archway—the block is fixed. Look behind thee, thou seest the axe already sharpened—thy place for good or evil in the next world is already determined — time flies — eternity approaches. If thou hast aught to say, speak it freely—if nought, confess the justice of thy sentence, and pass on to death.'

The emperor commenced this oration, with those looks described by his daughter as so

piercing, that they dazzled like lightning, and his periods, if not precisely flowing like burning lava, were yet the accents of a man having the power of absolute command, and as such produced an effect not only on the criminal, but also upon the prince himself, whose watery eyes and faltering voice acknowledged his sense and feeling of the fatal import of the present moment.

Rousing himself to the conclusion of what he had commenced, the emperor again demanded whether the prisoner had anything to say in his own defence.

Nicephorus was not one of those hardened criminals who may be termed the very prodigies of history, from the coolness with which they contemplated the consummation of their crimes, whether in their own punishment, or the misfortunes of others. 'I have been tempted,' he said, dropping on his knees, 'and I have fallen. I have nothing to allege in excuse of my folly and ingratitude; but I stand prepared to die to expiate my guilt.' A deep sigh, almost amounting to a scream, was here heard, close behind the emperor, and its cause assigned by the sudden exclamation of Irene,—'My lord! my lord! your daughter is gone!' And in fact Anna Comnena had sunk into her mother's arms without either sense or motion. The father's attention was instantly called to support his swooning child, while the unhappy husband strove with the guards to be permitted to go to the assistance of his wife. 'Give me but five minutes of that time which the law has abridged—let my efforts but assist in recalling her to a life which should be as long as her virtues and her talents deserve; and then let me die at her feet, for I care not to go an inch beyond.'

The emperor, who in fact had been more astonished at the boldness and rashness of Nicephorus, than alarmed by his power, considered him as a man rather misled than misleading others, and felt, therefore, the full effect of this last interview. He was, besides, not naturally cruel, where severities were to be enforced under his own eye.

'The divine and immortal Constantine,' he said, 'did not, I am persuaded, subject his descendants to this severe trial, in order further to search out the innocence of the criminals, but rather to give to those who came after him an opportunity of generously forgiving a crime which could not without pardon—the express pardon of the prince—escape unpunished. I rejoice that I am born of the willow rather than of the oak, and I acknowledge my weakness, that not even the safety of my own life, or resentment of this unhappy man's treasonable machinations, have the same effect with me as the tears of my wife, and the swooning of my daughter. Rise up, Nicephorus Briennius, freely pardoned, and restored even to the rank of Cæsar. We will direct thy pardon to be made out by the great Logothete, and sealed with the golden bull. For four-and-twenty hours thou art a prisoner, until an arrangement is made for preserving the public peace. Meanwhile thou wilt remain under the charge of the Patriarch, who will be answerable for thy forthcoming.—Daughter and wife, you must now go hence to your own apartment; a future time will come, during which you may have enough of weeping and embracing, mourning and rejoicing. Pray Heaven that I, who, having been trained on till I have sacrificed justice and true policy to uxorious compassion and paternal tenderness of heart, may not have cause at last for grieving in good earnest for all the events of this miscellaneous drama.'

The pardoned Cæsar, who endeavoured to regulate his ideas according to this unexpected change, found it as difficult to reconcile himself to the reality of his situation as Ursel to the face of nature, after having been long deprived of enjoying it; so much do the dizziness and confusion of ideas, occasioned by moral and physical causes of surprise and terror, resemble each other in their effects on the understanding.

At length he stammered forth a request that he might be permitted to go to the field with the emperor, and divert, by the interposition of his own body, the traitorous blows which some desperate man might aim against that of his prince, in a day which was too likely to be one of danger and bloodshed.

'Hold there!' said Alexius Comnenus;—'we will not begin thy newly-redeemed life by renewed doubts of thine allegiance; yet it is but fitting to remind thee that thou art still the nominal and ostensible head of those who expect to take a part in this day's insurrection, and it will be the safest course to trust its pacification to others than to thee. Go, sir, compare notes with the Patriarch, and merit your pardon by confessing to him any traitorous intentions concerning this foul conspiracy with which we may be as yet unacquainted. Daughter and wife, farewell! I must now depart for the lists, where I have to speak with the traitor Achilles Tatius and the heathenish infidel Agelastes, if he still lives, but of whose providential death I hear a confirmed rumour.'

'Yet do not go, my dearest father!' said the princess; 'but let me rather go to encourage the loyal subjects in your behalf. The extreme kindness which you have extended towards my guilty husband convinces me of the extent of your affection towards your unworthy daughter, and the greatness of the sacrifice which you have made to her almost childish affection for an ungrateful man who put your life in danger.'

'That is to say, daughter,' said the emperor, smiling, 'that the pardon of your husband is a boon which has lost its merit when it is granted. Take my advice, Anna, and think otherwise; wives and their husbands ought in prudence to forget their offences towards each other as soon as human nature will permit them. Life is too short, and conjugal tranquillity too uncertain, to admit of dwelling long upon such irritating subjects. To your apartments, princesses, and prepare the scarlet buskins and the embroidery which is displayed on the cuffs and collars of the Cæsar's robe, indicative of his high rank. He must not be seen without them on the morrow.—Reverend father, I remind you once more that the Cæsar is in your personal custody from this moment until to-morrow at the same hour.'

They parted; the emperor repairing to put

himself at the head of his Varangian Guards—the Cæsar, under the superintendence of the Patriarch, withdrawing into the interior of the Blacquernal Palace, where Nicephorus Briennius was under the necessity of 'unthreading the rude eye of rebellion,' and throwing such lights as were in his power upon the progress of the conspiracy.

'Agelastes,' he said, 'Achilles Tatius, and Hereward the Varangian, were the persons principally entrusted in its progress. But whether they had been all true to their engagements, he did not pretend to be assured.'

In the female apartments there was a violent discussion betwixt Anna Comnena and her mother. The princess had undergone during the day many changes of sentiment and feeling; and though they had finally united themselves into one strong interest in her husband's favour, yet no sooner was the fear of his punishment removed, than the sense of his ungrateful behaviour began to revive. She became sensible also that a woman of her extraordinary attainments, who had been by a universal course of flattery disposed to entertain a very high opinion of her own consequence, made rather a poor figure when she had been the passive subject of a long series of intrigues, by which she was destined to be disposed of in one way or the other, according to the humour of a set of subordinate conspirators, who never so much as dreamed of regarding her as a being capable of forming a wish in her own behalf, or even yielding or refusing a consent. Her father's authority over her, and right to dispose of her, was less questionable; but even then it was something derogatory to the dignity of a princess born in the purple—an authoress besides, and giver of immortality—to be, without her own consent, thrown, as it were, at the head now of one suitor, now of another, however mean or disgusting, whose alliance could for the time benefit the emperor. The consequence of these moody reflections was, that Anna Comnena deeply toiled in spirit for the discovery of some means by which she might assert her sullied dignity, and various were the expedients which she revolved.

CHAPTER XXXII.

> But now the hand of fate is on the curtain,
> And brings the scene to light.
>
> DON SEBASTIAN.

THE gigantic trumpet of the Varangians sounded its loudest note of march, and the squadrons of the faithful Guards, sheathed in complete mail, and enclosing in their centre the person of their Imperial master, set forth upon their procession through the streets of Constantinople. The form of Alexius, glittering in his splendid armour, seemed no unmeet central point for the force of an empire; and while the citizens crowded in the train of him and his escort, there might be seen a visible difference between those who came with the premeditated intention of tumult, and the greater part, who, like the multitude of every great city, thrust each other and shout for rapture on account of any cause for which a crowd may be collected together. The hope of the conspirators was lodged chiefly in the Immortal Guards, who were levied principally for the defence of Constantinople, partook of the general prejudices of the citizens, and had been particularly influenced by those in favour of Ursel, by whom, previous to his imprisonment, they had themselves been commanded. The conspirators had determined that those of this body who were considered as most discontented, should early in the morning take possession of the posts in the lists most favourable for their purpose of assaulting the emperor's person. But, in spite of all efforts short of actual violence, for which the time did not seem to be come, they found themselves disappointed in this purpose, by parties of the Varangian Guards, planted with apparent carelessness, but in fact with perfect skill, for the prevention of their enterprise. Somewhat confounded at perceiving that a design, which they could not suppose to be suspected, was nevertheless on every part controlled and counter-checked, the conspirators began to look for the principal persons of their own party, on whom they depended for orders in this emergency; but neither the Cæsar nor Agelastes was to be seen, whether in the lists or on the military march from Constantinople; and though Achilles Tatius rode in the latter assembly, yet it might be clearly observed that he was rather attending upon the Protospathaire, than assuming that independence as an officer which he loved to affect.

In this manner, as the emperor with his glittering bands approached the phalanx of Tancred and his followers, who were drawn up, it will be remembered, upon a rising cape between the city and the lists, the main body of the Imperial procession deflected in some degree from the straight road, in order to march past them without interruption; while the Protospathaire and the Acolyte passed, under the escort of a band of Varangians, to bear the emperor's inquiries to Prince Tancred, concerning the purpose of his being there with his band. The short march was soon performed — the large trumpet which attended the two officers sounded a parley, and Tancred himself, remarkable for that personal beauty which Tasso * has preferred to any of the Crusaders, except Rinaldo d'Este, the creature of his own poetical imagination, advanced to parley with them.

'The Emperor of Greece,' said the Protospathaire to Tancred, 'requires the Prince of Otranto to show, by the two high officers who shall deliver him this message, with what purpose he has returned, contrary to his oath, to the right side of these straits; assuring Prince Tancred, at the same time, that nothing will so much please the Emperor, as to receive an answer not at variance with his treaty with the Duke of Bouillon, and the oath which was taken by the crusading nobles and their soldiers; since that would enable the Emperor, in conformity to his own wishes, by his kind reception of Prince

* [Tancred is the hero of the Italian poet Tasso's celebrated poem, *Jerusalem Delivered*.]

Tancred and his troop, to show how high is his estimation of the dignity of the one, and the bravery of both.—We wait an answer.'

The tone of the message had nothing in it very alarming, and its substance cost Prince Tancred very little trouble to answer. 'The cause,' he said, 'of the Prince of Otranto appearing here with fifty lances, is this cartel, in which a combat is appointed betwixt Nicephorus Briennius, called the Cæsar, a high member of this empire, and a worthy knight of great fame, the partner of the pilgrims who have taken the Cross, in their high vow to rescue Palestine from the infidels. The name of the said knight is the redoubted Robert of Paris. It becomes, therefore, an obligation, indispensable upon the holy pilgrims of the Crusade, to send one chief of their number, with a body of men-at-arms, sufficient to see, as is usual, fair play between the combatants. That such is their intention may be seen from their sending no more than fifty lances, with their furniture and following; whereas it would have cost them no trouble to have detached ten times the number, had they nourished any purpose of interfering by force, or disturbing the fair combat which is about to take place. The Prince of Otranto, therefore, and his followers, will place themselves at the disposal of the Imperial court, and witness the proceedings of the combat, with the most perfect confidence that the rules of fair battle will be punctually observed.'

The two Grecian officers transmitted this reply to the emperor, who heard it with pleasure, and, immediately proceeding to act upon the principle which he had laid down, of maintaining peace, if possible, with the Crusaders, named Prince Tancred with the Protospathaire as field-marshals of the lists, fully empowered, under the emperor, to decide all the terms of the combat, and to have recourse to Alexius himself where their opinions disagreed. This was made known to the assistants, who were thus prepared for the entry into the lists of the Grecian officer and the Italian prince in full armour, while a proclamation announced to all the spectators their solemn office. The same annunciation commanded the assistants of every kind to clear a convenient part of the seats which surrounded the lists on one side, that it might serve for the accommodation of Prince Tancred's followers.

Achilles Tatius, who was a heedful observer of all these passages, saw with alarm that by the last collocation the armed Latins were interposed between the Immortal Guards and the discontented citizens, which made it most probable that the conspiracy was discovered, and that Alexius found he had a good right to reckon upon the assistance of Tancred and his forces in the task of suppressing it. This, added to the cold and caustic manner in which the emperor communicated his commands to him, made the Acolyte of opinion that his best chance of escape from the danger in which he was now placed was, that the whole conspiracy should fall to the ground, and that the day should pass without the least attempt to shake the throne of Alexius Comnenus. Even then it continued highly doubtful whether a despot so wily and so suspicious as the emperor would think it sufficient to rest satisfied with the private knowledge of the undertaking, and its failure, with which he appeared to be possessed, without putting into exercise the bow-strings and the blinding-irons of the mutes of the interior. There was, however, little possibility either of flight or of resistance. The least attempt to withdraw himself from the neighbourhood of those faithful followers of the emperor, personal foes of his own, by whom he was gradually and more closely surrounded, became each moment more perilous, and more certain to provoke a rupture, which it was the interest of the weaker party to delay, with whatever difficulty. And while the soldiers under Achilles' immediate authority seemed still to treat him as their superior officer, and appeal to him for the word of command, it became more and more evident that the slightest degree of suspicion which should be excited would be the instant signal for his being placed under arrest. With a trembling heart, therefore, and eyes dimmed by the powerful idea of soon parting with the light of day, and all that it made visible, the Acolyte saw himself condemned to watch the turn of circumstances over which he could have no influence, and to content himself with waiting the result of a drama, in which his own life was concerned, although the piece was played by others. Indeed, it seemed as if through the whole assembly some signal was waited for, which no one was in readiness to give.

The discontented citizens and soldiers looked in vain for Agelastes and the Cæsar, and when they observed the condition of Achilles Tatius, it seemed such as rather to express doubt and consternation, than to give encouragement to the hopes they had entertained. Many of the lower classes, however, felt too secure in their own insignificance to fear the personal consequences of a tumult, and were desirous, therefore, to provoke the disturbance, which seemed hushing itself to sleep.

A hoarse murmur, which attained almost the importance of a shout, exclaimed,—'Justice, justice!—Ursel, Ursel!—The rights of the Immortal Guards!' etc. At this the trumpet of the Varangians awoke, and its tremendous tones were heard to peal loudly over the whole assembly, as the voice of its presiding deity. A dead silence prevailed in the multitude, and the voice of a herald announced, in the name of Alexius Comnenus, his sovereign will and pleasure.

'Citizens of the Roman Empire, your complaints, stirred up by factious men, have reached the ear of your Emperor; you shall yourselves be witness to his power of gratifying his people. At your request, and before your own sight, the visual ray which hath been quenched shall be reillumined — the mind whose efforts were restricted to the imperfect supply of individual wants shall be again extended, if such is the owner's will, to the charge of an ample *theme* or division of the empire. Political jealousy, more hard to receive conviction than the blind to receive sight, shall yield itself conquered, by the Emperor's paternal love of his people, and his desire to give them satisfaction. Ursel, the darling of your wishes, supposed to be long dead, or at least believed to exist in blinded

seclusion, is restored to you well in health, clear in eyesight, and possessed of every faculty necessary to adorn the Emperor's favour, or merit the affection of the people.'

As the herald thus spoke, a figure, which had hitherto stood shrouded behind some officers of the interior, now stepped forth, and flinging from him a dusky veil, in which he was wrapped, appeared in a dazzling scarlet garment, of which the sleeves and buskins displayed those ornaments which expressed a rank nearly adjacent to that of the emperor himself. He held in his hand a silver truncheon, the badge of delegated command over the Immortal Guards, and, kneeling before the emperor, presented it to his hands, intimating a virtual resignation of the command which it implied. The whole assembly were electrified at the appearance of a person long supposed either dead, or by cruel means rendered incapable of public trust. Some recognised the man, whose appearance and features were not easily forgot, and gratulated him upon his most unexpected return to the service of his country. Others stood suspended in amazement, not knowing whether to trust their eyes; while a few determined malcontents eagerly pressed upon the assembly an allegation that the person presented as Ursel was only a counterfeit, and the whole a trick of the emperor.

'Speak to them, noble Ursel,' said the emperor. 'Tell them that if I have sinned against thee, it has been because I was deceived, and that my disposition to make thee amends is as ample as ever was my purpose of doing thee wrong.'

'Friends and countrymen,' said Ursel, turning himself to the assembly, 'his Imperial Majesty permits me to offer my assurance that if in any former part of my life I have suffered at his hand, it is more than wiped out by the feelings of a moment so glorious as this; and that I am well satisfied, from the present instant, to spend what remains of my life in the service of the most generous and beneficent of sovereigns, or, with his permission, to bestow it in preparing, by devotional exercises, for an infinite immortality to be spent in the society of saints and angels. Whichever choice I shall make, I reckon that you, my beloved countrymen, who have remembered me so kindly during years of darkness and captivity, will not fail to afford me the advantage of your prayers.'

This sudden apparition of the long-lost Ursel had too much of that which elevates and surprises not to captivate the multitude, and they sealed their reconciliation with three tremendous shouts, which are said so to have shaken the air, that birds, incapable of sustaining themselves, sunk down exhausted out of their native element.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'What, leave the combat out! exclaimed the knight.
'Yea! or we must renounce the Stagyrite.
So large a crowd the stage will ne'er contain.
—'Then build a new, or act it on a plain.
POPE.

THE sounds of the gratulating shout had expanded over the distant shores of the Bosphorus by mountain and forest, and died at length in the farthest echoes, when the people, in the silence which ensued, appeared to ask each other what next scene was about to adorn a pause so solemn and a stage so august. The pause would probably have soon given place to some new clamour, for a multitude, from whatever cause assembled, seldom remains long silent, had not a new signal from the Varangian trumpet given notice of a fresh purpose to solicit their attention. The blast had something in its tone spirit-stirring and yet melancholy, partaking both of the character of a point of war, and of the doleful sounds which might be chosen to announce an execution of peculiar solemnity. Its notes were high and widely extended, and prolonged and long dwelt upon, as if the brazen clamour had been waked by something more tremendous than the lungs of mere mortals.

The multitude appeared to acknowledge these awful sounds, which were indeed such as habitually solicited their attention to Imperial edicts of melancholy import, by which rebellions were announced, dooms of treason discharged, and other tidings of a great and affecting import intimated to the people of Constantinople. When the trumpet had in its turn ceased, with its thrilling and doleful notes, to agitate the immense assembly, the voice of the herald again addressed them.

It announced in a grave and affecting strain, that it sometimes chanced how the people failed in their duty to a sovereign who was unto them as a father, and how it became the painful duty of the prince to use the rod of correction rather than the olive sceptre of mercy.

'Fortunate,' continued the herald, 'it is when the supreme Deity, having taken on himself the preservation of a throne, in beneficence and justice resembling his own, has also assumed the most painful task of his earthly delegate, by punishing those whom his unerring judgment acknowledges as most guilty, and leaving to his substitute the more agreeable task of pardoning such of those as art has misled, and treachery hath involved in its snares.

'Such being the case, Greece and its accompanying themes are called upon to listen and learn that a villain, namely Agelastes, who had insinuated himself into the favour of the Emperor, by affectation of deep knowledge and severe virtue, had formed a treacherous plan for the murder of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, and a revolution in the State. This person, who under pretended wisdom hid the doctrines of a heretic and the vices of a sensualist, had found proselytes to his doctrines even among the Emperor's household, and those persons who were most bound to him, and down to the lower order, to excite the last of whom were dispersed a multitude of forged rumours, similar to those concerning Ursel's death and blindness, of which your own eyes have witnessed the falsehood.'

The people, who had hitherto listened in silence, upon this appeal broke forth in a clamorous assent. They had scarcely been again silent, ere the iron-voiced herald continued his proclamation.

'Not Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,' he said, 'had more justly, or more directly, fallen under

the doom of an offended Deity, than this villain Agelastes. The steadfast earth gaped to devour the apostate sons of Israel, but the termination of this wretched man's existence has been, as far as can now be known, by the direct means of an evil spirit, whom his own arts had evoked into the upper air. By the spirit, as would appear by the testimony of a noble lady and other females, who witnessed the termination of his life, Agelastes was strangled, a fate well becoming his odious crimes. Such a death, even of a guilty man, must indeed be most painful to the humane feelings of the Emperor, because it involves suffering beyond this world. But the awful catastrophe carries with it this comfort, that it absolves the Emperor from the necessity of carrying any farther a vengeance which Heaven itself seems to have limited to the exemplary punishment of the principal conspirator. Some changes of offices and situations shall be made, for the sake of safety and good order; but the secret who had or who had not been concerned in this awful crime, shall sleep in the bosoms of the persons themselves implicated, since the Emperor is determined to dismiss their offence from his memory, as the effect of a transient delusion. Let all, therefore, who now hear me, whatever consciousness they may possess of a knowledge of what was this day intended, return to their houses, assured that their own thoughts will be their only punishment. Let them rejoice that Almighty goodness has saved them from the meditations of their own hearts, and, according to the affecting language of Scripture,—"Let them repent and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall them."'

The voice of the herald then ceased, and was again answered by the shouts of the audience. These were unanimous; for circumstances contributed to convince the malcontent party that they stood at the sovereign's mercy, and the edict that they heard having shown his acquaintance with their guilt, it lay at his pleasure to let loose upon them the strength of the Varangians, while, from the terms on which it had pleased him to receive Tancred, it was probable that the Apuleian forces were also at his disposal.

The voices, therefore, of the bulky Stephanos, of Harpax the centurion, and other rebels, both of the camp and city, were the first to thunder forth their gratitude for the clemency of the emperor, and their thanks to Heaven for his preservation.

The audience, reconciled to the thoughts of the discovered and frustrated conspiracy, began meantime, according to their custom, to turn themselves to the consideration of the matter which had more avowedly called them together, and private whispers, swelling by degrees into murmurs, began to express the dissatisfaction of the citizens at being thus long assembled, without receiving any communication respecting the announced purpose of their meeting.

Alexius was not slow to perceive the tendency of their thoughts; and, on a signal from his hand, the trumpets blew a point of war, in sounds far more lively than those which had prefaced the Imperial edict. 'Robert, Count of Paris,' then said a herald, 'art thou here in thy place, or by knightly proxy, to answer the challenge brought against thee by his Imperial Highness Nicephorus Briennius, Cæsar of this empire?'

The Emperor conceived himself to have equally provided against the actual appearance at this call of either of the parties named, and had prepared an exhibition of another kind, namely, certain cages, tenanted by wild animals, which being now loosened should do their pleasure with each other in the eyes of the assembly. His astonishment and confusion, therefore, were great, when, as the last note of the proclamation died in the echo, Count Robert of Paris stood forth, armed *cap-à-pie*, his mailed charger led behind him from within the curtained enclosure at one end of the lists, as if ready to mount at the signal of the marshal.

The alarm and the shame that were visible in every countenance near the Imperial presence, when no Cæsar came forth in like fashion to confront the formidable Frank, were not of long duration. Hardly had the style and title of the Count of Paris been duly announced by the heralds, and their second summons of his antagonist uttered in due form, when a person, dressed like one of the Varangian Guards, sprung into the lists, and announced himself as ready to do battle in the name and place of the Cæsar, Nicephorus Briennius, and for the honour of the empire.

Alexius, with the utmost joy, beheld this unexpected assistance, and readily gave his consent to the bold soldier who stood thus forward in the hour of utmost need, to take upon himself the dangerous office of champion. He the more readily acquiesced, as, from the size and appearance of the soldier, and the gallant bearing he displayed, he had no doubt of his individual person, and fully confided in his valour. But Prince Tancred interposed his opposition.

'The lists,' he said, 'were only open to knights and nobles; or, at any rate, men were not permitted to meet therein who were not of some equality of birth and blood; nor could he remain a silent witness where the laws of chivalry are in such respects forgotten.'

'Let Count Robert of Paris,' said the Varangian, 'look upon my countenance, and say whether he has not, by promise, removed all objection to our contest which might be founded upon an inequality of condition, and let him be judge himself, whether, by meeting me in this field, he will do more than comply with a compact which he has long since become bound by.'

Count Robert, upon this appeal, advanced, and acknowledged, without further debate, that, notwithstanding their difference of rank, he held himself bound by his solemn word to give this valiant soldier a meeting in the field. That he regretted, on account of this gallant man's eminent virtues, and the high services he had received at his hands, that they should now stand upon terms of such bloody arbitration; but, since nothing was more common than that the fate of war called on friends to meet each other in mortal combat, he would not shrink

from the engagement he had pledged himself to; nor did he think his quality in the slightest degree infringed or diminished, by meeting in battle a warrior so well known and of such good account as Hereward, the brave Varangian. He added, that 'he willingly admitted that the combat should take place on foot, and with the battle-axe, which was the ordinary weapon of the Varangian Guard.'

Hereward had stood still, almost like a statue, while this discourse passed; but when the Count of Paris had made this speech, he inclined himself towards him with a graceful obeisance, and expressed himself honoured and gratified by the manly manner in which the count acquitted himself, according to his promise, with complete honour and fidelity.

'What we are to do,' said Count Robert, with a sigh of regret, which even his love of battle could not prevent, 'let us do quickly; the heart may be affected, but the hand must do its duty.'

Hereward assented, with the additional remark, 'Let us then lose no more time, which is already flying fast.' And, grasping his axe, he stood prepared for combat.

'I also am ready,' said Count Robert of Paris, taking the same weapon from a Varangian soldier, who stood by the lists. Both were immediately upon the alert, nor did further forms or circumstances put off the intended duel.

The first blows were given and parried with great caution, and Prince Tancred and others thought that on the part of Count Robert the caution was much greater than usual; but in combat, as in food, the appetite increases with the exercise. The fiercer passions began, as usual, to awaken with the clash of arms and the sense of deadly blows, some of which were made with great fury on either side, and parried with considerable difficulty, and not so completely but that blood flowed on both their parts. The Greeks looked with astonishment on a single combat, such as they had seldom witnessed, and held their breath as they beheld the furious blows dealt by either warrior, and expected with each stroke the annihilation of one or other of the combatants. As yet their strength and agility seemed somewhat equally matched, although those who judged with more pretension to knowledge were of opinion that Count Robert spared putting forth some part of the military skill for which he was celebrated; and the remark was generally made and allowed, that he had surrendered a great advantage by not insisting upon his right to fight upon horseback. On the other hand, it was the general opinion that the gallant Varangian omitted to take advantage of one or two opportunities afforded him by the heat of Count Robert's temper, who obviously was incensed at the duration of the combat.

Accident at length seemed about to decide what had been hitherto an equal contest. Count Robert, making a feint on one side of his antagonist, struck him on the other, which was uncovered, with the edge of his weapon, so that the Varangian reeled, and seemed in the act of falling to the earth. The usual sound made by spectators at the sight of any painful or unpleasant circumstance, by drawing the breath between the teeth, was suddenly heard to pass through the assembly, while a female voice loud and eagerly exclaimed, — 'Count Robert of Paris!—forget not this day that thou owest a life to Heaven and me.' The Count was in the act of again seconding his blow, with what effect could hardly be judged, when this cry reached his ears, and apparently took away his disposition for further combat.

'I acknowledge the debt,' he said, sinking his battle-axe, and retreating two steps from his antagonist, who stood in astonishment, scarcely recovered from the stunning effect of the blow by which he was so nearly prostrated. He sank the blade of his battle-axe in imitation of his antagonist, and seemed to wait in suspense what was to be the next process of the combat. 'I acknowledge my debt,' said the valiant Count of Paris, 'alike to Bertha of Britain, and to the Almighty, who has preserved me from the crime of ungrateful blood-guiltiness.—You have seen the fight, gentlemen,' turning to Tancred and his chivalry, 'and can testify, on your honour, that it has been maintained fairly on both sides, and without advantage on either. I presume my honourable antagonist has by this time satisfied the desire which brought me under his challenge, and which certainly had no taste in it of personal or private quarrel. On my part, I retain towards him such a sense of personal obligation as would render my continuing this combat, unless compelled to it by self-defence, a shameful and sinful action.'*

Alexius gladly embraced the terms of truce, which he was far from expecting, and threw down his warder, in signal that the duel was ended. Tancred, though somewhat surprised, and perhaps even scandalized, that a private soldier of the Emperor's Guard should have so long resisted the utmost efforts of so approved a knight, could not but own that the combat had been fought with perfect fairness and equality, and decided upon terms dishonourable to neither party. The count's character being well known and established amongst the Crusaders, they were compelled to believe that some motive of a most potent nature formed the principle upon which, very contrary to his general practice, he had proposed a cessation of the combat before it was brought to a deadly, or at least to a decisive, conclusion. The edict of the emperor upon the occasion, therefore, passed into a law, acknowledged by the assent of the chiefs present, and especially affirmed and gratulated by the shouts of the assembled spectators.

But perhaps the most interesting figure in the assembly was that of the bold Varangian, arrived so suddenly at a promotion of military renown, which the extreme difficulty he had experienced in keeping his ground against Count Robert had prevented him from anticipating, although his modesty had not diminished the indomitable courage with which he maintained the contest. He stood in the middle of the lists, his face ruddy with the exertion of the

* Note E. Chronicle of Lalain.

combat, and not less so from the modest consciousness proper to the plainness and simplicity of his character, which was disconcerted by finding himself the central point of the gaze of the multitude.

'Speak to me, my soldier,' said Alexius, strongly affected by the gratitude which he felt was due to Hereward upon so singular an occasion; 'speak to thine Emperor as his superior, for such thou art at this moment, and tell him if there is any manner, even at the expense of half his kingdom, to atone for his own life saved, and what is yet dearer, for the honour of his country which thou hast so manfully defended and preserved?'

'My lord,' answered Hereward, 'your Imperial Highness values my poor services over highly, and ought to attribute them to the noble Count of Paris, first, for his condescending to accept of an antagonist so mean in quality as myself; and next, in generously relinquishing victory, when he might have achieved it by an additional blow; for I here confess before your Majesty, my brethren, and the assembled Grecians, that my power of protracting the combat was ended, when the gallant Count, by his generosity, put a stop to it.'

'Do not thyself that wrong, brave man,' said Count Robert; 'for I vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances, that the combat was yet within the undetermined doom of Providence, when the pressure of my own feelings rendered me incapable of continuing it, to the necessary harm, perhaps to the mortal damage, of an antagonist to whom I owe so much kindness. Choose, therefore, the recompense which the generosity of thy Emperor offers in a manner so just and grateful, and fear not lest mortal voice pronounces that reward unmerited which Robert of Paris shall avouch with his sword to have been gallantly won upon his own crest.'

'You are too great, my lord, and too noble,' answered the Anglo-Saxon, 'to be gainsaid by such as I am, and I must not awaken new strife between us by contesting the circumstances under which our combat so suddenly closed, nor would it be wise or prudent in me further to contradict you. My noble Emperor generously offers me the right of naming what he calls my recompense; but let not his generosity be dispraised, although it is from you, my lord, and not from his Imperial Highness, that I am to ask a boon, to me the dearest to which my voice can give utterance.'

'And that,' said the count, 'has reference to Bertha, the faithful attendant of my wife?'

'Even so,' said Hereward; 'it is my proposal to request my discharge from the Varangian Guard, and permission to share in your lordship's pious and honourable vow for the recovery of Palestine, with liberty to fight under your honoured banner, and permission from time to time to recommend my love-suit to Bertha, the attendant of the Countess of Paris, and the hope that it may find favour in the eyes of her noble lord and lady. I may thus finally hope to be restored to a country which I have never ceased to love over the rest of the world.'

'Thy service, noble soldier,' said the count, 'shall be as acceptable to me as that of a born earl; nor is there an opportunity of acquiring honour which I can shape for thee, to which, as it occurs, I will not gladly prefer thee. I will not boast of what interest I have with the King of England, but something I can do with him, and it shall be strained to the uttermost to settle thee in thine own beloved native country.'

The emperor then spoke. 'Bear witness, heaven and earth, and you, my faithful subjects, and you, my gallant allies; above all, you, my bold and true Varangian Guard, that we would rather have lost the brightest jewel from our Imperial crown, than have relinquished the service of this true and faithful Anglo-Saxon. But since go he must and will, it shall be my study to distinguish him by such marks of beneficence as may make it known, through his future life, that he is the person to whom the Emperor Alexius Comnenus acknowledged a debt larger than his empire could discharge. You, my Lord Tancred, and your principal leaders, will sup with us this evening, and to-morrow resume your honourable and religious purpose of pilgrimage. We trust both the combatants will also oblige us by their presence. —Trumpets, give the signal for dismission.'

The trumpets sounded accordingly, and the different classes of spectators, armed and unarmed, broke up into various parties, or formed into their military ranks, for the purpose of their return to the city.

The screams of women suddenly and strangely raised, was the first thing that arrested the departure of the multitude, when those who glanced their eyes back, saw Sylvan, the great ourang-outang, produce himself in the lists, to their surprise and astonishment. The women, and many of the men who were present, unaccustomed to the ghastly look and savage appearance of a creature so extraordinary, raised a yell of terror so loud, that it discomposed the animal who was the occasion of its being raised. Sylvan, in the course of the night, having escaped over the garden-wall of Agelastes, and clambered over the rampart of the city, found no difficulty in hiding himself in the lists which were in the act of being raised, having found a lurking-place in some dark corner under the seats of the spectators. From this he was probably dislodged by the tumult of the dispersing multitude, and had been compelled, therefore, to make an appearance in public when he least desired it, not unlike that of the celebrated Pulchinello,* at the conclusion of his own drama, when he enters in mortal strife with the Foul Fiend himself, a scene which scarcely excites more terror among the juvenile audience, than did the unexpected apparition of Sylvan among the spectators of the duel. Bows were bent and javelins pointed by the braver part of the soldiery, against an animal of an appearance so ambiguous, and whom his uncommon size and grizly look caused most who beheld him to suppose either the devil himself, or the apparition of some fiendish deity of ancient days, whom the heathens worshipped. Sylvan had so far improved such opportunities as had been afforded him, as to become sufficiently

* [The principal actor in a popular Italian puppet-play.]

aware that the attitudes assumed by so many military men inferred immediate danger to his person, from which he hastened to shelter himself by flying to the protection of Hereward, with whom he had been in some degree familiarized. He seized him, accordingly, by the cloak, and, by the absurd and alarmed look of his fantastic features, and a certain wild and gibbering chatter, endeavoured to express his fear and to ask protection. Hereward understood the terrified creature, and, turning to the emperor's throne, said aloud,—'Poor frightened being, turn thy petition, and gestures, and tones, to a quarter which, having to-day pardoned so many offences which were wilfully and maliciously schemed, will not be, I am sure, obdurate to such as thou, in thy half-reasoning capacity, mayst have been capable of committing.'

The creature, as is the nature of its tribe, caught from Hereward himself the mode of applying with most effect his gestures and pitiable supplication, while the emperor, notwithstanding the serious scene which had just passed, could not help laughing at the touch of comedy flung into it by this last incident.

'My trusty Hereward,'—he said aside, '(I will not again call him Edward if I can help it) —thou art the refuge of the distressed, whether it be man or beast, and nothing that sues through thy intercession, while thou remainest in our service, shall find its supplication in vain. Do thou, good Hereward,' for the name was now pretty well established in his Imperial memory, 'and such of thy companions as know the habits of the creature, lead him back to his old quarters in the Blacquernal; and that done, my friend, observe that we request thy company, and that of thy faithful mate Bertha, to partake supper at our court, with our wife and daughter, and such of our servants and allies as we shall request to share the same honour. Be assured that, while thou remainest with us, there is no point of dignity which shall not be willingly paid to thee.—And do thou approach, Achilles Tatius, as much favoured by thine Emperor as before this day dawned. What charges are against thee have been only whispered in a friendly ear, which remembers them not, unless (which Heaven forfend!) their remembrance is renewed by fresh offences.'

Achilles Tatius bowed till the plume of his helmet mingled with the mane of his fiery horse, but held it wisest to forbear any answer in words, leaving his crime and his pardon to stand upon those general terms in which the emperor had expressed them.

Once more the multitude of all ranks returned on their way to the city, nor did any second interruption arrest their march. Sylvan, accompanied by one or two Varangians, who led him in a sort of captivity, took his way to the vaults of the Blacquernal, which were in fact his proper habitation.

Upon the road to the city, Harpax, the notorious corporal of the Immortal Guards, held a discourse with one or two of his own soldiers, and of the citizens who had been members of the late conspiracy.

'So,' said Stephanos the prize-fighter, 'a fine affair we have made of it, to suffer ourselves to be all anticipated and betrayed by a thick-skulled Varangian; every chance turning against us as they would against Corydon the shoemaker, if he were to defy me to the circus. Ursel, whose death made so much work, turns out not to be dead after all; and, what is worse, he lives not to our advantage. This fellow Hereward, who was yesterday no better than myself—What do I say?—better!—he was a great deal worse—an insignificant nobody in every respect!—is now crammed with honours, praises, and gifts, till he well-nigh returns what they have given him; and the Cæsar and the Acolyte, our associates, have lost the Emperor's love and confidence, and if they are suffered to survive, it must be like the tame domestic poultry, whom we pamper with food one day, that upon the next their necks may be twisted for spit or pot.'

'Stephanos,' replied the centurion, 'thy form of body fits thee well for the *palæstra*, but thy mind is not so acutely formed as to detect that which is real from that which is only probable, in the political world, of which thou art now judging. Considering the risk incurred by lending a man's ear to a conspiracy, thou oughtest to reckon it a saving, in every particular, where he escapes with his life and character safe. This has been the case with Achilles Tatius, and with the Cæsar. They have remained also in their high places of trust and power, and may be confident that the Emperor will hardly dare to remove them at a future period, since the possession of the full knowledge of their guilt has not emboldened him to do so. Their power, thus left with them, is in fact ours; nor is there a circumstance to be supposed, which can induce them to betray their confederates to the government. It is much more likely that they will remember them with the probability of renewing, at a fitter time, the alliance which binds them together. Cheer up thy noble resolution, therefore, my prince of the circus, and think that thou shalt still retain that predominant influence which the favourites of the amphitheatre are sure to possess over the citizens of Constantinople.'

'I cannot tell,' answered Stephanos; 'but it gnaws at my heart like the worm that dieth not, to see this beggarly foreigner betray the noblest blood in the land, not to mention the best athlete in the *palæstra*, and move off not only without punishment for his treachery, but with praise, honour, and preferment.'

'True,' said Harpax; 'but observe, my friend, that he does move off to purpose. He leaves the land, quits the corps in which he might claim preferment and a few vain honours, being valued at what such trifles amount to. Hereward, in the course of one or two days, shall be little better than a disbanded soldier, subsisting by the poor bread which he can obtain as a follower of this beggarly Count, or which he is rather bound to dispute with the infidel, by encountering with his battle-axe the Turkish sabres. What will it avail him amidst the disasters, the slaughter, and the famine of Palestine, that he once upon a time was admitted to supper with the Emperor? We know Alexius Comnenus—he is willing to dis-

charge, at the highest cost, such obligations as are incurred to men like this Hereward; and, believe me, I think that I see the wily despot shrug his shoulders in derision, when one morning he is saluted with the news of a battle in Palestine lost by the Crusaders, in which his old acquaintance has fallen a dead man. I will not insult thee by telling thee how easy it might be to acquire the favour of a gentlewoman in waiting upon a lady of quality; nor do I think it would be difficult, should that be the object of the prize-fighter, to acquire the property of a large baboon like Sylvan, which no doubt would set up as a juggler any Frank who had meanness of spirit to propose to gain his bread in such a capacity, from the alms of the starving chivalry of Europe. But he who can stoop to envy the lot of such a person, ought not to be one whose chief personal distinctions are sufficient to place him first in rank over all the favourites of the amphitheatre.'

There was something in this sophistical kind of reasoning which was but half satisfactory to the obtuse intellect of the prize-fighter, to whom it was addressed, although the only answer which he attempted was couched in this observation:—

'Ay but, noble centurion, you forget that, besides empty honours, this Varangian Hereward, or Edward, whichever is his name, is promised a mighty donative of gold.'

'Marry, you touch me there,' said the centurion; 'and when you tell me that the promise is fulfilled, I will willingly agree that the Anglo-Saxon hath gained something to be envied for; but while it remains in the shape of a naked promise, you shall pardon me, my worthy Stephanos, if I hold it of no more account than the mere pledges which are distributed among ourselves as well as to the Varangians, promising upon future occasions mints of money, which we are likely to receive at the same time with the last year's snow. Keep up your heart, therefore, noble Stephanos, and believe not that your affairs are worse for the miscarriage of this day; and let not thy gallant courage sink, but, remembering those principles upon which it was called into action, believe that thy objects are not the less secure because fate has removed their acquisition to a more distant day.' The veteran and unbending conspirator Harpax thus strengthened for some future renewal of their enterprise the failing spirits of Stephanos.

After this, such leaders as were included in the invitation given by the emperor repaired to the evening meal, and, from the general content and complaisance expressed by Alexius and his guests of every description, it could little have been supposed that the day just passed over was one which had inferred a purpose so dangerous and treacherous.

The absence of the Countess Brenhilda, during this eventful day, created no small surprise to the emperor and those in his immediate confidence, who knew her enterprising spirit, and the interest she must have felt in the issue of the combat. Bertha had made an early communication to the count, that his lady, agitated with the many anxieties of the few preceding days, was unable to leave her apartment. The valiant knight, therefore, lost no time in acquainting his faithful countess of his safety; and, afterwards joining those who partook of the banquet at the palace, he bore himself as if the least recollection did not remain on his mind of the perfidious conduct of the emperor at the conclusion of the last entertainment. He knew, in truth, that the knights of Prince Tancred not only maintained a strict watch round the house where Brenhilda remained, but also that they preserved a severe ward in the neighbourhood of the Blacquernal, as well for the safety of their heroic leader, as for that of Count Robert, the respected companion of their military pilgrimage.

It was the general principle of the European chivalry, that distrust was rarely permitted to survive open quarrels, and that whatever was forgiven was dismissed from their recollection, as unlikely to recur; but on the present occasion there was a more than usual assemblage of troops, which the occurrences of the day had drawn together, so that the Crusaders were called upon to be particularly watchful.

It may be believed that the evening passed over without any attempt to renew the ceremonial in the Council Chamber of the Lions, which had been upon a former occasion terminated in such misunderstanding. Indeed, it would have been lucky if the explanation between the mighty Emperor of Greece and the chivalrous Knight of Paris had taken place earlier; for reflection on what had passed had convinced the emperor that the Franks were not a people to be imposed upon by pieces of clockwork and similar trifles, and that what they did not understand was sure, instead of procuring their awe or admiration, to excite their anger and defiance. Nor had it altogether escaped Count Robert that the manners of the Eastern people were upon a different scale from those to which he had been accustomed; that they neither were so deeply affected by the spirit of chivalry, nor, in his own language, was the worship of the Lady of the Broken Lances so congenial a subject of adoration. This notwithstanding, Count Robert observed that Alexius Comnenus was a wise and politic prince; his wisdom perhaps too much allied to cunning, but yet aiding him to maintain with great address that empire over the minds of his subjects which was necessary for their good, and for maintaining his own authority. He therefore resolved to receive with equanimity whatever should be offered by the emperor, either in civility or in the way of jest, and not again to disturb an understanding which might be of advantage to Christendom, by a quarrel founded upon misconception of terms or misapprehension of manners. To this prudent resolution the Count of Paris adhered during the whole evening; with some difficulty, however, since it was somewhat inconsistent with his own fiery and inquisitive temper, which was equally desirous to know the precise amount of whatever was addressed to him, and to take umbrage at it, should it appear in the least degree offensive, whether so intended or not.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was not until after the conquest of Jerusalem that Count Robert of Paris returned to Constantinople, and with his wife, and such proportion of his followers as the sword and pestilence had left after that bloody warfare, resumed his course to his native kingdom. Upon reaching Italy, the first care of the noble count and countess was to celebrate in princely style the marriage of Hereward and his faithful Bertha, who had added to their other claims upon their master and mistress, those acquired by Hereward's faithful services in Palestine, and no less by Bertha's affectionate ministry to her lady in Constantinople.

As to the fate of Alexius Comnenus, it may be read at large in the history of his daughter Anna, who has represented him as the hero of many a victory, achieved, says the purple-born, in the third chapter and fifteenth book of her history, sometimes by his arms and sometimes by his prudence.

'His boldness alone has gained some battles, at other times his success has been won by stratagem. He has erected the most illustrious of his trophies by confronting danger, by combating like a simple soldier, and throwing himself bareheaded into the thickest of the foe. But there are others,' continues the accomplished lady, 'which he gained an opportunity of erecting by assuming the appearance of terror, and even of retreat. In a word, he knew alike how to triumph either in flight or in pursuit, and remained upright even before those enemies who appeared to have struck him down; resembling the military implement termed the calthrop, which remains always upright in whatever direction it is thrown on the ground.'

It would be unjust to deprive the princess of the defence she herself makes against the obvious charge of partiality.

'I must still once more repel the reproach which some bring against me, as if my history was composed merely according to the dictates of the natural love for parents which is engraved in the hearts of children. In truth, it is not the effect of that affection which I bear to mine, but it is the evidence of matter of fact, which obliges me to speak as I have done. Is it not possible that one can have at the same time an affection for the memory of a father and for truth? For myself, I have never directed my attempt to write history otherwise than for the ascertainment of the matter of fact. With this purpose I have taken for my subject the history of a worthy man. Is it just, that, by the single accident of his being the author of my birth, his quality of my father ought to form a prejudice against me, which would ruin my credit with my readers? I have given, upon other occasions, proofs sufficiently strong of the ardour which I had for the defence of my father's interests, which those that know me can never doubt; but, on the present, I have been limited by the inviolable fidelity with which I respect the truth, which I should have felt conscience to have veiled, under pretence of serving the renown of my father.'—*Alexiad*, chap. iii. book xv.

This much we have deemed it our duty to quote, in justice to the fair historian; we will extract also her description of the emperor's death, and are not unwilling to allow that the character assigned to the princess by our own Gibbon has in it a great deal of fairness and of truth.

Notwithstanding her repeated protests of sacrificing rather to the exact and absolute truth than to the memory of her deceased parent, Gibbon remarks truly, that 'instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins a belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays in every page the vanity of a female author. The genuine character of Alexius is lost in a vague constellation of virtues; and the perpetual strain of panegyric and apology awakens our jealousy to question the veracity of the historian, and the merit of the hero. We cannot, however, refuse her judicious and important remark, that the disorders of the times were the misfortune and the glory of Alexius; and that every calamity which can afflict a declining empire was accumulated on his reign by the justice of Heaven and the vices of his predecessors.'—Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, vol. ix. p. 83, foot-note.

The princess accordingly feels the utmost assurance that a number of signs, which appeared in heaven and on earth, were interpreted by the soothsayers of the day as foreboding the death of the emperor. By these means, Anna Comnena assigned to her father those indications of consequence, which ancient historians represent as necessary intimations of the sympathy of nature with the removal of great characters from the world; but she fails not to inform the Christian reader that her father's belief attached to none of these prognostics, and that even on the following remarkable occasion he maintained his incredulity:—A splendid statue, supposed generally to be a relic of paganism, holding in its hand a golden sceptre, and standing upon a base of porphyry, was overturned by a tempest, and was generally believed to be an intimation of the death of the emperor. This, however, he generously repelled. Phidias, he said, and other great sculptors of antiquity, had the talent of imitating the human frame with surprising accuracy; but to suppose that the power of foretelling future events was reposed in these masterpieces of art, would be to ascribe to their makers the faculties reserved by the Deity for himself, when he says, 'It is I who kill and make alive.' During his latter days, the emperor was greatly afflicted with the gout, the nature of which has exercised the wit of many persons of science as well as of Anna Comnena. The poor patient was so much exhausted, that when the empress was talking of most eloquent persons who should assist in the composition of his history, he said, with a natural contempt of such vanities, 'The passages of my unhappy life call rather for tears and lamentation than for the praises you speak of.'

A species of asthma having come to the assistance of the gout, the remedies of the physicians became as vain as the intercession of the monks and clergy, as well as the alms which were indiscriminately lavished. Two or three deep

successive swoons gave ominous warning of the approaching blow, and at length was terminated the reign and life of Alexius Comnenus, a prince who, with all the faults which may be imputed to him, still possesses a real right, from the purity of his general intentions, to be accounted one of the best sovereigns of the Lower Empire.

For some time the historian forgot her pride of literary rank, and, like an ordinary person, burst into tears and shrieks, tore her hair, and defaced her countenance, while the Empress Irene cast from her her princely habits, cut off her hair, changed her purple buskins for black mourning shoes, and her daughter Mary, who had herself been a widow, took a black robe from one of her own wardrobes, and presented it to her mother. 'Even in the moment when she put it on,' says Anna Comnena, 'the Emperor gave up the ghost, and in that moment the sun of my life set.'

We shall not pursue her lamentations further. She upbraids herself that, after the death of her father, that light of the world, she had also survived Irene, the delight alike of the East and of the West, and survived her husband also. 'I am indignant,' she said, 'that my soul, suffering under such torrents of misfortune, should still deign to animate my body. Have I not,' said she, 'been more hard and unfeeling than the rocks themselves; and is it not just that one, who could survive such a father and mother, and such a husband, should be subjected to the influence of so much calamity? But let me finish this history, rather than any longer fatigue my readers with my unavailing and tragical lamentation.'

Having thus concluded her history, she adds the following two lines:—

> The learned Comnena lays her pen aside,
> What time her subject and her father died.*

These quotations will probably give the readers as much as they wish to know of the real character of this Imperial historian. Fewer words will suffice to dispose of the other parties who have been selected from her pages, as persons in the foregoing drama.

There is very little doubt that the Count Robert of Paris, whose audacity in seating himself upon the throne of the emperor gives a peculiar interest to his character, was in fact a person of the highest rank; being no other, as has been conjectured by the learned Ducange, than an ancestor of the House of Bourbon, which has so long given kings to France. He was a successor, it has been conceived, of the Counts of Paris, by whom the city was valiantly defended against the Normans, and an ancestor of Hugh Capet. There are several hypotheses upon this subject, deriving the well-known Hugh Capet, first, from the family of Saxony, secondly, from Saint Arnoul, afterwards Bishop of Altex; third, from Nibilong; fourth, from the Duke of Bavaria; and fifth, from a natural son of the Emperor Charlemagne. Variously placed, but in each of these contested pedigrees, appears this Robert, surnamed the *Strong*, who was count of that district of which Paris was the capital, most peculiarly styled the County, or Isle of France. Anna Comnena, who has recorded the bold usurpation of the emperor's seat by this haughty chieftain, has also acquainted us with his receiving a severe, if not a mortal wound, at the battle of Dorylæum,† owing to his neglecting the warlike instructions with which her father had favoured him on the subject of the Turkish wars. The antiquary who is disposed to investigate this subject may consult the late Lord Ashburnham's elaborate Genealogy of the Royal House of France; also a note of Ducange's on the princess's history, p. 362, arguing for the identity of her 'Robert of Paris, a haughty barbarian,' with the 'Robert called the Strong,' mentioned as an ancestor of Hugh Capet. Gibbon, vol. xi. p. 52, may also be consulted. The French antiquary and the English historian seem alike disposed to find the church, called in the tale that of the Lady of the Broken Lances, in that dedicated to Saint Drusas, or Drosin, of Soissons, who was supposed to have peculiar influence on the issue of combats, and to be in the habit of determining them in favour of such champions as spent the night preceding at his shrine.

In consideration of the sex of one of the parties concerned, the author has selected our Lady of the Broken Lances as a more appropriate patroness than Saint Drusas himself, for the Amazons, who were not uncommon in that age. Gaita, for example, the wife of Robert Guiscard, a redoubted hero, and the parent of a most heroic race of sons, was herself an Amazon, fought in the foremost ranks of the Normans, and is repeatedly commemorated by our Imperial historian, Anna Comnena.

The reader can easily conceive to himself that Robert of Paris distinguished himself among his brethren-at-arms and fellow-Crusaders. His fame resounded from the walls of Antioch; but at the battle of Dorylæum he was so desperately wounded, as to be disabled from taking a part in the grandest scene of the expedition. His heroic countess, however, enjoyed the great satisfaction of mounting the walls of Jerusalem, and in so far discharging her own vows and those of her husband. This was the more fortunate, as the sentence of the physicians pronounced that the wounds of the count had been inflicted by a poisoned weapon, and that complete recovery was only to be hoped for by having recourse to his native air. After some time spent in the vain hope of averting by patience this unpleasant alternative, Count Robert subjected himself to necessity, or what was represented as such, and, with his wife and the faithful Hereward, and all others of his followers who had been like himself disabled from combat, took the way to Europe by sea.

A light galley, procured at a high rate, conducted them safely to Venice, and from that then glorious city, the moderate portion of spoil which had fallen to the count's share among the

* [Ληξεν ὁπου βιοτοιο Αλεξιος ὁ Κομνηνος
Ενθα καλη Θυγατηρ ληξεν Αλεξιαδος.]

† [At this place, in Phrygia, Asia Minor, a desperate battle was fought between the Crusaders and the Seljuk Turks, the latter being defeated.]

conquerors of Palestine, served to convey them to his own dominions, which, more fortunate than those of most of his fellow-pilgrims, had been left uninjured by their neighbours during the time of their proprietor's absence on the Crusade. The report that the count had lost his health, and the power of continuing his homage to the Lady of the Broken Lances, brought upon him the hostilities of one or two ambitious or envious neighbours, whose covetousness was, however, sufficiently repressed by the brave resistance of the countess and the resolute Hereward. Less than a twelvemonth was required to restore the Count of Paris to his full health, and to render him, as formerly, the assured protector of his own vassals, and the subject in whom the possessors of the French throne reposed the utmost confidence. This latter capacity enabled Count Robert to discharge his debt towards Hereward in a manner as ample as he could have hoped or expected. Being now respected alike for his wisdom and his sagacity, as much as he always was for his intrepidity and his character as a successful Crusader, he was repeatedly employed by the court of France in settling the troublesome and intricate affairs in which the Norman possessions of the English crown involved the rival nations. William Rufus was not insensible to his merit, nor blind to the importance of gaining his good-will; and, finding out his anxiety that Hereward should be restored to the land of his fathers, he took, or made an opportunity, by the forfeiture of some rebellious noble, of conferring upon our Varangian a large district adjacent to the New Forest, being part of the scenes which his father chiefly frequented, and where it is said the descendants of the valiant squire and his Bertha have subsisted for many a long year, surviving turns of time and chance which are in general fatal to the continuance of more distinguished families.

THEODOSIUS' COLUMN, CONSTANTINOPLE.

NOTES TO COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS.

NOTE A, p. 588.—CONSTANTINOPLE.

The impression which the Imperial city was calculated to make on such visitors as the Crusaders of the West is given by the ancient French chronicler Villehardouin, who was present at the capture of A.D. 1203. 'When we had come,' he says, 'within three leagues, to a certain Abbey, then we could plainly survey Constantinople. There the ships and the galleys came to anchor; and much did they who had never been in that quarter before gaze upon the city. That such a city could be in the world they had never conceived, and they were never weary of staring at the high walls and towers with which it was entirely encompassed, the rich palaces and lofty churches, of which there were so many that no one could have believed it, if he had not seen with his own eyes that city, the Queen of all cities. And know that there was not so bold a heart there, that it did not feel some terror at the strength of Constantinople.'—Chap. lxvi.

Again,—'And now many of those of the host went to see Constantinople within, and the rich palaces and stately churches, of which it possesses so many, and the riches of the place, which are such as no other city ever equalled. I need not speak of the sanctuaries, which are as many as are in all the world beside.'—Chap. c.

NOTE B, p. 590.—VARANGIANS.

Ducange has poured forth a tide of learning on this curious subject, which will be found in his Notes on Villehardouin's *Constantinople under the French Emperors*, Paris 1637, folio, p. 196. Gibbon's *History* may also be consulted, vol. x. p. 231.

Villehardouin, in describing the siege of Constantinople, A.D. 1203, says, ''Li murs fu mult garnis d'Anglois et de Danois,'—hence the dissertation of Ducange here quoted, and several articles besides in his Glossarium as *Varangi*, Warengangi, etc. The etymology of the name is left uncertain, though the German *fort-ganger*, *i.e.* forth-goer, wanderer, *exile*, seems the most probable. The term occurs in various Italian and Sicilian documents, anterior to the establishment of the Varangian Guards at Constantinople, and collected by Muratori: as, for instance, in an edict of one of the Lombard kings, 'Omnes Warengangi, qui de exteris finibus in regni nostri finibus advenerint, seque sub scuto potestatis nostræ subdiderint, legibus nostris Longobardorum vivere debeant,'—and in another, 'De Warengangis, nobilibus, mediocribus, et rusticis hominibus, qui usque nunc in terrâ vestrâ fugiti sunt, habeatis eos.'—*Muratori*, vol. ii. p. 261.

With regard to the origin of the Varangian Guard, the most distinct testimony is that of Ordericus Vittalis, who says, 'When therefore the English had lost their liberty, they turned themselves with zeal to discover the means of throwing off the unaccustomed yoke. Some fled to Sueno, King of the Danes, to excite him to the recovery of the inheritance of his grandfather, Canute. Not a few fled into exile in other regions, either from the mere desire of escaping from under the Norman rule, or in the hope of acquiring wealth, and so being one day in a condition to renew the struggle at home. Some of these, in the bloom of youth, penetrated into a far distant land, and offered themselves to the military service of the Constantinopolitan Emperor—that wise prince, against whom Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia, had then raised all his forces. The English exiles were favourably received, and opposed in battle to the Normans, for whose encounter the Greeks themselves were too weak. Alexius began to build a town for the English, a little above Constantinople, at a place called *Chevelot*, but the trouble of the Normans from Sicily still increasing, he soon recalled them to the capital and entrusted the principal palace with all its treasures to their keeping. This was the method in which the Saxon English found their way to Ionia, where they still remain, highly valued by the Emperor and the people.'—Book iv. p. 508.

NOTE C, p. 630.—LABARUM.

Ducange fills half a column of his huge page with the mere names of the authors who have written at length on the *Labarum*, or principal standard of the empire for the time of Constantine. It consisted of a spear of silver, or plated with that metal, having suspended from a cross-beam below the spoke a small square silken banner, adorned with portraits of the reigning family, and over these the famous monogram which expresses at once the figure of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ. The bearer of the *Labarum* was an officer of high rank down to the last days of the Byzantine government.—See Gibbon, chap. xx.

Ducange seems to have proved, from the evidence of coins and triumphal monuments, that a standard of the form of the *Labarum* was used by various barbarous nations long before it was adopted by their Roman conquerors; and he is of opinion that its name also was borrowed from either Teutonic Germany, or Celtic Gaul, or Sclavonic Illyria. It is certain that either the German language or the Welsh may afford at this day a perfectly satisfactory etymon: *Lap-heer* in the former, and *Lab-hair* in the latter, having precisely the same meaning—*the cloth of the host.*

The form of the *Labarum* may still be recognised in the banners carried in ecclesiastical processions in all Roman Catholic countries.

NOTE D, p. 634.—GAITA, THE AMAZON.

This Amazon makes a conspicuous figure in Anna Comnena's account of her father's campaigns against Robert Guiscard. On one occasion (*Alexiad*, lib. iv. p. 93) she represents her as thus recalling the fugitive soldiery of her husband to their duty,—Ἡ δέ γε Γαϊτα Παλλας ἀλλη, καν μη Αθηνη, κατ' αυτων μεγιστην ἀφεισα φωνην, μονον οὐ το 'Ομηρικον επος τη ἰδιᾳ διαλεκτῳ λεγειν ἐοικει. Μεχρι ποσου φευξεσθε; στητε, ἀνερες ἐστε. 'Ως δε ἐτι φευγοντας τουτους ἐωρα, δορυ μακρον ἐναγκαλισαμενη, ὁλους ῥυτηρας ἐνδουσα κατα των φευγοντων ἐιεται.—That is, exhorting them, in all but Homeric language, at the top of her voice; and when this failed, brandishing a long spear, and rushing upon the fugitives at the utmost speed of her horse.

This heroic lady, according to the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of those days, was afterwards deluded by some cunning overtures of the Greek Emperor, and poisoned her husband in expectation of gaining a place on the throne of Constantinople. Ducange, however, rejects the story, and so does Gibbon.

NOTE E, p. 726.—CHRONICLE OF LALAIN.

[In the Diary of Sir Walter Scott (19th February 1826) he writes:—'Being troubled with thick-coming fancies, and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain—curious, but dull, from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. . . Still, things occur to one. Something might be made of a

tale of chivalry,—taken from the Passage of Arms, which Jacques de Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth.'

And in a footnote Mr. Lockhart says, 'This hint was taken up in Count Robert of Paris.

A brief notice of the heroic knight-errant referred to may, therefore, not be considered out of place here.

The 'Chronique du bon Chevalier Messire Jacques de Lalain, Frere et Compagnon de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or, attributed to Messire Georges Chastellain, forms vol. xxi. of the *Collection des Chroniques Nationales Françaises*, published by J. A. Buchon, of which there is a set in the Abbotsford Library. In a previous edition of this work, published at Bruxelles, 1634, small 4to, it is called 'Histoire' in place of 'Chronique, and has a small portrait of the *bon Chevalier* with the Collar of the Golden Fleece, carefully engraved, evidently from an original miniature painting. It may be added that this work was translated into French verse, and amplified, by a Flemish knight, Messire Jean d'Ennetières, d'Beaume. It was published at Tournay in 1633, with the title, *Le Chevalier sans Reproche, Jacques de Lalain;* and is divided into sixteen Books, with an engraved design to each. Had Sir Walter set himself to read this version, he might have well described it as insufferably dull. The circumstance, however, that gives a special interest to this work is the portion that relates to Scotland in the reign of James the Second.

The *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* contains a long article, 'LALAIN ou LALAING (Jacques, dit Jacquet de), surnommé le Bon Chevalier,' from which it appears that he was born about 1422, and when sixteen years of age was sent to the court of Adolphus Duke of Cleves: he afterwards continued to signalize himself by his exploits as the representative of a knight-errant. His biographer remarks, that on the first point of view of his historical career, 'Ce personnage, on le voit, n'offre qu'un intérêt médiocre. Mais il n'en est pas de même si on le considère au point de vue des mœurs du temps. Jacques de Lalain nous offre en effet la personification d'un type aussi curieux qu'intéressant. Il fut un des derniers représentants de l'idéal Chevaleresque. L'imagination s'attache avec sympathie au destin de ce personnage, exalté jusqu'a l'héroïsme par la foi qui l'anime.'

The chapters in the French Chronicle that relate to Scotland are very curious, but are too long to be quoted. Jacques de Lalain, hearing of the prowess of Sir James of Douglas, sent a letter of challenge by a herald to Scotland, dated July 1448. The reply, accepting the challenge, is dated at Edinburgh, 24th September 1448. He accordingly arrived in Scotland in the beginning of 1449, and the tournament took place during the time of Lent, at Stirling, in the presence of the Scottish king and the nobility, and a great concourse of people. To quote the words of a well-known historian,*—'Two Burgundians of the noble house of Lalain, and a third styled the Esquire Melyades, challenged two of the Douglases, and Halket, to fight with the lance, battle-axe, sword, and dagger. After a festival of some days, the combatants entered the lists, clothed in velvet, and proceeded to their pavilions to arm; the Earl of Douglas himself, attended by not less than about five thousand followers, accompanying the Scottish champions. After having been solemnly knighted by the King, the parties engaged: the spears were soon thrown away: one of the Douglasses was felled by a battle-axe, and the combat becoming unequal, the King threw down his baton, the signal of its termination.'

At a Chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the 4th of May 1451, Jacques de Lalain was elected a Knight of that distinguished Order; but was slain by a cannon ball at the siege of the Château de Poucques, 3rd July 1453, aged thirty-two.]

* Pinkerton's *History*, vol. i. p. 207.

EMBLEMS OF THE GODDESS CYBELE.

GLOSSARY TO COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS.

Abye, to pay for, atone for.

Acanthus, an ornament of a leaf-like shape used in adorning buildings.

Ægis, a protecting mantle, a protecting influence.

Afflatus, breath of life.

Al' erta! Al' erta! Roba de guadagno, cameradi! Take heed, take heed! Here's booty, comrades.

Aliquando dormitat Homerus, Homer is caught napping sometimes.

Alla illa alla, Mohamed resoul alla, God is God; Mohammed the prophet of God.

Ambidexter, double-handed; double-dealing.

Arabesque, a variety of decorative ornamentation, consisting of the figures of men and animals combined with representations of plant life, and elaborate traceries, all more or less fanciful.

Arblast, a cross-bow.

Argosy, a merchantship.

Armipotent, mighty in arms, an epithet of Mars, the Roman god of war.

Astucious, astute, crafty.

Atmeidan, a circus, exercise ring.

Attaint, a successful hit, stroke; an object.

Automata, pieces of machinery that possess the power of self-action.

Belles-lettres, poetry, romance, and similar entertaining literature.

Besant, a gold coin, worth at different periods from 10s. to 20s.

Bosquet, shrubbery.

Bruited, noised abroad.

Cacabulum, a small cooking pot.

Calthrop, four iron spikes fixed into a ball in such a way that, when any three rest on the ground, the fourth projects upwards; this instrument was put down where cavalry was expected to charge.

Cap-à-pie, from head to foot.

Cartel, a written challenge.

Contra omnes mortales, against all men.

Corps de garde, for *garde du corps*, a body of guards.

Cytherean, dedicated to Venus, the goddess of love.

Daidling-bit, a path for dawdling or sauntering on.

Dan (*Cupid*), a title of familiarity used by some old English writers.

Darkling, in the dark.

Davus sum, non Œdipus, I am a simple man, not a guesser of riddles.

Doited, stupid.

Donjon-keep, the strongest tower in a mediæval castle.

Dramatis personæ, the parties concerned in any event.

Drink hael, drink health.

Dromond, a large transport vessel.

Duello, duel, combat between two persons.

En brut, in the rough, unpolished.

En champ clos, in the lists, the ground enclosed for a tournament.

Eremite, a hermit, solitary monk.

Etymon, the root or original form of a word.

Evoe, evoe, exclamations used by the worshippers of Bacchus.

Ex prepositо, of express purpose.

Faitour, an evil-doer, scoundrel.

Felucca, a light vessel.

Fleurs-de-lis semées, scattered lilies, a heraldic term.

Four-hours, a light repast taken between dinner and supper, generally at four o'clock.

Franklin, a yeoman, small landowner.

Gaed, went.

Gaitling, an infant, child.

Gambaud, or *gambade*, a leap, spring.

Genie, a supernatural being or agent in Oriental myths and tales.

Gossipred, intimate acquaintance.

Gourmand, an expert in matters of eating and drinking.

Grammaticus, rhetor, etc. (p. 694). Grammarian, rhetorician, geometer, painter, manager of a wrestling school, interpreter of omens, rope dancer, physician, sage, he knew everything. A hungry, paltry Greek, he will go to heaven if you bid him do so.

Gusto, taste, flavour.

Haram, the women's apartments in an Oriental's house; also the women, the wives and their attendants, taken collectively.

Hiatus valde deflendi, gaps to be greatly deplored or wept over.

Hieroglyphics, picture-writing.

Hippodrome, a circus, exercise ring.

Ichor, a fluid that in the gods answered to the blood of human bodies.

Infinitus est numerus stultorum, the number of fools is infinite.

Ken, know.

Kiosk, a Turkish pavilion or summer-house.

Kittle turn, a hard sentence, a difficulty.

Lacunæ, gaps, omissions.

Largess, gratuitous distribution of money, presents.

Lave, the remainder, rest.

Lelies, the name given to the Arab shout of onset.

Leman, a courtezan, mistress.

Les Anglois et Danois mult bien combattoient avec leurs haches, the English and Danes fought much with battle-axes.

Licet exire, permission to leave the room.

Lingua franca, a corrupt Italian that was employed as the common medium of intercourse in the East.

Lustre, a period of five years.

Macaroni, a fop, beau of the eighteenth century.
Maud, a shepherd's grey woollen plaid.
Mêlée, a hand to hand combat of several fighters.
Militat omnis amans, etc. (p. 670), every lover is a man-at-arms, and even Cupid has his camp.
Muckle, much.
Musis severioribus, to graver, more arduous studies.

Natheless, nevertheless.
Necromantic, practising magic or witchcraft.
Nicotian weed, tobacco.
Niddering or *nithing*, a worthless person, stamping a man as an outcast and utterly vile.

Oboli, a coin of ancient Greece, worth 1½d.
Œstrum, torment, prick.
Omnium augustissimus, the most august or illustrious of all.

Paladin, a hero of the romance of chivalry.
Palœstra, the arena where boxing and other athletic games were carried on.
Palmer, a pilgrim to the Holy Land.
Panhypersebastos, the most august of the august.
Panoply, complete armour, equipment.
Par amours, unlawfully, illicitly.
Paynim, pagan, heathen.
Periapt, a charm, talisman.
Perpending, weighing, considering.
Phalanx, a battalion of soldiers in solid order.
Pistrinum, a corn-mill worked by an ass or horse ; slaves were sometimes harnessed to it as a mode of punishment.
Plinth, the square base on which a column stands.
Polytheism, any religion based on belief in a number of gods.
Porphyrogenita, born in the purple, *i.e.* of imperial birth.
Prelection, a lecture.
Prerupt, abrupt, sudden.
Punctiuncula, trifling points, small matters.

Quidnunc, one who knows or pretends to know all the news of the day.

Regis ad exemplum, after the king's example.
Rencontre, an encounter, struggle, fight.
Res tuas agas, you attend to your own business.

Sae, so.
Sair lift, a sore or heavy burden, task.
Sanctum sanctorum, the most private of all apartments.
Satrap, a governor, high officer of state.
Satyr, a fabulous creature, half man, half goat.
Schaw, to indicate, reveal, show.
Sebastos, august.
Sed et illa propago (p. 714), that godless generation, greedy of slaughter and full of violence.
Semée, strewn, sown.
Sequin, a gold coin worth about 9s. 6d.
Seraglio, the palace or household of an Eastern sovereign.
Sewer, the officer who had charge of the arrangements of the table.
Sicarius, a stabber, assassin.
Stadia, a Greek measure of distance, equivalent to 200 yards.
Stummed (wine), unfermented.
Sub crimine falsi, under the penalty of being esteemed faithless.
Susurrus, whisper, rumour.
Sylvan, a faun, woodland deity.

Tanquam deus ex machina, like a god stepping down from the (theatrical) car (or other contrivance).
Tecbir, the Arab shout of onset.
Theme, a province or division of the Byzantine empire.
Thrall, a slave.
Τὸν ἐμὸν Καισαρα, my emperor, my beloved.
Tu cole justiciam, teque atque alios manet ultor, Do thou cultivate justice, an avenger will come for thee and for others.

Ultimus atque optimus, the last and best.
Ultimus labor, the last work.
Ultramontane, beyond the mountains, that is, north of the Alps.

Veiller y vont, etc. (p. 576), thither come to keep vigil and watch such pilgrims as desire to engage in single combat.
Vere sapiens, the truly wise man.
Vicit Leo ex tribu Judæ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (*i.e.* Christ) hath conquered.
Vilipend, to speak of with scorn, slander.
Vulnerary, relating to wounds.

Windlestraw, a stalk of grass ; a lance.
Wot, know.
Waes hael, Kaisar mirrig und machtigh, good health to thee, stout and mighty emperor.

Zoe kai psyche, life and soul.

THE

SURGEON'S DAUGHTER

AND

CASTLE DANGEROUS

By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

HARTLEY AND MENIE GRAY, chapter xi.

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1892

MONÇADA CLAIMING HIS DAUGHTER.—PAGE 751.

MR. CROFTANGRY'S PREFACE.

Indite, my muse, indite,
Subpœna'd is thy lyre,
The praises to requite
Which rules of court require.
PROBATIONARY ODES.

THE concluding a literary undertaking, in whole or in part, is, to the inexperienced at least, attended with an irritating titillation, like that which attends on the healing of a wound — a prurient impatience, in short, to know what the world in general, and friends in particular, will say to our labours. Some authors, I am told, profess an oyster-like indifference upon this subject; for my own part, I hardly believe in their sincerity. Others may acquire it from habit; but, in my poor opinion, a neophyte like myself must be for a long time incapable of such sang froid.

Frankly, I was ashamed to feel how childishly I felt on the occasion. No person could have said prettier things than myself upon the importance of stoicism concerning the opinion of others, when their applause or censure refers to literary character only; and I had determined to lay my work before the public, with the same unconcern with which the ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, giving herself no further trouble concerning the incubation, but leaving to the atmosphere to bring forth the young, or otherwise, as the climate shall serve. But, though an ostrich in theory, I became in practice a poor hen, who has no sooner made her deposit, but she runs cackling about, to call the attention of every one to the wonderful work which she has performed.

As soon as I became possessed of my first volume, neatly stitched up and boarded, my sense of the necessity of communicating with some one became ungovernable. Janet was inexorable, and seemed already to have tired of my literary confidence; for whenever I drew near the subject, after evading it as long as she could, she made, under some pretext or other, a bodily retreat to the kitchen or the cockloft, her own peculiar and inviolate domains. My publisher would have been a natural resource; but he understands his business too well, and follows it too closely, to desire to enter into literary discussions, wisely considering, that he who has to sell books has seldom leisure to read them. Then my acquaintance, now that I have lost Mistress Bethune Baliol, are of that distant and accidental kind, to whom I had not face enough to communicate the nature of my uneasiness, and who probably would only have laughed at me had I made any attempt to interest them in my labours.

Reduced thus to a sort of despair, I thought of my friend and man of business, Mr. Fairscribe. His habits, it was true, were not likely to render him indulgent to light literature, and indeed, I had more than once noticed his daughters, and especially my little songstress, whip into her reticule what looked very like a circulating library volume, as soon as her father entered the room. Still he was not only my assured, but almost my only friend, and I had little doubt that he would take an interest in the volume for the sake of the author, which the work itself might fail to inspire. I sent him, therefore, the book, carefully sealed up, with an intimation that I requested the favour of his opinion upon the contents, of which I affected to talk in the depreciatory style which

calls for point-blank contradiction, if your correspondent possess a grain of civility.

This communication took place on a Monday, and I daily expected (what I was ashamed to anticipate by volunteering my presence, however sure of a welcome) an invitation to eat an egg, as was my friend's favourite phrase, or a card to drink tea with Misses Fairscribe, or a provocation to breakfast, at least, with my hospitable friend and benefactor, and to talk over the contents of my enclosure. But the hours and days passed on from Monday till Saturday, and I had no acknowledgment whatever that my packet had reached its destination. 'This is very unlike my good friend's punctuality,' thought I; and, having again and again vexed James, my male attendant, by a close examination concerning the time, place, and delivery, I had only to strain my imagination to conceive reasons for my friend's silence. Sometimes I thought that his opinion of the work had proved so unfavourable that he was averse to hurt my feelings by communicating it—sometimes, that, escaping his hands to whom it was destined, it had found its way into his writing-chamber, and was become the subject of criticism to his smart clerks and conceited apprentices. "'Sdeath!' thought I, 'if I were sure of this, I would'——

'And what would you do?' said Reason, after a few moments' reflection. 'You are ambitious of introducing your book into every writing and reading chamber in Edinburgh, and yet you take fire at the thoughts of its being criticised by Mr. Fairscribe's young people? Be a little consistent—for shame!'

'I will be consistent,' said I doggedly; 'but, for all that, I will call on Mr. Fairscribe this evening.'

I hastened my dinner, donned my greatcoat (for the evening threatened rain), and went to Mr. Fairscribe's house. The old domestic opened the door cautiously, and, before I asked the question, said, 'Mr. Fairscribe is at home, sir; but it is Sunday night.' Recognising, however, my face and voice, he opened the door wider, admitted me, and conducted me to the parlour, where I found Mr. Fairscribe and the rest of his family engaged in listening to a sermon by the late Mr. Walker of Edinburgh, which was read by Miss Catherine with unusual distinctness, simplicity, and judgment. Welcomed as a friend of the house, I had nothing for it but to take my seat quietly, and, making a virtue of necessity, endeavour to derive my share of the benefit arising from an excellent sermon. But I am afraid Mr. Walker's force of logic and precision of expression were somewhat lost upon me. I was sensible I had chosen an improper time to disturb Mr. Fairscribe, and when the discourse was ended, I rose to take my leave, somewhat hastily, I believe. 'A cup of tea, Mr. Croftangry?' said the young lady. 'You will wait and take part of a Presbyterian supper?' said Mr. Fairscribe. 'Nine o'clock—I make it a point of keeping my father's hours on Sunday at e'en. Perhaps Dr.——' (naming an excellent clergyman) 'may look in.'*

I made my apology for declining his invitation; and I fancy my unexpected appearance and hasty retreat had rather surprised my friend, since, instead of accompanying me to the door, he conducted me into his own apartment.

'What is the matter,' he said, 'Mr. Croftangry? This is not a night for secular business, but if anything sudden or extraordinary has happened'——

'Nothing in the world,' said I, forcing myself upon confession, as the best way of clearing myself out of the scrape,—'only—only I sent you a little parcel, and as you are so regular in acknowledging letters and communications, I—I thought it might have miscarried—that's all.'

My friend laughed heartily, as if he saw into and enjoyed my motives and my confusion. 'Safe?—it came safe enough,' he said. 'The wind of the world always blows its vanities into haven. But this is the end of the session, when I have little time to read anything printed except Inner-House† papers; yet if you will take your kail with us next Saturday, I will glance over your work, though I am sure I am no competent judge of such matters.'

With this promise I was fain to take my leave, not without half persuading myself that if once the phlegmatic lawyer began my lucubrations, he would not be able to rise from them till he had finished the perusal, nor to endure an interval betwixt his reading the last page, and requesting an interview with the author.

No such marks of impatience displayed themselves. Time, blunt or keen, as my friend Joanna says, swift or leisurely, held his course; and, on the appointed Saturday, I was at the door precisely as it struck four. The dinner hour, indeed, was five punctually; but what did I know but my friend might want half-an-hour's conversation with me before that time? I was ushered into an empty drawing-room, and, from a needlebook and work-basket hastily abandoned, I had some reason to think I interrupted my little friend Miss Katie in some domestic labour more praiseworthy than elegant. In this critical age, filial piety must hide herself in a closet, if she has a mind to darn her father's linen.

Shortly after, I was the more fully convinced that I had been too early an intruder, when a wench came to fetch away the basket, and recommend to my courtesies a red and green gentleman in a cage, who answered all my advances by croaking out, 'You're a fool—you're a fool, I tell you!' until, upon my word, I began to think the creature was in the right. At last my friend arrived, a little overheated. He had been taking a turn at golf, to prepare him for 'colloquy sublime.' And wherefore not? since the game, with its variety of odds, lengths, bunkers, tee'd balls and so on, may be no inadequate representation of the hazards attending literary pursuits. In particular, those formidable buffets, which make one ball spin through the air like a rifle shot, and strike another down into the very earth it is placed upon, by the maladroitness, or the malicious purpose of the player—what are they but parallels to the favourable or depreciating notices of the reviewers, who play at golf with the publications of the season,

* Robert Walker [1754–1783], the colleague and rival of Doctor Hugh Blair [1758–1800], in the High Church, Saint Giles, Edinburgh.

† [A division of the principal law-court of Scotland.]

even as Altisidora, in her approach to the gates of the infernal regions, saw the devils playing at racket with the new books of Cervantes' days.*

Well, every hour has its end. Five o'clock came, and my friend, with his daughters and his handsome young son, who, though fairly buckled to the desk, is every now and then looking over his shoulder at a smart uniform, set seriously about satisfying the corporeal wants of nature; while I, stimulated by a nobler appetite after fame, wished that the touch of a magic wand could, without all the ceremony of picking and choosing, carving and slicing, masticating and swallowing, have transported a quantum sufficit *of the good things on my friend's hospitable board into the stomachs of those who surrounded it, to be there at leisure converted into chyle, while their thoughts were turned on higher matters. At length all was over. But the young ladies sat still, and talked of the music of the Freischutz,† for nothing else was then thought of; so we discussed the wild hunter's song, and the tame hunter's song, etc. etc., in all which my young friends were quite at home. Luckily for me, all this horning and hooping drew on some allusion to the Seventh Hussars, which gallant regiment, I observe, is a more favourite theme with both Miss Catherine and her brother than with my old friend, who presently looked at his watch, and said something significantly to Mr. James about office hours. The youth got up with the ease of a youngster that would be thought a man of fashion rather than of business, and endeavoured, with some success, to walk out of the room as if the locomotion was entirely voluntary; Miss Catherine and her sisters left us at the same time, and now, thought I, my trial comes on.*

Reader, did you ever, in the course of your life, cheat the courts of justice and lawyers, by agreeing to refer a dubious and important question to the decision of a mutual friend? If so, you may have remarked the relative change which the arbiter undergoes in your estimation, when raised, though by your own free choice, from an ordinary acquaintance, whose opinions were of as little consequence to you as yours to him, into a superior personage, on whose decision your fate must depend pro tanto, *as my friend Mr. Fairscribe would say. His looks assume a mysterious if not a minatory expression: his hat has a loftier air, and his wig, if he wears one, a more formidable buckle.*

I felt, accordingly, that my good friend Fairscribe, on the present occasion, had acquired something of a similar increase of consequence. But a week since, he had, in my opinion, been indeed an excellent-meaning man, perfectly competent to everything within his own profession, but immured, at the same time, among its forms and technicalities, and as incapable of judging of matters of taste as any mighty Goth whatsoever, of or belonging to the ancient Senate-House of Scotland. But what of that? I had made him my judge by my own election; and I have often observed that an idea of declining such a reference, on account of his own consciousness of incompetency, is, as it perhaps ought to be, the last which occurs to the referee himself. He that has a literary work subjected to his judgment by the author, immediately throws his mind into a critical attitude, though the subject be one which he never before thought of. No doubt the author is well qualified to select his own judge, and why should the arbiter whom he has chosen doubt his own talents for condemnation or acquittal, since he has been doubtless picked out by his friend, from his undubitable reliance on their competence? Surely the man who wrote the production is likely to know the person best qualified to judge of it.

Whilst these thoughts crossed my brain, I kept my eyes fixed on my good friend, whose motions appeared unusually tardy to me, while he ordered a bottle of particular claret, decanted it with scrupulous accuracy with his own hand, caused his old domestic to bring a saucer of olives and chips of toasted bread, and thus, on hospitable thoughts intent, seemed to me to adjourn the discussion which I longed to bring on, yet feared to precipitate.

'He is dissatisfied,' thought I, 'and is ashamed to show it, afraid doubtless of hurting my feelings. What had I to do to talk to him about anything save charters and sasines?—Stay, he is going to begin.'

'We are old fellows now, Mr. Croftangry,' said my landlord; 'scarcely so fit to take a poor quart of claret between us, as we would have been in better days to take a pint, in the old Scottish liberal acceptation of the phrase. Maybe you would have liked me to have kept James to help us. But if it is not on a holiday or so, I think it is best he should observe office hours.'*

Here the discourse was about to fall. I relieved it by saying, Mr. James was at the happy time of life when he had better things to do than to sit over the bottle. 'I suppose,' said I, 'your son is a reader?'

'Um—yes—James may be called a reader in a sense; but I doubt there is little solid in his studies—poetry and plays, Mr. Croftangry, all nonsense—they set his head a-gadding after the army, when he should be minding his business.'

'I suppose, then, that romances do not find much more grace in your eyes than dramatic and poetical compositions?'

'Deil a bit, deil a bit, Mr. Croftangry, nor historical productions either. There is too much fighting in history, as if men only were brought into this world to send one another out of it. It nourishes false notions of our being, and chief and proper end, Mr. Croftangry.'

Still all this was general, and I became determined to bring our discourse to a focus. 'I am afraid, then, I have done very ill to trouble you with my idle manuscripts, Mr. Fairscribe; but you must do me the justice to remember that I had nothing better to do than to amuse myself by writing the sheets I put into your hands the other day. I may truly plead—

I left no calling for this idle trade.

'I cry your mercy, Mr. Croftangry,' said my old friend, suddenly recollecting—'yes, yes, I have been very rude; but I had forgotten entirely

* [See *Don Quixote*, Part ii. chap. lxx.]

† [An opera by the German composer Weber.]

‡ [The Scottish pint was equal to three imperial pints.]

that you had taken a spell yourself at that idle man's trade.'

'I suppose,' replied I, 'you, on your side, have been too busy *a man to look at my poor Chronicles?'*

'No, no,' said my friend, 'I am not so bad as that neither. I have read them bit by bit, just as I could get a moment's time, and I believe I shall very soon get through them.'

'Well, my good friend?' said I interrogatively.

And 'Well, *Mr. Croftangry,' cried he, 'I really think you have got over the ground very tolerably well. I have noted down here two or three bits of things which I presume to be errors of the press, otherwise it might be alleged, perhaps, that you did not fully pay that attention to the grammatical rules which one would desire to see rigidly observed.'*

I looked at my friend's notes, which, in fact, showed that, in one or two grossly obvious passages, I had left uncorrected such solecisms in grammar.

'Well, well, I own my fault; but, setting apart these casual errors, how do you like the matter and the manner of what I have been writing, Mr. Fairscribe?'

'Why,' said my friend, pausing, with more grave and important hesitation than I thanked him for, 'there is not much to be said against the manner. The style is terse and intelligible, Mr. Croftangry, very intelligible; and that I consider as the first point in everything that is intended to be understood. There are, indeed, here and there some flights and fancies which I comprehended with difficulty; but I got to your meaning at last. There are people that are like ponies; their judgments cannot go fast, but they go sure.'

'That is a pretty clear proposition, my friend; but then how did you like the meaning when you did get at it? or was that like some ponies, too difficult to catch, and, when catched, not worth the trouble?'

'I am far from saying that, my dear sir, in respect it would be downright uncivil; but since you ask my opinion, I wish you could have thought about something more appertaining to civil policy, than all this bloody work about shooting and dirking, and downright hanging. I am told it was the Germans who first brought in such a practice of choosing their heroes out of the Porteous Roll; but, by my faith, we are like to be upsides with them. The first was, as I am credibly informed, Mr. Scolar, as they call him; a scholar-like piece of work he has made of it, with his robbers and thieves.'*

'Schiller,' said I, 'my dear sir, let it be Schiller.'

'Shiller, or what you like,' said Mr. Fairscribe; 'I found the book where I wish I had found a better one, and that is, in Kate's work-basket. I sat down, and, like an old fool, began to read; but there, I grant, you have the better of Shiller, Mr. Croftangry.'

'I should be glad, my dear sir, that you really think I have approached *that admirable author; even your friendly partiality ought not to talk of my having* excelled *him.'*

'But I do say you have excelled him, Mr. Croftangry, in a most material particular. For surely a book of amusement should be something that one can take up and lay down at pleasure; and I can say justly, I was never at the least loss to put aside these sheets of yours when business came in the way. But faith, this Shiller, sir, does not let you off so easily. I forgot one appointment on particular business, and I wilfully broke through another, that I might stay at home and finish his confounded book, which, after all, is about two brothers, the greatest rascals I ever heard of. The one, sir, goes near to murder his own father, and the other (which you would think still stranger) sets about to debauch his own wife.'

'I find, then, Mr. Fairscribe, that you have no taste for the romance of real life—no pleasure in contemplating those spirit-rousing impulses, which force men of fiery passions upon great crimes and great virtues?'

'Why, as to that, I am not just so sure. But then to mend the matter,' continued the critic, 'you have brought in Highlanders into every story, as if you were going back again, velis et remis, *into the old days of Jacobitism. I must speak my plain mind, Mr. Croftangry. I cannot tell what innovations in Kirk and State may now be proposed, but our fathers were friends to both, as they were settled at the glorious Revolution, and liked a tartan plaid as little as they did a white surplice. I wish to Heaven all this tartan fever bode well to the Protestant succession and the Kirk of Scotland.'*

'Both too well settled, I hope, in the minds of the subject,' said I, 'to be affected by old remembrances, on which we look back as on the portraits of our ancestors, without recollecting, while we gaze on them, any of the feuds by which the originals were animated while alive. But most happy should I be to light upon any topic to supply the place of the Highlands, Mr. Fairscribe. I have been just reflecting that the theme is becoming a little exhausted, and your experience may perhaps supply'——

'Ha, ha, ha!—my *experience supply!' interrupted Mr. Fairscribe, with a laugh of derision;*—*'why, you might as well ask my son James's experience to supply a case about thirlage. No, no, my good friend, I have lived by the law, and in the law, all my life; and when you seek the impulses that make soldiers desert and shoot their sergeants and corporals, and Highland drovers dirk English graziers, to prove themselves men of fiery passions, it is not to a man like me you should come. I could tell you some tricks of my own trade, perhaps, and a queer story or two of estates that have been lost and recovered. But, to tell you the truth, I think you might do with your Muse of Fiction, as you call her, as many an honest man does with his own sons in flesh and blood.'*

'And how is that, my dear sir?'

'Send her to India, to be sure. That is the true place for a Scot to thrive in; and if you carry your story fifty years back, as there is nothing to hinder you, you will find as much shooting and stabbing there as ever was in the wild Highlands. If you want rogues, as they are so much in fashion with you, you have that

* List of criminal indictments, so termed in Scotland.

gallant caste of adventurers, who laid down their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope as they went out to India, and forgot to take them up again when they returned. Then, for great exploits, you have in the old history of India, before Europeans were numerous there, the most wonderful deeds, done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford.'

'I know it,' said I, kindling at the ideas his speech inspired. 'I remember in the delightful pages of Orme, the interest which mingles in his narratives, from the very small number of English which are engaged. Each officer of a regiment becomes known to you by name, nay, the non-commissioned officers and privates acquire an individual share of interest. They are distinguished among the natives like the Spaniards among the Mexicans. What do I say? They are like Homer's demigods among the warring mortals. Men, like Clive and Cailliaud,† influenced great events, like Jove himself. Inferior officers are like Mars or Neptune; and the sergeants and corporals might well pass for demigods. Then the various religious costumes, habits, and manners of the people of Hindostan,—the patient Hindoo, the warlike Rajapoot, the haughty Moslemah, the savage and vindictive Malay—Glorious and unbounded subjects! The only objection is, that I have never been there, and know nothing at all about them.'*

'Nonsense, my good friend. You will tell us about them all the better that you know nothing of what you are saying; and come, we'll finish the bottle, and when Katie (her sisters go to the assembly)‡ has given us tea, she will tell you the outline of the story of poor Menie Gray, whose picture you will see in the drawing-room, a distant relation of my father's, who had, however, a handsome part of cousin Menie's succession. There are none living that can be hurt by the story now, though it was thought best to smother it up at the time, as indeed even the whispers about it led poor cousin Menie to live very retired. I mind her well when a child. There was something very gentle, but rather tiresome, about poor cousin Menie.'

When we came into the drawing-room, my friend pointed to a picture which I had before noticed, without, however, its having attracted more than a passing look; now I regarded it with more attention. It was one of those portraits of the middle of the eighteenth century, in which artists endeavoured to conquer the stiffness of hoops and brocades, by throwing a fancy drapery around the figure, with loose folds like a mantle or dressing-gown, the stays, however, being retained, and the bosom displayed in a manner which shows that our mothers, like their daughters, were as liberal of their charms as the nature of the dress might permit. To this, the well-known style of the period, the features and form of the individual added, at first sight, little interest. It represented a handsome woman of about thirty, her hair wound simply about her head, her features regular, and her complexion fair. But, on looking more closely, especially after having had a hint that the original had been the heroine of a tale, I could observe a melancholy sweetness in the countenance that seemed to speak of woes endured, and injuries sustained, with that resignation which women can and do sometimes display under the insults and ingratitude of those on whom they have bestowed their affections.

'Yes, she was an excellent and an ill-used woman,' said Mr. Fairscribe, his eye fixed like mine on the picture—'She left our family not less, I daresay, than five thousand pounds, and I believe she died worth four times that sum; but it was divided among the nearest of kin, which was all fair.'

'But her history, Mr. Fairscribe,' said I—'to judge from her look, it must have been a melancholy one.'

'You may say that, Mr. Croftangry. Melancholy enough, and extraordinary enough too—But,' added he, swallowing in haste a cup of the tea which was presented to him, 'I must away to my business—we cannot be gowffing all the morning, and telling old stories all the afternoon. Katie knows all the outs and the ins of cousin Menie's adventures as well as I do, and when she has given you the particulars, then I am at your service to condescend more articulately upon dates or particulars.'

Well, here was I, a gay old bachelor, left to hear a love tale from my young friend Katie Fairscribe, who, when she is not surrounded by a bevy of gallants, at which time, to my thinking, she shows less to advantage, is as pretty, well-behaved, and unaffected a girl as you see tripping the new walks of Princes Street or Heriot Row. Old bachelorship so decided as mine has its privileges in such a tête-à-tête, *providing you are, or can seem for the time, perfectly good-humoured and attentive, and do not ape the manners of your younger years, in attempting which you will only make yourself ridiculous. I don't pretend to be so indifferent to the company of a pretty young woman as was desired by the poet, who wished to sit beside his mistress—*

——As unconcern'd as when
Her infant beauty could beget
Nor happiness nor pain.

On the contrary, I can look on beauty and innocence, as something of which I know and esteem the value, without the desire or hope to make them my own. A young lady can afford to talk with an old stager like me without either artifice or affectation; and we may maintain a species of friendship, the more tender, perhaps, because we are of different sexes, yet with which that distinction has very little to do.

Now, I hear my wisest and most critical neighbour remark, 'Mr. Croftangry is in the way of doing a foolish thing. He is well to pass—Old Fairscribe knows to a penny what he is worth, and Miss Katie, with all her airs, may like the old brass that buys the new pan. I thought Mr. Croftangry was looking very cadgy when he came in to play a rubber with us last night. Poor gentleman, I am sure I should be sorry to see him make a fool of himself.'

* [*History of Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, for the year* 1745, by Robert Orme, 3 vols. 4to.]

† [Lord Clive, of Indian celebrity, born 1725, died 1774; and Frederic Cailliaud, the traveller, born 1787, died 1869.]

‡ [The fashionable balls of Old Edinburgh were so called.]

Spare your compassion, dear madam, there is not the least danger. The beaux yeux de ma casette *are not brilliant enough to make amends for the spectacles which must supply the dimness of my own. I am a little deaf, too, as you know, to your sorrow when we are partners; and if I could get a nymph to marry me with all these imperfections, who the deuce would marry Janet M'Evoy? and from Janet M'Evoy Chrystal Croft-angry will not part.*

Miss Katie Fairscribe gave me the tale of Menie Gray with much taste and simplicity, not attempting to suppress the feelings, whether of grief or resentment, which justly and naturally arose from the circumstances of the tale. Her father afterwards confirmed the principal outlines of the story, and furnished me with some additional circumstances which Miss Katie had suppressed or forgotten. Indeed, I have learned on this occasion, what old Lintot meant when he told Pope that he used to propitiate the critics of importance, when he had a work in the press, by now and then letting them see a sheet of the blotted proof, or a few leaves of the original manuscript. Our mystery of authorship hath something about it so fascinating, that if you admit any one, however little he may previously have been disposed to such studies, into your confidence, you will find that he considers himself as a party interested, and if success follows, will think himself entitled to no inconsiderable share of the praise.*

The reader has seen that no one could have been naturally less interested than was my excellent friend Fairscribe in my lucubrations, when I first consulted him on the subject; but since he has contributed a subject to the work, he has become a most zealous coadjutor; and, half-ashamed, I believe, yet half-proud of the literary stock-company in which he has got a share, he never meets me without jogging my elbow, and dropping some mysterious hints, as, 'I am saying —when will you give us any more of yon?'—or, 'Yon's not a bad narrative—I like yon.'

Pray Heaven the reader may be of his opinion.

November 1827.

* [The publisher of Pope s works.]

INTRODUCTION—(1831).

The tale of the Surgeon's Daughter *formed part of the first series of Chronicles of the Canongate, published in 1827; but has been separated from the stories of the* Highland Widow, *etc., which it originally accompanied, and deferred to the close of this collection, for reasons which printers and publishers will understand, and which would hardly interest the general reader.*

The Author has nothing to say now in reference to this little novel, but that the principal incident on which it turns was narrated to him one morning at breakfast by his worthy friend, Mr. Train of Castle Douglas, in Galloway, whose kind assistance he has so often had occasion to acknowledge in the course of these prefaces; and that the military friend who is alluded to as having furnished him with some information as to Eastern matters was Colonel James Ferguson of Huntly Burn, one of the sons of the venerable historian and philosopher of that name—which name he took the liberty of concealing under its Gaelic form of Mac-Erries.

W. S.

Abbotsford, *Sept.* 1831.

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION.

[*Mr Train was requested by Sir Walter Scott to give him, in writing, the story as nearly as possible in the shape in which he had told it; but the following narrative, which he drew up accordingly, did not reach Abbotsford until July 1832.*]

IN the old Stock of Fife, there was not, perhaps, an individual whose exertions were followed by consequences of such a remarkable nature as those of Davie Duff, popularly called 'The Thane of Fife,' who, from a very humble parentage, rose to fill one of the chairs of the magistracy of his native burgh. By industry and economy in early life, he obtained the means of erecting, solely on his own account, one of those ingenious manufactories for which Fifeshire is justly celebrated. From the day on which the industrious artisan first took his seat at the Council Board, he attended so much to the interests of the little privileged community, that civic honours were conferred on him as rapidly as the Set of the Royalty could legally admit.*

To have the right of walking to church on holy-day preceded by a phalanx of halberdiers, in habiliments fashioned as in former times, seems, in the eyes of many a guild brother, to be a very enviable pitch of worldly grandeur. Few persons were ever more proud of civic honours than the Thane of Fife, but he knew well how to turn his political influence to the best account. The council, court, and other business of the burgh, occupied much of his time, which caused him to entrust the management of his manufactory to a near relation, whose name was D——, a young man of dissolute habits; but the Thane, seeing at last that by continuing that extravagant person in that charge his affairs would, in all probability, fall into a state of bankruptcy, applied to the member of Parliament for that district to obtain a situation for his relation in the civil department of the State. The knight, whom it is here unnecessary to name, knowing how effectually the Thane ruled the little burgh, applied in the proper quarter, and actually obtained an appointment for D—— in the civil service of the East India Company.

A respectable surgeon, whose residence was in a neighbouring village, had a beautiful daughter named Emma, who had long been courted by D——. Immediately before his departure to India, as a mark of mutual affection, they exchanged miniatures, taken by an eminent artist in Fife, and each set in a locket, for the purpose of having the object of affection always in view.

The eyes of the old Thane were now turned towards Hindostan with much anxiety; but his relation had not long arrived in that distant quarter of the globe before he had the satisfaction of receiving a letter, conveying the welcome intelligence of his having taken possession of his new station in a large frontier town of the Company's dominions, and that great emoluments were attached to the situation; which was confirmed by several subsequent communications of the most gratifying description to the old Thane, who took great pleasure in spreading the news of the reformed habits and singular good fortune of his intended heir. None of all his former acquaintances heard with such joy the favourable report of the successful adventurer in the East, as did the fair and accomplished daughter of the village surgeon; but his previous character caused her to keep her own correspondence with him secret from her parents, to whom even the circumstance of her being acquainted with D—— was wholly unknown, till her father received a letter from him, in which he assured him of his attachment to Emma long before his departure from Fife; that, having been so happy as to gain her affections, he would have made her his wife before leaving his native country, had he then had the means of supporting her in a suitable rank through life; and that, having it now in his power to do so, he only waited the consent of her parents to fulfil the vow he had formerly made.

The doctor having a large family, with a very limited income to support them, and understanding that D—— had at last become a person of sober and industrious habits, he gave his consent, in which Emma's mother fully concurred.

Aware of the straitened circumstances of the doctor, D—— remitted a sum of money to complete at Edinburgh Emma's Oriental education, and fit her out in her journey to India; she was to embark at Sheerness, on board one of the Company's ships, for a port in India, at which place he said he would wait her arrival, with a retinue suited to a person of his rank in society.

Emma set out from her father's house just in time to secure a passage, as proposed by her intended husband, accompanied by her only brother, who, on their arrival at Sheerness, met one C——, an old schoolfellow, captain of the ship by which Emma was to proceed to India.

It was the particular desire of the doctor that his daughter should be committed to the care of that gentleman, from the time of her leaving the shores of Britain till the intended marriage ceremony was duly performed, on her arrival in India; a charge that was frankly undertaken by the generous sea-captain.

On the arrival of the fleet at the appointed port, D——, with a large cavalcade of mounted Pindarees,† was, as expected, in attendance, ready to salute Emma on landing, and to carry her direct into the interior of the country. C——, who had made several voyages to the shores of Hindostan, knowing something of Hindoo manners and customs, was surprised to see a private individual in the Company's service with so many attendants; and when D—— declined having the marriage ceremony performed according to the rites of the Church, till he returned to the place of his abode, C——, more and more confirmed in his suspicion that all was not right, resolved not to part with Emma till he had fulfilled, in the most satisfactory manner, the promise he had made before leaving England, of giving her duly away in marriage. Not being able by her entreaties to alter the resolution of D——, Emma solicited her protector C—— to accompany her to the place of her intended destination, to which he most readily agreed, taking with him as many of his crew as he deemed sufficient to insure the safe custody of his innocent protégée, should any attempt be made to carry her away by force.

Both parties journeyed onwards till they arrived at a frontier town, where a native Rajah was waiting the arrival of the fair maid of Fife, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, from seeing her miniature likeness in the possession of D——, to whom he had paid a large sum of money for the original, and had only entrusted him to convey her in state to the seat of his government.

No sooner was this villanous action of D—— known to C——, than he communicated the whole particulars to the commanding officer of a regiment of Scotch Highlanders that happened to be quartered in that part of India, begging at the same time, for the honour of Caledonia, and protection of injured innocence, that he would use the means in his power of resisting any attempt that might be made by the native chief to wrest from their hands the virtuous female who had been so shamefully decoyed from her native country by the worst of mankind. Honour occupied too large a space in the heart of the Gael to resist such a call of humanity.

The Rajah, finding his claim was not to be acceded to, and resolving to enforce the same, assembled his troops, and attacked with great fury the place where the affrighted Emma was for a time secured by her country men, who fought in her defence with all their native valour, which at length so overpowered their assailants, that they were forced to retire in every direction, leaving behind many of their slain, among whom was found the mangled corpse of the perfidious D——.

C—— was immediately afterwards married to Emma, and my informant assured me he saw them many years afterwards, living happily together in the county of Kent, on the fortune bequeathed by the 'Thane of Fife.'

J. T.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, *July* 1832.

* The Constitution of the Burgh.

[† Mercenary soldiers or freebooters.]

RICHARD MIDDLEMAS AND TOM HILLARY.—PAGE 766.

CHAPTER. I.

When fainting Nature call'd for aid,
And hovering Death prepared the blow,
His vigorous remedy display'd
The power of art without the show;
In Misery's darkest caverns known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die;
No summons mock'd by cold delay,
No petty gains disclaim'd by pride,
The modest wants of every day
The toil of every day supplied.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE exquisitely beautiful portrait which the Rambler has painted of his friend Levett,* well describes Gideon Gray, and many other village doctors, from whom Scotland reaps more benefit, and to whom she is perhaps more ungrateful, than to any other class of men, excepting her schoolmasters.

Such a rural man of medicine is usually the inhabitant of some petty burgh or village, which forms the central point of his practice. But, besides attending to such cases as the village may afford, he is day and night at the service of every one who may command his assistance within a circle of forty miles in diameter, untraversed by roads in many directions, and including moors, mountains, rivers, and lakes. For late and dangerous journeys through an inaccessible country, for services of the most essential kind, rendered at the expense, or risk at least, of his own health and life, the Scottish village doctor receives at best a very moderate recompense, often one which is totally inadequate, and very frequently none whatever. He has none of the ample resources proper to the brothers of the profession in an English town. The burgesses of a Scottish burgh are rendered, by their limited means of luxury, inaccessible to gout, surfeits, and all the comfortable chronic diseases which are attendant on wealth and indolence. Four years, or so, of abstemiousness, enable them to stand an election dinner; and there is no hope of broken heads among a score or two of quiet electors, who settle the business over a table. There the mothers of the State never make a point of pouring, in the course of every revolving year, a certain quantity of doctor's stuff through the bowels of their beloved children. Every old woman, from the townhead to the townfit, can prescribe a dose of salts, or spread a plaster; and it is only when a fever or a palsy renders matters serious, that the assistance of the doctor is invoked by his neighbours in the burgh.

But still the man of science cannot complain of inactivity or want of practice. If he does not find patients at his door, he seeks them through a wide circle. Like the ghostly lover of Burger's *Leonora*,† he mounts at midnight, and traverses

* [A sort of medical practitioner whom Doctor Johnson sheltered in his own house for twenty years.]

† [A German poem that was translated by Sir Walter Scott.]

in darkness paths which, to those less accustomed to them, seem formidable in daylight, through straits where the slightest aberration would plunge him into a morass, or throw him over a precipice, on to cabins which his horse might ride over without knowing they lay in his way, unless he happened to fall through the roofs. When he arrives at such a stately termination of his journey, where his services are required, either to bring a wretch into the world, or prevent one from leaving it, the scene of misery is often such that, far from touching the hard-saved shillings which are gratefully offered to him, he bestows his medicines as well as his attendance—for charity. I have heard the celebrated traveller Mungo Park, who had experienced both courses of life, rather give the preference to travelling as a discoverer in Africa, than to wandering by night and day the wilds of his native land in the capacity of a country medical practitioner. He mentioned having once upon a time rode forty miles, sat up all night, and successfully assisted a woman under influence of the primitive curse, for which his sole remuneration was a roasted potato and a draught of buttermilk. But his was not the heart which grudged the labour that relieved human misery. In short, there is no creature in Scotland that works harder and is more poorly requited than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable, in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition; and so you will often find in his master, under an unpromising and blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science.

Mr. Gideon Gray, surgeon in the village of Middlemas, situated in one of the midland counties of Scotland, led the rough, active, and ill-rewarded course of life which we have endeavoured to describe. He was a man between forty and fifty, devoted to his profession, and of such reputation in the medical world, that he had been more than once, as opportunities occurred, advised to exchange Middlemas and its meagre circle of practice for some of the larger towns in Scotland, or for Edinburgh itself. This advice he had always declined. He was a plain, blunt man, who did not love restraint, and was unwilling to subject himself to that which was exacted in polite society. He had not himself found out, nor had any friend hinted to him, that a slight touch of the cynic, in manner and habits, gives the physician, to the common eye, an air of authority which greatly tends to enlarge his reputation. Mr. Gray, or, as the country people called him, Doctor Gray (he might hold the title by diploma for what I know, though he only claimed the rank of Master of Arts), had few wants, and these were amply supplied by a professional income which generally approached two hundred pounds a-year, for which, upon an average, he travelled about five thousand miles on horseback in the course of the twelve months. Nay, so liberally did this revenue support himself and his ponies, called Pestle and Mortar, which he exercised alternately, that he took a damsel to shrae it, Jean Watson, namely, the cherry-cheeked daughter of an honest farmer, who, being herself one of twelve children who had been brought up on an income of fourscore pounds a-year, never thought there could be poverty in more than double the sum; and looked on Gray, though now termed by irreverent youth the Old Doctor, as a very advantageous match. For several years they had no children, and it seemed as if Doctor Gray, who had so often assisted the efforts of the goddess Lucina,* was never to invoke her in his own behalf. Yet his domestic roof was, on a remarkable occasion, decreed to be the scene where the goddess's art was required.

Late of an autumn evening three old women might be observed plying their aged limbs through the single street of the village at Middlemas towards the honoured door, which, fenced off from the vulgar causeway, was defended by a broken paling, enclosing two slips of ground, half arable, half overrun with an abortive attempt at shrubbery. The door itself was blazoned with the name of Gideon Gray, M.A., Surgeon, etc. etc. Some of the idle young fellows, who had been a minute or two before loitering at the other end of the street before the door of the alehouse (for the pretended inn deserved no better name), now accompanied the old dames with shouts of laughter, excited by their unwonted agility; and with bets on the winner, as loudly expressed as if they had been laid at the starting-post of Middlemas races. 'Half-a-mutchkin on Luckie Simson!'—'Auld Peg Tamson against the field!'—'Mair speed, Alison Jaup, ye'll tak the wind out of them yet!'—'Canny against the hill, lasses, or we may have a brusten auld carline amang ye!' These, and a thousand such gibes, rent the air, without being noticed, or even heard, by the anxious racers, whose object of contention seemed to be, which should first reach the doctor's door.

'Guide us, Doctor, what can be the matter now!' said Mrs. Gray, whose character was that of a good-natured simpleton. 'Here's Peg Tamson, Jean Simson, and Alison Jaup running a race on the hie street of the burgh!'

The doctor, who had but the moment before hung his wet greatcoat before the fire (for he was just dismounted from a long journey), hastened down-stairs, auguring some new occasion for his services, and happy that, from the character of the messengers, it was likely to be within burgh, and not landward.

He had just reached the door as Lucky Simson, one of the racers, arrived in the little area before it. She had got the start, and kept it, but at the expense, for the time, of her power of utterance; for when she came in presence of the doctor, she stood blowing like a grampus, her loose toy flying back from her face, making the most violent efforts to speak, but without the power of uttering a single intelligible word. Peg Thomson whipped in before her.

'The leddy, sir, the leddy!'——

'Instant help, instant help!'—screeched, rather than uttered, Alison Jaup; while Lucky Simson, who had certainly won the race, found

* [Who took births under her care.]

words to claim the prize which had set them all in motion. 'And I hope, sir, you will recommend me to be the sick-nurse; I was here to bring you the tidings lang before ony a' thae lazy queans.'

Loud were the counter-protestations of the two competitors, and loud the laugh of the idle *loons* who listened at a little distance.

'Hold your tongue, ye flyting fools,'* said the doctor; 'and you, ye idle rascals, if I come out among you'—— So saying, he smacked his long-lashed whip with great emphasis, producing much the effect of the celebrated *Quos ego* of Neptune in the first *Æneid*.—'And now,' said the doctor, 'where, or who, is this lady?'

The question was scarce necessary; for a plain carriage, with four horses, came at a foot's-pace towards the door of the doctor's house, and the old women, now more at their ease, gave the doctor to understand that the gentleman thought the accommodation of the Swan Inn totally unfit for his lady's rank and condition, and had, by their advice (each claiming the merit of the suggestion), brought her here, to experience the hospitality of the *west room*;—a spare apartment, in which Doctor Gray occasionally accommodated such patients as he desired to keep for a space of time under his own eye.

There were two persons only in the vehicle. The one, a gentleman in a riding dress, sprung out, and, having received from the doctor an assurance that the lady would receive tolerable accommodation in his house, he lent assistance to his companion to leave the carriage, and, with great apparent satisfaction, saw her safely deposited in a decent sleeping apartment, and under the respectable charge of the doctor and his lady, who assured him once more of every species of attention. To bind their promise more firmly, the stranger slipped a purse of twenty guineas (for this story chanced in the golden age, into the hand of the doctor, as an earnest of the most liberal recompense, and requested he would spare no expense in providing all that was necessary or desirable for a person in the lady's condition, and for the helpless being to whom she might immediately be expected to give birth. He then said he would retire to the inn, where he begged a message might instantly acquaint him with the expected change in the lady's situation.

'She is of rank,' he said, 'and a foreigner; let no expense be spared. We designed to have reached Edinburgh, but were forced to turn off the road by an accident.' Once more he said, 'Let no expense be spared, and manage that she may travel as soon as possible.'

'That,' said the doctor, 'is past my control. Nature must not be hurried, and she avenges herself of every attempt to do so.'

'But art,' said the stranger, 'can do much,' and he proffered a second purse, which seemed as heavy as the first.

'Art,' said the doctor, 'may be recompensed, but cannot be purchased. You have already paid me more than enough to take the utmost care I can of your lady; should I accept more money, it could only be for promising, by implication at least, what is beyond my power to perform. Every possible care shall be taken of your lady, and that affords the best chance of her being speedily able to travel.—Now, go you to the inn, sir, for I may be instantly wanted, and we have not yet provided either an attendant for the lady, or a nurse for the child; but both shall be presently done.'

'Yet a moment, Doctor—what languages do you understand?'

'Latin and French I can speak indifferently, and so as to be understood; and I read a little Italian.'

'But no Portuguese or Spanish?' continued the stranger.

'No, sir.'

'That is unlucky. But you may make her understand you by means of French. Take notice, you are to comply with her request in everything—if you want means to do so, you may apply to me.'

'May I ask, sir, by what name the lady is to be'——

'It is totally indifferent,' said the stranger, interrupting the question; 'you shall know it at more leisure.'

So saying, he threw his ample cloak about him, turning himself half round to assist the operation, with an air which the doctor would have found it difficult to imitate, and walked down the street to the little inn. Here he paid and dismissed the postilions, and shut himself up in an apartment, ordering no one to be admitted till the doctor should call.

The doctor, when he returned to his patient's apartment, found his wife in great surprise, which, as is usual with persons of her character, was not unmixed with fear and anxiety.

'She cannot speak a word like a Christian being,' said Mrs. Gray.

'I know it,' said the doctor.

'But she threeps to keep on a black fause-face, and skirls if we offer to take it away.'

'Well, then, let her wear it—What harm will it do?'

'Harm, Doctor! Was ever honest woman brought to bed with a fause-face on?'

'Seldom, perhaps. But, Jean, my dear, those who are not quite honest must be brought to bed all the same as those who are, and we are not to endanger the poor thing's life by contradicting her whims at present.'

Approaching the sick woman's bed, he observed that she indeed wore a thin silk mask of the kind which do such uncommon service in the elder comedy; such as women of rank still wore in travelling, but certainly never in the situation of this poor lady. It would seem she had sustained importunity on the subject, for when she saw the doctor, she put her hand to her face, as if she was afraid he would insist on pulling off the vizard. He hastened to say, in tolerable French, that her will should be a law to them in every respect, and that she was at perfect liberty to wear the mask till it was her pleasure to lay it aside. She understood him; for she replied, by a very imperfect attempt, in the same language, to express her gratitude for the permission, as she seemed to regard it, of retaining her disguise.

* [Scolding fools.]

The doctor proceeded to other arrangements; and, for the satisfaction of those readers who may love minute information, we record that Lucky Simson, the first in the race, carried as a prize the situation of sick-nurse beside the delicate patient; that Peg Thomson was permitted the privilege of recommending her good-daughter, Bet Jamieson, to be wet-nurse; and an *oe*, or grandchild, of Lucky Jaup was hired to assist in the increased drudgery of the family; the doctor thus, like a practised minister, dividing among his trusty adherents such good things as fortune placed at his disposal.

About one in the morning the doctor made his appearance at the Swan Inn, and acquainted the stranger gentleman that he wished him joy of being the father of a healthy boy, and that the mother was, in the usual phrase, as well as could be expected.

The stranger heard the news with seeming satisfaction, and then exclaimed, 'He must be christened, Doctor! he must be christened instantly!'

'There can be no hurry for that,' said the doctor.

'*We* think otherwise,' said the stranger, cutting his argument short. 'I am a Catholic, Doctor, and as I may be obliged to leave this place before the lady is able to travel, I desire to see my child received into the pale of the Church. There is, I understand, a Catholic priest in this wretched place?'

'There is a Catholic gentleman, sir, Mr. Goodriche, who is reported to be in orders.'

'I commend your caution, Doctor,' said the stranger; 'it is dangerous to be too positive on any subject. I will bring that same Mr. Goodriche to your house to-morrow.'

Gray hesitated for a moment. 'I am a Presbyterian Protestant, sir,' he said, 'a friend to the constitution as established in Church and State, as I have a good right, having drawn his Majesty's pay, God bless him, for four years, as surgeon's mate in the Cameronian regiment, as my regimental Bible and commission can testify. But although I be bound especially to abhor all trafficking or trinketing with Papists, yet I will not stand in the way of a tender conscience. Sir, you may call with Mr. Goodriche, when you please, at my house; and undoubtedly, you being, as I suppose, the father of the child, you will arrange matters as you please; only, I do not desire to be thought an abettor or countenancer of any part of the popish ritual.'

'Enough, sir,' said the stranger haughtily; 'we understand each other.'

The next day he appeared at the doctor's house with Mr. Goodriche, and two persons understood to belong to that reverend gentleman's communion. The party were shut up in an apartment with the infant, and it may be presumed that the solemnity of baptism was administered to the unconscious being thus strangely launched upon the world. When the priest and witnesses had retired, the strange gentleman informed Mr. Gray that, as the lady had been pronounced unfit for travelling for several days, he was himself about to leave the neighbourhood, but would return thither in the space of ten days, when he hoped to find his companion able to leave it.

'And by what name are we to call the child and mother?'

'The infant's name is Richard.'

'But it must have some surname—so must the lady—She cannot reside in my house, yet be without a name.'

'Call them by the name of your town here—Middlemas, I think it is?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Well, Mrs. Middlemas is the name of the mother, and Richard Middlemas of the child—and I am Matthew Middlemas, at your service. This,' he continued, 'will provide Mrs. Middlemas in everything she may wish to possess—or assist her in case of accidents.' With that he placed £100 in Mr. Gray's hand, who rather scrupled receiving it, saying, 'He supposed the lady was qualified to be her own purse-bearer.'

'The worst in the world, I assure you, Doctor,' replied the stranger. 'If she wished to change that piece of paper, she would scarce know how many guineas she should receive for it. No, Mr. Gray, I assure you you will find Mrs. Middleton—Middlemas—what did I call her—as ignorant of the affairs of this world as any one you have met with in your practice; so you will please to be her treasurer and administrator for the time, as for a patient that is incapable to look after her own affairs.'

This was spoke, as it struck Doctor Gray, in rather a haughty and supercilious manner. The words intimated nothing in themselves, more than the same desire of preserving incognito, which might be gathered from all the rest of the stranger's conduct; but the manner seemed to say, 'I am not a person to be questioned by any one—what I say must be received without comment, how little soever you may believe or understand it.' It strengthened Gray in his opinion that he had before him a case either of seduction, or of private marriage, betwixt persons of the very highest rank; and the whole bearing, both of the lady and the gentleman, confirmed his suspicions. It was not in his nature to be troublesome or inquisitive, but he could not fail to see that the lady wore no marriage-ring; and her deep sorrow and perpetual tremor seemed to indicate an unhappy creature, who had lost the protection of parents, without acquiring a legitimate right to that of a husband. He was therefore somewhat anxious when Mr. Middlemas, after a private conference of some length with the lady, bade him farewell. It is true, he assured him of his return within ten days, being the very shortest space which Gray could be prevailed upon to assign for any prospect of the lady being removed with safety.

'I trust in Heaven that he will return,' said Gray to himself; 'but there is too much mystery about all this, for the matter being a plain and well-meaning transaction. If he intends to treat this poor thing as many a poor girl has been used before, I hope that my house will not be the scene in which he chooses to desert her. The leaving the money has somewhat a suspicious aspect, and looks as if my friend were in the act of making some compromise with his conscience. Well—I must hope the best. Meantime, my path plainly is to do what I can for the poor lady's benefit.'

Mr. Gray visited his patient shortly after Mr. Middlemas's departure—as soon, indeed, as he could be admitted. He found her in violent agitation. Gray's experience dictated the best mode of relief and tranquillity. He caused her infant to be brought to her. She wept over it for a long time, and the violence of her agitation subsided under the influence of parental feelings, which, from her appearance of extreme youth, she must have experienced for the first time.

The observant physician could, after this paroxysm, remark that his patient's mind was chiefly occupied in computing the passage of the time, and anticipating the period when the return of her husband—if husband he was—might be expected. She consulted almanacks, inquired concerning distances, though so cautiously as to make it evident she desired to give no indication of the direction of her companion's journey, and repeatedly compared her watch with those of others ; exercising, it was evident, all that delusive species of mental arithmetic by which mortals attempt to accelerate the passage of Time while they calculate his progress. At other times she wept anew over her child, which was by all judges pronounced as goodly an infant as needed to be seen ; and Gray sometimes observed that she murmured sentences to the unconscious infant, not only the words, but the very sound and accents of which were strange to him, and which, in particular, he knew not to be Portuguese.

Mr. Goodriche, the Catholic priest, demanded access to her upon one occasion. She at first declined his visit, but afterwards received it, under the idea, perhaps, that he might have news from Mr. Middlemas, as he called himself. The interview was a very short one, and the priest left the lady's apartment in displeasure, which his prudence could scarce disguise from Mr. Gray. He never returned, although the lady's condition would have made his attentions and consolations necessary, had she been a member of the Catholic Church.

Our doctor began at length to suspect his fair guest was a Jewess, who had yielded up her person and affections to one of a different religion ; and the peculiar style of her beautiful countenance went to enforce this opinion. The circumstances made no difference to Gray, who saw only her distress and desolation, and endeavoured to remedy both to the utmost of his power. He was, however, desirous to conceal it from his wife, and the others around the sick person, whose prudence and liberality of thinking might be more justly doubted. He therefore so regulated her diet, that she could not be either offended, or brought under suspicion, by any of the articles forbidden by the Mosaic law being presented to her. In other respects than what concerned her health or convenience, he had but little intercourse with her.

The space passed within which the stranger's return to the burgh had been so anxiously expected by his female companion. The disappointment occasioned by his non-arrival was manifested in the convalescent by inquietude, which was at first mingled with peevishness, and afterwards with doubt and fear. When two or three days had passed without message or letter of any kind, Gray himself became anxious, both on his own account and the poor lady's, lest the stranger should have actually entertained the idea of deserting this defenceless and probably injured woman. He longed to have some communication with her, which might enable him to judge what inquiries could be made, or what else was most fitting to be done. But so imperfect was the poor young woman's knowledge of the French language, and perhaps so unwilling she herself to throw any light on her situation, that every attempt of this kind proved abortive. When Gray asked questions concerning any subject which appeared to approach to explanation, he observed she usually answered him by shaking her head, in token of not understanding what he said ; at other times by silence, and with tears, and sometimes referring him to *Monsieur*.

For *Monsieur's* arrival, then, Gray began to become very impatient, as that which alone could put an end to a disagreeable species of mystery, which the good company of the burgh began now to make the principal subject of their gossip ; some blaming Gray for taking foreign *landloupers* * into his house, on the subject of whose morals the most serious doubts might be entertained ; others envying the 'bonnie hand' the doctor was like to make of it, by having disposal of the wealthy stranger's travelling funds ; a circumstance which could not be well concealed from the public, when the honest man's expenditure for trifling articles of luxury came far to exceed its ordinary bounds.

The conscious probity of the honest doctor enabled him to despise this sort of tittle-tattle, though the secret knowledge of its existence could not be agreeable to him. He went his usual rounds with his usual perseverance, and waited with patience until time should throw light on the subject and history of his lodger. It was now the fourth week after her confinement, and the recovery of the stranger might be considered as perfect, when Gray, returning from one of his ten-mile visits, saw a post-chaise and four horses at the door. 'This man has returned,' he said, 'and my suspicions have done him less than justice.' With that he spurred his horse, a signal which the trusty steed obeyed the more readily, as its progress was in the direction of the stable door. But when, dismounting, the doctor hurried into his own house, it seemed to him that the departure as well as the arrival of this distressed lady was destined to bring confusion to his peaceful dwelling. Several idlers had assembled about his door, and two or three had impudently thrust themselves forward almost into the passage, to listen to a confused altercation which was heard from within.

The doctor hastened forward, the foremost of the intruders retreating in confusion on his approach, while he caught the tones of his wife's voice, raised to a pitch which he knew, by experience, boded no good ; for Mrs. Gray, good-humoured and tractable in general, could sometimes perform the high part in a matrimonial duet. Having much more confidence in his wife's good intentions than her prudence, he lost

* Strollers.

no time in pushing into the parlour, to take the matter into his own hands. Here he found his helpmate, at the head of the whole militia of the sick lady's apartment, that is, wet-nurse, and sick-nurse, and girl-of-all-work, engaged in violent dispute with two strangers. The one was a dark-featured elderly man, with an eye of much sharpness and severity of expression, which now seemed partly quenched by a mixture of grief and mortification. The other, who appeared actively sustaining the dispute with Mrs. Gray, was a stout, bold-looking, hard-faced person, armed with pistols, of which he made rather an unnecessary and ostentatious display.

'Here is my husband, sir,' said Mrs. Gray, in a tone of triumph, for she had the grace to believe the doctor one of the greatest men living,—'Here is the Doctor—let us see what you will say now.'

'Why, just what I said before, ma'am,' answered the man, 'which is, that my warrant must be obeyed. It is regular, ma'am, regular.'

So saying, he struck the forefinger of his right hand against a paper which he held towards Mrs. Gray with his left.

'Address yourself to me, if you please, sir,' said the doctor, seeing that he ought to lose no time in removing the cause into the proper court. 'I am the master of this house, sir, and I wish to know the cause of this visit.'

'My business is soon told,' said the man. 'I am a king's messenger, and this lady has treated me as if I was a baron-bailie's officer.'

'That is not the question, sir,' replied the doctor. 'If you are a king's messenger, where is your warrant, and what do you propose to do here?' At the same time he whispered the little wench to call Mr. Lawford, the town-clerk, to come thither as fast as he possibly could. The good-daughter of Peg Thomson started off with an activity worthy of her mother-in-law.

'There is my warrant,' said the official, 'and you may satisfy yourself.'

'The shameless loon dare not tell the Doctor his errand,' said Mrs. Gray exultingly.

'A bonnie errand it is,' said old Lucky Simson, 'to carry away a lying-in woman as a gled * would do a clocking-hen.'

'A woman no a month delivered!' echoed the nurse Jamieson.

'Twenty-four days, eight hours, and seven minutes, to a second,' said Mrs. Gray.

The doctor having looked over the warrant, which was regular, began to be afraid that the females of his family, in their zeal for defending the character of their sex, might be stirred up into some sudden fit of mutiny, and therefore commanded them to be silent.

'This,' he said, 'is a warrant for arresting the bodies of Richard Tresham and of Zilia de Monçada, on account of high treason. Sir, I have served his Majesty, and this is not a house in which traitors are harboured. I know nothing of any of these two persons, nor have I ever heard even their names.'

'But the lady whom you have received into your family,' said the messenger, 'is Zilia de Monçada, and here stands her father, Matthias de Monçada, who will make oath to it.'

'If this be true,' said Mr. Gray, looking towards the alleged officer, 'you have taken a singular duty on you. It is neither my habit to deny my own actions, nor to oppose the laws of the land. There is a lady in this house slowly recovering from confinement, having become under this roof the mother of a healthy child. If she be the person described in this warrant, and this gentleman's daughter, I must surrender her to the laws of the country.'

Here the Esculapian militia were once more in motion.

'Surrender, Doctor Gray! It's a shame to hear you speak, and you that lives by women and weans, abune your other means!' so exclaimed his fair better part.

'I wonder to hear the Doctor!' said the younger nurse; 'there's no a wife in the town would believe it o' him.'

'I aye thought the Doctor was a man till this moment,' said Lucky Simson; 'but I believe him now to be an auld wife, little baulder than mysel'; and I dinna wonder now that poor Mrs. Gray'——

'Hold your peace, you foolish woman,' said the doctor. 'Do you think this business is not bad enough already, that you are making it worse with your senseless claver?†—Gentlemen, this is a very sad case. Here is a warrant for a high crime against a poor creature who is little fit to be removed from one house to another, much more dragged to a prison. I tell you plainly that I think the execution of this arrest may cause her death. It is your business, sir, if you be really her father, to consider what you can do to soften this matter, rather than drive it on.'

'Better death than dishonour,' replied the stern-looking old man, with a voice as harsh as his aspect; 'and you, messenger,' he continued, 'look what you do, and execute the warrant at your peril.'

'You hear,' said the man, appealing to the doctor himself, 'I must have immediate access to the lady.'

'In a lucky time,' said Mr. Gray, 'here comes the town-clerk.—You are very welcome, Mr. Lawford. Your opinion here is much wanted as a man of law, as well as of sense and humanity. I was never more glad to see you in all my life.'

He then rapidly stated the case; and the messenger, understanding the new-comer to be a man of some authority, again exhibited his warrant.

'This is a very sufficient and valid warrant, Doctor Gray,' replied the man of law. 'Nevertheless, if you are disposed to make oath that instant removal would be unfavourable to the lady's health, unquestionably she must remain here, suitably guarded.'

'It is not so much the mere act of locomotion which I am afraid of,' said the surgeon; 'but I am free to depone, on soul and conscience, that the shame and fear of her father's anger, and the sense of the affront of such an arrest, with terror for its consequences, may occasion violent and dangerous illness—even death itself.'

* Or kite.

† Tattling.

'The father must see the daughter, though they may have quarrelled,' said Mr. Lawford; 'the officer of justice must execute his warrant, though it should frighten the criminal to death: these evils are only contingent, not direct and immediate consequences. You must give up the lady, Mr. Gray, though your hesitation is very natural.'

'At least, Mr. Lawford, I ought to be certain that the person in my house is the party they search for.'

'Admit me to her apartment,' replied the man whom the messenger termed Monçada.

The messenger, whom the presence of Lawford had made something more placid, began to become impudent once more. He hoped, he said, by means of his female prisoner, to acquire the information necessary to apprehend the more guilty person. If more delays were thrown in his way, that information might come too late, and he would make all who were accessary to such delay responsible for the consequences.

'And I,' said Mr. Gray, 'though I were to be brought to the gallows for it, protest that this course may be the murder of my patient.—Can bail not be taken, Mr. Lawford?'

'Not in case of high treason,' said the official person; and then continued in a confidential tone, 'Come, Mr. Gray, we all know you to be a person well affected to our royal sovereign King George and the government; but you must not push this too far, lest you bring yourself into trouble, which everybody in Middlemas would be sorry for. The Forty-Five * has not been so far gone by, but we can remember enough of warrants of high treason—ay, and ladies of quality committed upon such charges. But they were all favourably dealt with—Lady Ogilvy, Lady Mackintosh, Flora Macdonald, and all. No doubt this gentleman knows what he is doing, and has assurances of the young lady's safety—So you must just jouk and let the jaw gae by,† as we say.'

'Follow me, then, gentlemen,' said Gideon, 'and you shall see the young lady;' and then, his strong features working with emotion at anticipation of the distress which he was about to inflict, he led the way up the small staircase, and, opening the door, said to Monçada, who had followed him, 'This is your daughter's only place of refuge, in which I am, alas! too weak to be her protector. Enter, sir, if your conscience will permit you.'

The stranger turned on him a scowl, into which it seemed as if he would willingly have thrown the power of the fabled basilisk. Then, stepping proudly forward, he stalked into the room. He was followed by Lawford and Gray at a little distance. The messenger remained in the doorway. The unhappy young woman had heard the disturbance, and guessed the cause too truly. It is possible she might even have seen the strangers on their descent from the carriage. When they entered the room, she was on her knees beside an easy-chair, her face in a silk wrapper that was hung over it. The man called Monçada uttered a single word; by the accent it might have been something equivalent to *wretch*; but none knew its import. The female gave a convulsive shudder, such as that by which a half-dying soldier is affected on receiving a second wound. But, without minding her emotion, Monçada seized her by the arm, and with little gentleness raised her to her feet, on which she seemed to stand only because she was supported by his strong grasp. He then pulled from her face the mask which she had hitherto worn. The poor creature still endeavoured to shroud her face, by covering it with her left hand, as the manner in which she was held prevented her from using the aid of the right. With little effort her father secured that hand also, which, indeed, was of itself far too little to serve the purpose of concealment, and showed her beautiful face, burning with blushes, and covered with tears.

'You, Alcade, and you, Surgeon,' he said to Lawford and Gray, with a foreign action and accent, 'this woman is my daughter, the same Zilia Monçada who is signal'd in that protocol. Make way, and let me carry her where her crimes may be atoned for.'

'Are you that person's daughter?' said Lawford to the lady.

'She understands no English,' said Gray; and, addressing his patient in French, conjured her to let him know whether she was that man's daughter or not, assuring her of protection if the fact were otherwise. The answer was murmured faintly, but was too distinctly intelligible—'He was her father.'

All further title of interference seemed now ended. The messenger arrested his prisoner; and, with some delicacy, required the assistance of the females to get her conveyed to the carriage in waiting.

Gray again interfered. 'You will not,' he said, 'separate the mother and the infant?'

Zilia de Monçada heard the question (which, being addressed to the father, Gray had inconsiderately uttered in French), and it seemed as if it recalled to her recollection the existence of the helpless creature to which she had given birth, forgotten for a moment amongst the accumulated horrors of her father's presence. She uttered a shriek, expressing poignant grief, and turned her eyes on her father with the most intense supplication.

'To the parish with the bastard!' said Monçada; while the helpless mother sunk lifeless into the arms of the females, who had now gathered round her.

'That will not pass, sir,' said Gideon—'If you are father to that lady, you must be grandfather to the helpless child; and you must settle in some manner for its future provision, or refer us to some responsible person.'

Monçada looked towards Lawford, who expressed himself satisfied of the propriety of what Gray said.

'I object not to pay for whatever the wretched child may require,' said he; 'and if you, sir,' addressing Gray, 'choose to take charge of him, and breed him up, you shall have what will better your living.'

The doctor was about to refuse a charge so uncivilly offered; but after a moment's reflection

* [The Rebellion of 1745.]
† [Stoop and let the wave go by.]

he replied, 'I think so indifferently of the proceedings I have witnessed, and of those concerned in them, that if the mother desires that I should retain the charge of this child, I will not refuse to do so.'

Monçada spoke to his daughter, who was just beginning to recover from her swoon, in the same language in which he had first addressed her. The proposition which he made seemed highly acceptable, as she started from the arms of the females, and, advancing to Gray, seized his hand, kissed it, bathed it in her tears, and seemed reconciled, even in parting with her child, by the consideration that the infant was to remain under his guardianship.

'Good, kind man,' she said in her indifferent French, 'you have saved both mother and child.'

The father, meanwhile, with mercantile deliberation, placed in Mr. Lawford's hands notes and bills to the amount of a thousand pounds, which he stated was to be vested for the child's use, and advanced in such portions as his board and education might require. In the event of any correspondence on his account being necessary, as in case of death or the like, he directed that communication should be made to Signor Matthias Monçada, under cover to a certain banking house in London.

'But beware,' he said to Gray, 'how you trouble me about these concerns, unless in case of absolute necessity.'

'You need not fear, sir,' replied Gray; 'I have seen nothing to-day which can induce me to desire a more intimate correspondence with you than may be indispensable.'

While Lawford drew up a proper minute of this transaction, by which he himself and Gray were named trustees for the child, Mr. Gray attempted to restore to the lady the balance of the considerable sum of money which Tresham (if such was his real name) had formally deposited with him. With every species of gesture, by which hands, eyes, and even feet, could express rejection, as well as in her own broken French, she repelled the proposal of reimbursement, while she entreated that Gray would consider the money as his own property; and at the same time forced upon him a ring set with brilliants, which seemed of considerable value. The father then spoke to her a few stern words, which she heard with an air of mingled agony and submission.

'I have given her a few minutes to see and weep over the miserable being which has been the seal of her dishonour,' said the stern father. 'Let us retire and leave her alone.—You,' to the messenger, 'watch the door of the room on the outside.'

Gray, Lawford, and Monçada retired to the parlour accordingly, where they waited in silence, each busied with his own reflections, till, within the space of half-an-hour, they received information that the lady was ready to depart.

'It is well,' replied Monçada; 'I am glad she has yet sense enough left to submit to that which needs must be.'

So saying, he ascended the stair, and returned, leading down his daughter, now again masked and veiled. As she passed Gray, she uttered the words—'My child, my child!' in a tone of unutterable anguish; then entered the carriage, which was drawn up as close to the door of the doctor's house as the little enclosure would permit. The messenger, mounted on a led horse, and accompanied by a servant and assistant, followed the carriage, which drove rapidly off, taking the road which leads to Edinburgh. All who had witnessed this strange scene now departed to make their conjectures, and some to count their gains; for money had been distributed among the females who had attended on the lady, with so much liberality as considerably to reconcile them to the breach of the rights of womanhood inflicted by the precipitate removal of the patient.

CHAPTER II.

The last cloud of dust which the wheels of the carriage had raised was dissipated, when dinner, which claims a share of human thoughts even in the midst of the most marvellous and affecting incidents, recurred to those of Mrs. Gray.

'Indeed, Doctor, you will stand glowering out of the window till some other patient calls for you, and then have to set off without your dinner;—and I hope Mr. Lawford will take pot-luck with us, for it is just his own hour; and indeed we had something rather better than ordinary for this poor lady—lamb and spinage, and a veal Florentine.'

The surgeon started as from a dream, and joined in his wife's hospitable request, to which Lawford willingly assented.

We will suppose the meal finished, a bottle of old and generous Antigua upon the table, and a modest little punch-bowl judiciously replenished for the accommodation of the doctor and his guest. Their conversation naturally turned on the strange scene which they had witnessed, and the town-clerk took considerable merit for his presence of mind.

'I am thinking, Doctor,' said he, 'you might have brewed a bitter browst to yourself if I had not come in as I did.'

'Troth, and it might very well so be,' answered Gray; 'for, to tell you the truth, when I saw yonder fellow vapouring with his pistols among the women-folk in my own house, the old Cameronian spirit began to rise in me, and a little thing would have made me cleek to the poker.'

'Hoot, hoot! that would never have done. Na, na,' said the man of law, 'this was a case where a little prudence was worth all the pistols and pokers in the world.'

'And that was just what I thought when I sent to you, Clerk Lawford,' said the doctor.

'A wiser man he could not have called on to a difficult case,' added Mrs. Gray, as she sat with her work at a little distance from the table.

'Thanks t'ye, and here's t'ye, my good neighbour,' answered the scribe. 'Will you not let me help you to another glass of punch, Mrs. Gray?' This being declined, he proceeded. 'I am jalousing that the messenger and his warrant were just brought in to prevent any opposition. Ye saw

how quietly he behaved after I had laid down the law—I'll never believe the lady is in any risk from him. But the father is a dour chield; depend upon it, he has bred up the young filly on the curb-rein, and that has made the poor thing start off the course. I should not be surprised that he took her abroad, and shut her up in a convent.'

'Hardly,' replied Doctor Gray, 'if it be true, as I suspect, that both the father and daughter are of the Jewish persuasion.'

'A Jew!' said Mrs. Gray; 'and have I been taking a' this fyke about a Jew?—I thought she seemed to gie a scunner at the eggs and bacon that Nurse Simson spoke about to her. But I thought Jews had aye had lang beards, and yon man's face is just like one of our ain folk's—I have seen the Doctor with a langer beard himsel', when he has not had leisure to shave.'

'That might have been Mr. Monçada's case,' said Lawford, 'for he seemed to have had a hard journey. But the Jews are often very respectable people, Mrs. Gray—they have no territorial property, because the law is against them there, but they have a good hank in the money market—plenty of stock in the funds, Mrs. Gray, and, indeed, I think, this poor young woman is better with her ain father, though he be a Jew and a dour chield into the bargain, than she would have been with the loon that wranged her, who is, by your account, Doctor Gray, baith a Papist and a rebel. The Jews are well attached to government; they hate the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender as much as any honest man among ourselves.'

'I cannot admire either of the gentlemen, said Gideon. 'But it is but fair to say that I saw Mr. Monçada when he was highly incensed, and to all appearance not without reason. Now, this other man Tresham, if that be his name, was haughty to me, and I think something careless of the poor young woman, just at the time when he owed her most kindness, and me some thankfulness. I am, therefore, of your opinion, Clerk Lawford, that the Christian is the worse bargain of the two.'

'And you think of taking care of this wean yourself, Doctor? That is what I call the good Samaritan.'

'At cheap cost, Clerk; the child, if it lives, has enough to bring it up decently, and set it out in life, and I can teach it an honourable and useful profession. It will be rather an amusement than a trouble to me, and I want to make some remarks on the childish diseases, which, with God's blessing, the child must come through under my charge; and since Heaven has sent us no children'——

'Hoot, hoot!' said the town-clerk, 'you are in ower great a hurry now—you havena been sae lang married yet.—Mrs. Gray, dinna let my daffing chase you away—we will be for a dish of tea belive, for the Doctor and I are nae glass-breakers.'

Four years after this conversation took place, the event happened, at the possibility of which the town-clerk had hinted; and Mrs. Gray presented her husband with an infant daughter. But good and evil are strangely mingled in this sublunary world. The fulfilment of his anxious longing for posterity was attended with the loss of his simple and kind-hearted wife; one of the most heavy blows which fate could inflict on poor Gideon, and his house was made desolate even by the event which had promised for months before to add new comforts to its humble roof. Gray felt the shock as men of sense and firmness feel a decided blow, from the effects of which they never hope again fully to raise themselves. He discharged the duties of his profession with the same punctuality as ever, was easy, and even, to appearance, cheerful in his intercourse with society; but the sunshine of existence was gone. Every morning he missed the affectionate charges which recommended to him to pay attention to his own health while he was labouring to restore that blessing to his patients. Every evening, as he returned from his weary round, it was without the consciousness of a kind and affectionate reception from one eager to tell, and interested to hear, all the little events of the day. His whistle, which used to arise clear and strong so soon as Middlemas steeple was in view, was now for ever silenced, and the rider's head drooped, while the tired horse, lacking the stimulus of his master's hand and voice, seemed to shuffle along as if it experienced a share of his despondency. There were times when he was so much dejected as to be unable to endure even the presence of his little Menie, in whose infant countenance he could trace the lineaments of the mother, of whose loss she had been the innocent and unconscious cause. 'Had it not been for this poor child'—he would think; but, instantly aware that the sentiment was sinful, he would snatch the infant to his breast, and load it with caresses—then hastily desire it to be removed from the parlour.

The Mahometans have a fanciful idea that the true believer, in his passage to Paradise, is under the necessity of passing barefooted over a bridge composed of red-hot iron. But on this occasion, all the pieces of paper which the Moslem has preserved during his life, lest some holy thing being written upon them might be profaned, arrange themselves between his feet and the burning metal, and so save him from injury. In the same manner, the effects of kind and benevolent actions are sometimes found, even in this world, to assuage the pangs of subsequent afflictions.

Thus the greatest consolation which poor Gideon could find after his heavy deprivation, was in the frolic fondness of Richard Middlemas, the child who was in so singular a manner thrown upon his charge. Even at this early age he was eminently handsome. When silent or out of humour, his dark eyes and striking countenance presented some recollections of the stern character imprinted on the features of his supposed father; but when he was gay and happy, which was much more frequently the case, these clouds were exchanged for the most frolicsome, mirthful expression that ever dwelt on the laughing and thoughtless aspect of a child. He seemed to have a tact beyond his years in discovering and conforming to the peculiarities of human character. His nurse, one prime object of Richard's observance, was Nurse Jamieson, or,

as she was more commonly called for brevity, and *par excellence*, Nurse. This was the person who had brought him up from infancy. She had lost her own child, and soon after her husband, and, being thus a lone woman, had, as used to be common in Scotland, remained a member of Doctor Gray's family. After the death of his wife, she gradually obtained the principal superintendence of the whole household; and, being an honest and capable manager, was a person of very great importance in the family.

She was bold in her temper, violent in her feelings, and, as often happens with those in her condition, was as much attached to Richard Middlemas, whom she had once nursed at her bosom, as if he had been her own son. This affection the child repaid by all the tender attentions of which his age was capable.

Little Dick was also distinguished by the fondest and kindest attachment to his guardian and benefactor, Doctor Gray. He was officious in the right time and place, quiet as a lamb when his patron seemed inclined to study or to muse, active and assiduous to assist or divert him whenever it seemed to be wished, and, in choosing his opportunities, he seemed to display an address far beyond his childish years.

As time passed on, this pleasing character seemed to be still more refined. In everything like exercise or amusement he was the pride and the leader of the boys of the place, over the most of whom his strength and activity gave him a decided superiority. At school his abilities were less distinguished, yet he was a favourite with the master, a sensible and useful teacher.

'Richard is not swift,' he used to say to his patron, Doctor Gray, 'but then he is sure; and it is impossible not to be pleased with a child who is so very desirous to give satisfaction.'

Young Middlemas's grateful affection to his patron seemed to increase with the expanding of his faculties, and found a natural and pleasing mode of displaying itself in his attentions to little Menie* Gray. Her slightest hint was Richard's law, and it was in vain that he was summoned forth by a hundred shrill voices to take the lead in hye-spye, or at football, if it was little Menie's pleasure that he should remain within, and build card-houses for her amusement. At other times he would take the charge of the little damsel entirely under his own care, and be seen wandering with her on the burgh common, collecting wild flowers, or knitting caps made of bulrushes. Menie was attached to Dick Middlemas, in proportion to his affectionate assiduities; and the father saw with pleasure every new mark of attention to his child on the part of his *protégé*.

During the time that Richard was silently advancing from a beautiful child into a fine boy, and approaching from a fine boy to the time when he must be termed a handsome youth, Mr. Gray wrote twice a-year with much regularity to Mr. Monçada, through the channel that gentleman had pointed out. The benevolent man thought that if the wealthy grandfather could only see his relative, of whom any family might be proud, he would be unable to persevere in his resolution of treating as an outcast one so nearly connected with him in blood, and so interesting in person and disposition. He thought it his duty, therefore, to keep open the slender and oblique communication with the boy's maternal grandfather, as that which might, at some future period, lead to a closer connection. Yet the correspondence could not, in other respects, be agreeable to a man of spirit like Mr. Gray. His own letters were as short as possible, merely rendering an account of his ward's expenses, including a moderate board to himself, attested by Mr. Lawford, his co-trustee; and intimating Richard's state of health, and his progress in education, with a few words of brief but warm eulogy upon his goodness of head and heart. But the answers he received were still shorter. 'Mr. Monçada,' such was their usual tenor, 'acknowledges Mr. Gray's letter of such a date, notices the contents, and requests Mr. Gray to persist in the plan which he has hitherto prosecuted on the subject of their correspondence.' On occasions where extraordinary expenses seemed likely to be incurred, the remittances were made with readiness.

That day fortnight after Mrs. Gray's death, fifty pounds were received, with a note, intimating that it was designed to put the child R. M. into proper mourning. The writer had added two or three words, desiring that the surplus should be at Mr. Gray's disposal, to meet the additional expenses of this period of calamity; but Mr. Monçada had left the phrase unfinished, apparently in despair of turning it suitably into English. Gideon, without further investigation, quietly added the sum to the account of his ward's little fortune, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Lawford, who, aware that he was rather a loser than a gainer by the boy's residence in his house, was desirous that his friend should not omit an opportunity of recovering some part of his expenses on that score. But Gray was proof against all remonstrance.

As the boy advanced towards his fourteenth year, Doctor Gray wrote a more elaborate account of his ward's character, acquirements, and capacity. He added that he did this for the purpose of enabling Mr. Monçada to judge how the young man's future education should be directed. Richard, he observed, was arrived at the point where education, losing its original and general character, branches off into different paths of knowledge, suitable to particular professions, and when it was therefore become necessary to determine which of them it was his pleasure that young Richard should be trained for; and he would, on his part, do all he could to carry Mr. Monçada's wishes into execution, since the amiable qualities of the boy made him as dear to him, though but a guardian, as he could have been to his own father.

The answer, which arrived in the course of a week or ten days, was fuller than usual, and written in the first person.—'Mr. Gray,' such was the tenor, 'our meeting has been under such circumstances as could not make us favourably known to each other at the time. But I have the advantage of you, since, knowing your motives for entertaining an indifferent opinion of me, I could respect them, and you at the

* Marion.

same time; whereas you, unable to comprehend the motives—I say you, being unacquainted with the infamous treatment I had received, could not understand the reasons that I have for acting as I have done. Deprived, sir, by the act of a villain, of my child, and she despoiled of honour, I cannot bring myself to think of beholding the creature, however innocent, whose look must always remind me of hatred and of shame. Keep the poor child by you—educate him to your own profession, but take heed that he looks no higher than to fill such a situation in life as you yourself worthily occupy, or some other line of like importance. For the condition of a farmer, a country lawyer, a medical practitioner, or some such retired course of life, the means of outfit and education shall be amply supplied. But I must warn him and you that any attempt to intrude himself on me further than I may especially permit, will be attended with the total forfeiture of my favour and protection. So, having made known my mind to you, I expect you will act accordingly.'

The receipt of this letter determined Gideon to have some explanation with the boy himself, in order to learn if he had any choice among the professions thus opened to him; convinced, at the same time, from his docility of temper, that he would refer the selection to his (Doctor Gray's) better judgment.

He had previously, however, the unpleasing task of acquainting Richard Middlemas with the mysterious circumstances attending his birth, of which he presumed him to be entirely ignorant, simply because he himself had never communicated them, but had let the boy consider himself as the orphan child of a distant relation. But though the doctor himself was silent, he might have remembered that Nurse Jamieson had the handsome enjoyment of her tongue, and was disposed to use it liberally.

From a very early period, Nurse Jamieson, amongst the variety of legendary lore which she instilled into her foster-son, had not forgotten what she called the awful season of his coming into the world—the personable appearance of his father, a grand gentleman, who looked as if the whole world lay at his feet—the beauty of his mother, and the terrible blackness of the mask which she wore, her een that glanced like diamonds, and the diamonds she wore on her fingers, that could be compared to nothing but her own een, the fairness of her skin, and the colour of her silk rokelay, with much proper stuff to the same purpose. Then she expatiated on the arrival of his grandfather, and the awful man, armed with pistol, dirk, and claymore (the last weapons existed only in nurse's imagination), the very ogre of a fairy tale—then all the circumstances of the carrying off his mother, while bank-notes were flying about the house like screeds of brown paper, and gold guineas were as plenty as chuckie-stanes. All this, partly to please and interest the boy, partly to indulge her own talent for amplification, nurse told with so many additional circumstances, and gratuitous commentaries, that the real transaction, mysterious and odd as it certainly was, sunk into tameness before the nurse's edition, like humble prose contrasted with the boldest flights of poetry.

To hear all this did Richard seriously incline, and still more was he interested with the idea of his valiant father coming for him unexpectedly at the head of a gallant regiment, with music playing and colours flying, and carrying his son away on the most beautiful pony eyes ever beheld; or his mother, bright as the day, might suddenly appear in her coach-and-six, to reclaim her beloved child; or his repentant grandfather, with his pockets stuffed out with bank-notes, would come to atone for his past cruelty, by heaping his neglected grandchild with unexpected wealth. Sure was Nurse Jamieson 'that it wanted but a blink of her bairn's bonnie ee to turn their hearts, as Scripture sayeth; and as strange things had been, as they should come a'thegither to the town at the same time, and make such a day as had never been seen in Middlemas; and then her bairn would never be called by that lowland name of Middlemas any more, which sounded as if it had been gathered out of the town gutter; but would be called Galatian,* or Sir William Wallace, or Robin Hood, or after some other of the great princes named in story-books.'

Nurse Jamieson's history of the past, and prospects of the future, were too flattering not to excite the most ambitious visions in the mind of a boy, who naturally felt a strong desire of rising in the world, and was conscious of possessing the powers necessary to his advancement. The incidents of his birth resembled those he found commemorated in the tales which he read or listened to; and there seemed no reason why his own adventures should not have a termination corresponding to those of such veracious histories. In a word, while good Doctor Gray imagined that his pupil was dwelling in utter ignorance of his origin, Richard was meditating upon nothing else than the time and means by which he anticipated his being extricated from the obscurity of his present condition, and enabled to assume the rank to which, in his own opinion, he was entitled by birth.

So stood the feelings of the young man, when, one day after dinner, the doctor, snuffing the candle, and taking from his pouch the great leathern pocket-book in which he deposited particular papers, with a small supply of the most necessary and active medicines, he took from it Mr. Monçada's letter, and requested Richard Middlemas's serious attention, while he told him some circumstances concerning himself, which it greatly imported him to know. Richard's dark eyes flashed fire—the blood flushed his broad and well-formed forehead—the hour of explanation was at length come. He listened to the narrative of Gideon Gray, which, the reader may believe, being altogether divested of the gilding which Nurse Jamieson's imagination had bestowed upon it, and reduced to what mercantile men termed the *needful*, exhibited little more than the tale of a child of shame, deserted by its father and mother, and brought up on the reluctant charity of a more distant relation, who regarded him as the living though unconscious evidence of the disgrace of his family, and would

* Galatian is a name of a person famous in Christmas gambols.

more willingly have paid for the expenses of his funeral than that of the food which was grudgingly provided for him. 'Temple and tower,' a hundred flattering edifices of Richard's childish imagination, went to the ground at once, and the pain which attended their demolition was rendered the more acute, by a sense of shame that he should have nursed such reveries. He remained, while Gideon continued his explanation, in a dejected posture, his eyes fixed on the ground, and the veins of his forehead swollen with contending passions.

'And now, my dear Richard,' said the good surgeon, 'you must think what you can do for yourself, since your grandfather leaves you the choice of three honourable professions, by any of which, well and wisely prosecuted, you may become independent if not wealthy, and respectable if not great. You will naturally desire a little time for consideration.'

'Not a minute,' said the boy, raising his head and looking boldly at his guardian. 'I am a free-born Englishman, and will return to England if I think fit.'

'A free-born fool you are!' said Gray; 'you were born, as I think, and no one can know better than I do, in the blue room of Stevenlaw's Land, in the town-head of Middlemas, if you call that being a free-born Englishman.'

'But Tom Hillary'—this was an apprentice of Clerk Lawford, who had of late been a great friend and adviser of young Middlemas—'Tom Hillary says that I am a free-born Englishman, notwithstanding, in right of my parents.'

'Pooh, child! what do we know of your parents?—But what has your being an Englishman to do with the present question?'

'O, Doctor!' answered the boy bitterly, 'you know we from the south side of Tweed cannot scramble so hard as you do. The Scots are too moral, and too prudent, and too robust, for a poor pudding-eater to live amongst them, whether as a parson, or as a lawyer, or as a doctor—with your pardon, sir.'

'Upon my life, Dick,' said Gray, 'this Tom Hillary will turn your brain. What is the meaning of all this trash?'

'Tom Hillary says that the parson lives by the sins of the people, the lawyer by their distresses, and the doctor by their diseases—always asking your pardon, sir.'

'Tom Hillary,' replied the doctor, 'should be drummed out of the burgh. A whipper-snapper of an attorney's apprentice, run away from Newcastle! If I hear him talking so, I'll teach him to speak with more reverence of the learned professions. Let me hear no more of Tom Hillary, whom you have seen far too much of lately. Think a little, like a lad of sense, and tell me what answer I am to give to Mr. Monçada.'

'Tell him,' said the boy, the tone of affected sarcasm laid aside, and that of injured pride substituted in its room—'tell him that my soul revolts at the obscure lot he recommends to me. I am determined to enter my father's profession, the army, unless my grandfather chooses to receive me into his house, and place me in his own line of business.'

'Yes, and make you his partner, I suppose, and acknowledge you for his heir?' said Doctor Gray; 'a thing extremely likely to happen, no doubt, considering the way in which he has brought you up all along, and the terms in which he now writes concerning you.'

'Then, sir, there is one thing which I can demand of you,' replied the boy. 'There is a large sum of money in your hands belonging to me; and since it is consigned to you for my use, I demand you should make the necessary advances to procure a commission in the army—account to me for the balance—and so, with thanks for past favours, I will give you no trouble in future.'

'Young man,' said the doctor gravely, 'I am very sorry to see that your usual prudence and good humour are not proof against the disappointment of some idle expectations which you had not the slightest reason to entertain. It is very true that there is a sum, which, in spite of various expenses, may still approach to a thousand pounds or better, which remains in my hands for your behoof. But I am bound to dispose of it according to the will of the donor; and at any rate you are not entitled to call for it until you come to years of discretion—a period from which you are six years distant, according to law, and which, in one sense, you will never reach at all, unless you alter your present unreasonable crotchets. But come, Dick, this is the first time I have seen you in so absurd a humour, and you have many things, I own, in your situation, to apologise for impatience even greater than you have displayed. But you should not turn your resentment on me, that am no way in fault. You should remember that I was your earliest and only friend, and took charge of you when every other person forsook you.'

'I do not thank you for it,' said Richard, giving way to a burst of uncontrolled passion. 'You might have done better for me had you pleased.'

'And in what manner, you ungrateful boy?' said Gray, whose composure was a little ruffled.

'You might have flung me under the wheels of their carriages as they drove off, and have let them trample on the body of their child, as they have done on his feelings.'

So saying, he rushed out of the room, and shut the door behind him with great violence, leaving his guardian astonished at his sudden and violent change of temper and manner.

'What the deuce can have possessed him? Ah, well. High-spirited, and disappointed in some follies which that Tom Hillary has put into his head. But his is a case for anodynes, and shall be treated accordingly.'

While the doctor formed this good-natured resolution, young Middlemas rushed to Nurse Jamieson's apartment, where poor Menie, to whom his presence always gave holiday feelings, hastened to exhibit, for his admiration, a new doll, of which she had made the acquisition. No one, generally, was more interested in Menie's amusements than Richard; but at present Richard, like his celebrated namesake, was not i' the vein. He threw off the little damsel so carelessly, almost so rudely, that the doll flew out of Menie's hand, fell on the hearth-stone, and broke its waxen face. The rudeness drew

from Nurse Jamieson a rebuke, even although the culprit was her darling.

'Hout awa, Richard—that wasna like yoursel' to guide Miss Menie that gait.—Haud your tongue, Miss Menie, and I'll soon mend the baby's face.'

But if Menie cried, she did not cry for the doll; and while the tears flowed silently down her cheeks, she sat looking at Dick Middlemas with a childish face of fear, sorrow, and wonder. Nurse Jamieson was soon diverted from her attention to Menie Gray's distresses, especially as she did not weep aloud, and her attention became fixed on the altered countenance, red eyes, and swollen features of her darling foster-child. She instantly commenced an investigation into the cause of his distress, after the usual inquisitorial manner of matrons of her class. 'What is the matter wi' my bairn?' and 'Wha has been vexing my bairn?' with similar questions, at last extorted this reply:

'I am not your bairn—I am no one's bairn—no one's son. I am an outcast from my family, and belong to no one. Doctor Gray has told me so himself.'

'And did he cast up to my bairn that he was a bastard?—troth he wasna blate—my certie, your father was a better man than ever stood on the Doctor's shanks—a handsome grand gentleman, with an ee like a gled's, and a step like a Highland piper.'

Nurse Jamieson had got on a favourite topic, and would have expatiated long enough, for she was a professed admirer of masculine beauty, but there was something which displeased the boy in her last simile; so he cut the conversation short, by asking whether she knew exactly how much money his grandfather had left with Doctor Gray for his maintenance. 'She could not say—didna ken—an awfu' sum it was to pass out of ae man's hand—She was sure it wasna less than ae hundred pounds, and it might weel be twa.' In short, she knew nothing about the matter; 'but she was sure Doctor Gray would count to him to the last farthing; for everybody ken'd that he was a just man where siller was concerned. However, if her bairn wanted to ken mair about it, to be sure the town-clerk could tell him all about it.'

Richard Middlemas arose and left the apartment, without saying more. He went immediately to visit the old town-clerk, to whom he had made himself acceptable, as, indeed, he had done to most of the dignitaries about the burgh. He introduced the conversation by the proposal which had been made to him for choosing a profession, and, after speaking of the mysterious circumstances of his birth, and the doubtful prospects which lay before him, he easily led the town-clerk into conversation as to the amount of the funds, and heard the exact state of the money in his guardian's hands, which corresponded with the information he had already received. He next sounded the worthy scribe on the possibility of his going into the army; but received a second confirmation of the intelligence Mr. Gray had given him, being informed that no part of the money could be placed at his disposal till he was of age; and then not without the especial consent of both his guardians, and particularly that of his master. He therefore took leave of the town-clerk, who, much approving the cautious manner in which he spoke, and his prudent selection of an adviser at this important crisis of his life, intimated to him that, should he choose the law, he would himself receive him into his office, upon a very moderate apprentice fee, and would part with Tom Hillary to make room for him, as the lad was 'rather pragmatical, and plagued him with speaking about his English practice, which they had nothing to do with on this side of the Border—the Lord be thanked!'

Middlemas thanked him for his kindness, and promised to consider his kind offer, in case he should determine upon following the profession of the law.

From Tom Hillary's master Richard went to Tom Hillary himself, who chanced then to be in the office. He was a lad about twenty, as smart as small, but distinguished for the accuracy with which he dressed his hair, and the splendour of a laced hat and embroidered waistcoat with which he graced the church of Middlemas on Sundays. Tom Hillary had been bred an attorney's clerk in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but for some reason or other had found it more convenient of late years to reside in Scotland, and was recommended to the town-clerk of Middlemas by the accuracy and beauty with which he transcribed the records of the burgh. It is not improbable that the reports concerning the singular circumstances of Richard Middlemas's birth, and the knowledge that he was actually possessed of a considerable sum of money, induced Hillary, though so much his senior, to admit the lad to his company, and enrich his youthful mind with some branches of information, which, in that retired corner, his pupil might otherwise have been some time in attaining. Amongst these were certain games at cards and dice, in which the pupil paid, as was reasonable, the price of initiation by his losses to his instructor. After a long walk with this youngster, whose advice, like the unwise son of the wisest of men, he probably valued more than that of his more aged counsellors, Richard Middlemas returned to his lodgings in Stevenlaw's Land, and went to bed sad and supperless.

The next morning Richard arose with the sun, and his night's rest appeared to have had its frequent effect, in cooling the passions and correcting the understanding. Little Menie was the first person to whom he made the *amende honorable;* and a much smaller propitiation than the new doll with which he presented her would have been accepted as an atonement for a much greater offence. Menie was one of those pure spirits, to whom a state of unkindness, if the estranged person has been a friend, is a state of pain, and the slightest advance of her friend and protector was sufficient to regain all her childish confidence and affection.

The father did not prove more inexorable than Menie had done. Mr. Gray, indeed, thought he had good reason to look cold upon Richard at their next meeting, being not a little hurt at the ungrateful treatment which he had received on the preceding evening. But Middlemas disarmed him at once, by frankly pleading that he had suffered his mind to be carried away by the

supposed rank and importance of his parents, into an idle conviction that he was one day to share them. The letter of his grandfather, which condemned him to banishment and obscurity for life, was, he acknowledged, a very severe blow; and it was with deep sorrow that he reflected that the irritation of his disappointment had led him to express himself in a manner far short of the respect and reverence of one who owed Mr. Gray the duty and affection of a son, and ought to refer to his decision every action of his life. Gideon, propitiated by an admission so candid, and made with so much humility, readily dismissed his resentment, and kindly inquired of Richard whether he had bestowed any reflection upon the choice of profession which had been subjected to him; offering, at the same time, to allow him all reasonable time to make up his mind.

On this subject Richard Middlemas answered with the same promptitude and candour.—'He had,' he said, 'in order to forming his opinion more safely, consulted with his friend the town-clerk.' The doctor nodded approbation. 'Mr. Lawford had, indeed, been most friendly, and had even offered to take him into his own office. But if his father and benefactor would permit him to study, under his instructions, the noble art in which he himself enjoyed such a deserved reputation, the mere hope that he might by and by be of some use to Mr. Gray in his business would greatly overbalance every other consideration. Such a course of education, and such a use of professional knowledge when he had acquired it, would be a greater spur to his industry than the prospect even of becoming town-clerk of Middlemas in his proper person.'

As the young man expressed it to be his firm and unalterable choice to study medicine under his guardian, and to remain a member of his family, Doctor Gray informed Mr. Monçada of the lad's determination; who, to testify his approbation, remitted to the doctor the sum of £100 as apprentice fee, a sum nearly three times as much as Gray's modesty had hinted at as necessary.

Shortly after, when Doctor Gray and the town-clerk met at the small club of the burgh, their joint theme was the sense and steadiness of Richard Middlemas.

'Indeed,' said the town-clerk, 'he is such a friendly and disinterested boy, that I could not get him to accept a place in my office, for fear he should be thought to be pushing himself forward at the expense of Tam Hillary.'

'And indeed, Clerk,' said Gray, 'I have sometimes been afraid that he kept too much company with that Tam Hillary of yours; but twenty Tam Hillarys would not corrupt Dick Middlemas.'

CHAPTER III.

Dick was come to high renown
Since he commenced physician;
Tom was held by all the town
The better politician.

TOM AND DICK.

AT the same period when Doctor Gray took under his charge his youthful lodger, Richard Middlemas, he received proposals from the friends of one Adam Hartley, to receive him also as an apprentice. The lad was the son of a respectable farmer on the English side of the Border, who, educating his eldest son to his own occupation, desired to make his second a medical man, in order to avail himself of the friendship of a great man, his landlord, who had offered to assist his views in life, and represented a doctor or surgeon as the sort of person to whose advantage his interest could be most readily applied. Middlemas and Hartley were therefore associated in their studies. In winter they were boarded in Edinburgh, for attending the medical classes which were necessary for taking their degree. Three or four years thus passed on, and, from being mere boys, the two medical aspirants shot up into young men, who, being both very good-looking, well dressed, well bred, and having money in their pockets, became personages of some importance in the little town of Middlemas, where there was scarce anything that could be termed an aristocracy, and in which beaux were scarce and belles were plenty.

Each of the two had his especial partizans; for though the young men themselves lived in tolerable harmony together, yet, as usual in such cases, no one could approve of one of them, without at the same time comparing him with, and asserting his superiority over, his companion.

Both were gay, fond of dancing, and sedulous attendants on the *practeezings*, as he called them, of Mr. M'Fittoch, a dancing-master, who, itinerant during the summer, became stationary in the winter season, and afforded the youth of Middlemas the benefit of his instructions at the rate of twenty lessons for five shillings sterling. On these occasions, each of Doctor Gray's pupils had his appropriate praise. Hartley danced with most spirit—Middlemas with a better grace. Mr. M'Fittoch would have turned out Richard against the country-side in the minuet, and wagered the thing dearest to him in the world (and that was his kit) upon his assured superiority; but he admitted Hartley was superior to him in hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels.

In dress, Hartley was most expensive, perhaps because his father afforded him better means of being so; but his clothes were neither so tasteful when new, nor so well preserved when they began to grow old, as those of Richard Middlemas. Adam Hartley was sometimes fine, at other times rather slovenly, and on the former occasions looked rather too conscious of his splendour. His chum was at all times regularly neat and well dressed; while at the same time he had an air of good-breeding, which made him appear always at ease; so that his dress, whatever it was, seemed to be just what he ought to have worn at the time.

In their persons there was a still more strongly-marked distinction. Adam Hartley was full middle size, stout, and well limbed; and an open English countenance, of the genuine Saxon mould, showed itself among chestnut locks, until the hairdresser destroyed them. He loved the rough exercises of wrestling, boxing, leaping, and quarterstaff, and frequented, when he could obtain leisure, the bull-baitings and football

matches by which the burgh was sometimes enlivened.

Richard, on the contrary, was dark, like his father and mother, with high features, beautifully formed, but exhibiting something of a foreign character; and his person was tall and slim, though muscular and active. His address and manners must have been natural to him, for they were, in elegance and ease, far beyond any example which he could have found in his native burgh. He learned the use of the small-sword while in Edinburgh, and took lessons from a performer at the theatre, with the purpose of refining his mode of speaking. He became also an amateur of the drama, regularly attending the playhouse, and assuming the tone of a critic in that and other lighter departments of literature. To fill up the contrast, so far as taste was concerned, Richard was a dexterous and successful angler—Adam, a bold and unerring shot. Their efforts to surpass each other in supplying Doctor Gray's table rendered his housekeeping much preferable to what it had been on former occasions; and, besides, small presents of fish and game are always agreeable amongst the inhabitants of a country town, and contributed to increase the popularity of the young sportsmen.

While the burgh was divided, for lack of better subject of disputation, concerning the comparative merits of Doctor Gray's two apprentices, he himself was sometimes chosen the referee. But in this, as on other matters, the doctor was cautious. He said the lads were both good lads, and would be useful men in the profession, if their heads were not carried with the notice which the foolish people of the burgh took of them, and the parties of pleasure that were so often taking them away from their business. No doubt it was natural for him to feel more confidence in Hartley, who came of ken'd folk, and was very near as good as a born Scotsman. But if he did feel such a partiality, he blamed himself for it, since the stranger child, so oddly cast upon his hands, had peculiar good right to such patronage and affection as he had to bestow; and truly the young man himself seemed so grateful, that it was impossible for him to hint the slightest wish that Dick Middlemas did not hasten to execute.

There were persons in the burgh of Middlemas who were indiscreet enough to suppose that Miss Menie must be a better judge than any other person of the comparative merits of these accomplished personages, respecting which the public opinion was generally divided. No one even of her greatest intimates ventured to put the question to her in precise terms; but her conduct was narrowly observed, and the critics remarked that to Adam Hartley her attentions were given more freely and frankly. She laughed with him, chatted with him, and danced with him; while to Dick Middlemas her conduct was more shy and distant. The premises seemed certain, but the public were divided in the conclusions which were to be drawn from them.

It was not possible for the young men to be the subject of such discussions without being sensible that they existed; and thus, contrasted together by the little society in which they moved, they must have been made of better than ordinary clay, if they had not themselves entered by degrees into the spirit of the controversy, and considered themselves as rivals for public applause.

Nor is it to be forgotten that Menie Gray was by this time shot up into one of the prettiest young women, not of Middlemas only, but of the whole county in which the little burgh is situated. This, indeed, had been settled by evidence which could not be esteemed short of decisive. At the time of the races, there were usually assembled in the burgh some company of the higher classes from the country around, and many of the sober burghers mended their incomes by letting their apartments, or taking in lodgers of quality for the busy week. All the rural thanes and thanesses attended on these occasions; and such was the number of cocked hats and silken trains, that the little town seemed for a time totally to have changed its inhabitants. On this occasion, persons of a certain quality only were permitted to attend upon the nightly balls which were given in the old townhouse, and the line of distinction excluded Mr. Gray's family.

The aristocracy, however, used their privileges with some feelings of deference to the native beaux and belles of the burgh, who were thus doomed to hear the fiddles nightly, without being permitted to dance to them. One evening in the race-week, termed the Hunters' Ball, was dedicated to general amusement, and liberated from the usual restrictions of etiquette. On this occasion all the respectable families in the town were invited to share the amusement of the evening, and to wonder at the finery, and be grateful for the condescension, of their betters. This was especially the case with the females, for the number of invitations to the gentlemen of the town was much more limited. Now, at this general muster, the beauty of Miss Gray's face and person had placed her, in the opinion of all competent judges, decidedly at the head of all the belles present, saving those with whom, according to the ideas of the place, it would hardly have been decent to compare her.

The Laird of the ancient and distinguished house of Louponheight did not hesitate to engage her hand during the greater part of the evening; and his mother, renowned for her stern assertion of the distinctions of rank, placed the little plebeian beside her at supper, and was heard to say that the surgeon's daughter behaved very prettily indeed, and seemed to know perfectly well where and what she was. As for the young laird himself, he capered so high, and laughed so uproariously, as to give rise to a rumour that he was minded to 'shoot madly from his sphere,' and to convert the village doctor's daughter into a lady of his own ancient name.

During this memorable evening, Middlemas and Hartley, who had found room in the music gallery, witnessed the scene, and, as it would seem, with very different feelings. Hartley was evidently annoyed by the excess of attention which the gallant Laird of Louponheight, stimulated by the influence of a couple of bottles of claret, and by the presence of a partner who danced remarkably well, paid to Miss Menie Gray. He saw from his lofty stand all the

dumb show of gallantry, with the comfortable feelings of a famishing creature looking upon a feast which he is not permitted to share, and regarded every extraordinary frisk of the jovial laird, as the same might have been looked upon by a gouty person, who apprehended that the dignitary was about to descend on his toes. At length, unable to restrain his emotion, he left the gallery and returned no more.

Far different was the demeanour of Middlemas. He seemed gratified and elevated by the attention which was generally paid to Miss Gray, and by the admiration she excited. On the valiant Laird of Louponheight he looked with indescribable contempt, and amused himself with pointing out to the burgh dancing-master, who acted *pro tempore* as one of the band, the frolicsome bounds and pirouettes, in which that worthy displayed a great deal more of vigour than of grace.

'But ye shouldna laugh sae loud, Master Dick,' said the master of capers; 'he hasna had the advantage of a real gracefu' teacher, as ye have had; and troth, if he listed to tak some lessons, I think I could make some hand of his feet, for he is a souple chield, and has a gallant instep of his ain; and sic a laced hat hasna been seen on the causeway of Middlemas this mony a day.—Ye are standing laughing there, Dick Middlemas; I would have you be sure he does not cut you out with your bonnie partner yonder.'

'He be ——!' Middlemas was beginning a sentence which could not have concluded with strict attention to propriety, when the master of the band summoned M'Fittoch to his post, by the following ireful expostulation:—'What are ye about, sir? Mind your bow-hand. How the deil d'ye think three fiddles is to keep down a bass, if yin o' them stands girning and gabbling as ye're doing? Play up, sir!'

Dick Middlemas, thus reduced to silence, continued, from his lofty station, like one of the gods of the Epicureans,* to survey what passed below, without the gaieties which he witnessed being able to excite more than a smile, which seemed, however, rather to indicate a good-humoured contempt for what was passing, than a benevolent sympathy with the pleasures of others.

CHAPTER IV.

Now hold thy tongue, Billy Bewick, he said,
Of peaceful talking let me be;
But if thou art a man, as I think thou art,
Come ower the dike and fight with me.
BORDER MINSTRELSY.

ON the morning after this gay evening, the two young men were labouring together in a plot of ground behind Stevenlaw's Land, which the doctor had converted into a garden, where he raised, with a view to pharmacy as well as botany, some rare plants, which obtained the place from the vulgar the sounding name of the Physic Garden.† Mr. Gray's pupils readily complied with his wishes, that they would take some care of this favourite spot, to which both contributed their labours, after which Hartley used to devote himself to the cultivation of the kitchen garden, which he had raised into this respectability from a spot not excelling a common kail-yard, while Richard Middlemas did his utmost to decorate with flowers and shrubs a sort of arbour, usually called Miss Menie's Bower.

At present they were both in the botanic patch of the garden, when Dick Middlemas asked Hartley why he had left the ball so soon the evening before?

'I should rather ask you,' said Hartley, 'what pleasure you felt in staying there?—I tell you, Dick, it is a shabby low place this Middlemas of ours. In the smallest burgh in England every decent freeholder would have been asked, if the Member gave a ball.'

'What, Hartley!' said his companion, 'are you, of all men, a candidate for the honour of mixing with the first-born of the earth? Mercy on us! How will canny Northumberland (throwing a true northern accent on the letter R) acquit himself? Methinks I see thee in thy pea-green suit, dancing a jig with the Honourable Miss Maddie MacFudgeon, while chiefs and thanes around laugh as they would do at a hog in armour!'

'You don't, or perhaps you won't, understand me,' said Hartley. 'I am not such a fool as to desire to be hail-fellow-well-met with these fine folks—I care as little for them as they do for me. But as they do not choose to ask us to dance, I don't see what business they have with our partners.'

'Partners, said you?' answered Middlemas; 'I don't think Menie is very often yours.'

'As often as I ask her,' answered Hartley, rather haughtily.

'Ay? Indeed?—I did not think that.—And hang me if I think so yet,' said Middlemas, with the same sarcastic tone. 'I tell thee, Adam, I will bet you a bowl of punch that Miss Gray will not dance with you the next time you ask her. All I stipulate, is to know the day.'

'I will lay no bets about Miss Gray,' said Hartley; 'her father is my master, and I am obliged to him—I think I should act very scurvily if I were to make her the subject of any idle debate betwixt you and me.'

'Very right,' replied Middlemas; 'you should finish one quarrel before you begin another. Pray, saddle your pony, ride up to the gate of Louponheight Castle, and defy the baron to mortal combat, for having presumed to touch the fair hand of Menie Gray.'

'I wish you would leave Miss Gray's name out of the question, and take your defiances to your fine folks in your own name, and see what they will say to the surgeon's apprentice.'

'Speak for yourself, if you please, Mr. Adam Hartley. I was not born a clown like some folks, and should care little, if I saw it fit, to talk to the best of them at the ordinary, and make myself understood too.'

* [Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, who took for the guide and supreme sanction of their conduct whatever was agreeable or pleasant.]

† The Botanic Garden was so termed in Edinburgh.

'Very likely,' answered Hartley, losing patience: 'you are one of themselves, you know—Middlemas of that Ilk.'

'You scoundrel!' said Richard, advancing on him in fury, his taunting humour entirely changed into rage.

'Stand back,' said Hartley, 'or you will come by the worst; if you will break rude jests, you must put up with rough answers.'

'I will have satisfaction for this insult, by Heaven!'

'Why, so you shall, if you insist on it,' said Hartley; 'but better, I think, to say no more about the matter. We have both spoken what would have been better left unsaid. I was in the wrong to say what I said to you, although you did provoke me. And now I have given you as much satisfaction as a reasonable man can ask.'

'Sir,' repeated Middlemas, 'the satisfaction which I demand is that of a gentleman—the Doctor has a pair of pistols.'

'And a pair of mortars also, which are heartily at your service, gentlemen,' said Mr. Gray, coming forward from behind a yew hedge, where he had listened to the whole or greater part of this dispute. 'A fine story it would be of my apprentices shooting each other with my own pistols! Let me see either of you fit to treat a gunshot wound, before you think of inflicting one. Go, you are both very foolish boys, and I cannot take it kind of either of you to bring the name of my daughter into such disputes as these. Hark ye, lads, ye both owe me, I think, some portion of respect, and even of gratitude—it will be a poor return, if instead of living quietly with this poor motherless girl, like brothers with a sister, you should oblige me to increase my expense, and abridge my comfort, by sending my child from me, for the few months that you are to remain here. Let me see you shake hands, and let us have no more of this nonsense.'

While their master spoke in this manner, both the young men stood before him in the attitude of self-convicted criminals. At the conclusion of this rebuke, Hartley turned frankly round and offered his hand to his companion, who accepted it, but after a moment's hesitation. There was nothing further passed on the subject, but the lads never resumed the same sort of intimacy which had existed betwixt them in their earlier acquaintance. On the contrary, avoiding every connection not absolutely required by their situation, and abridging as much as possible even their indispensable intercourse in professional matters, they seemed as much estranged from each other as two persons residing in the same small house had the means of being.

As for Menie Gray, her father did not appear to entertain the least anxiety upon her account, although, from his frequent and almost daily absence from home, she was exposed to constant intercourse with two handsome young men, both, it might be supposed, ambitious of pleasing her more than most parents would have deemed entirely prudent. Nor was Nurse Jamieson—her menial situation and her excessive partiality for her foster-son considered—altogether such a matron as could afford her protection. Gideon, however, knew that his daughter possessed, in its fullest extent, the upright and pure integrity of his own character, and that never father had less reason to apprehend that a daughter should deceive his confidence; and, justly secure of her principles, he overlooked the danger to which he exposed her feelings and affections.

The intercourse betwixt Menie and the young men seemed now of a guarded kind on all sides. Their meeting was only at meals, and Miss Gray was at pains, perhaps by her father's recommendation, to treat them with the same degree of attention. This, however, was no easy matter; for Hartley became so retiring, cold, and formal, that it was impossible for her to sustain any prolonged intercourse with him; whereas Middlemas, perfectly at his ease, sustained his part as formerly upon all occasions that occurred, and, without appearing to press his intimacy assiduously, seemed nevertheless to retain the complete possession of it.

The time drew nigh at length when the young men, freed from the engagements of their indentures, must look to play their own independent part in the world. Mr. Gray informed Richard Middlemas that he had written pressingly upon the subject to Monçada, and that more than once, but had not yet received an answer; nor did he presume to offer his own advice, until the pleasure of his grandfather should be known. Richard seemed to endure this suspense with more patience than the doctor thought belonged naturally to his character. He asked no questions—stated no conjectures—showed no anxiety, but seemed to await with patience the turn which events should take. 'My young gentleman,' thought Mr. Gray, 'has either fixed on some course in his own mind, or he is about to be more tractable than some points of his character have led me to expect.'

In fact, Richard had made an experiment on this inflexible relative, by sending Mr. Monçada a letter full of duty, and affection, and gratitude, desiring to be permitted to correspond with him in person, and promising to be guided in every particular by his will. The answer to this appeal was his own letter returned, with a note from the bankers whose cover had been used, saying that any future attempt to intrude on Mr. Monçada would put a final period to their remittances.

While things were in this situation in Stevenlaw's Land, Adam Hartley one evening, contrary to his custom for several months, sought a private interview with his fellow-apprentice. He found him in the little arbour, and could not omit observing that Dick Middlemas, on his appearance, shoved into his bosom a small packet, as if afraid of its being seen, and, snatching up a hoe, began to work with great devotion, like one who wished to have it thought that his whole soul was in his occupation.

'I wished to speak with you, Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley; 'but I fear I interrupt you.'

'Not in the least,' said the other, laying down his hoe; 'I was only scratching up the weeds which the late showers have made rush up so numerously. I am at your service.'

Hartley proceeded to the arbour, and seated

himself. Richard imitated his example, and seemed to wait for the proposed communication.

'I have had an interesting communication with Mr. Gray'—said Hartley, and there stopped, like one who finds himself entering upon a difficult task.

'I hope the explanation has been satisfactory?' said Middlemas.

'You shall judge.—Doctor Gray was pleased to say something to me very civil about my proficiency in the duties of our profession; and, to my great astonishment, asked me whether, as he was now becoming old, I had any particular objection to continue in my present situation, but with some pecuniary advantages, for two years longer; at the end of which he promised to me that I should enter into partnership with him.'

'Mr. Gray is an undoubted judge,' said Middlemas, 'what person will best suit him as a professional assistant. The business may be worth £200 a-year, and an active assistant might go nigh to double it, by riding Strath-Devan and the Carse. No great subject for division after all, Mr. Hartley.'

'But,' continued Hartley, 'that is not all. The Doctor says—he proposes—in short, if I can render myself agreeable, in the course of these two years, to Miss Menie Gray, he proposes that, when they terminate, I should become his son as well as his partner.'

As he spoke, he kept his eye fixed on Richard's face, which was for a moment strongly agitated; but, instantly recovering, he answered, in a tone where pique and offended pride vainly endeavoured to disguise themselves under an affectation of indifference, 'Well, Master Adam, I cannot but wish you joy of the patriarchal arrangement. You have served five years for a professional diploma—a sort of Leah, that privilege of killing and curing. Now you begin a new course of servitude for a lovely Rachel. Undoubtedly—perhaps it is rude in me to ask—but undoubtedly you have accepted so flattering an arrangement?'

'You cannot but recollect there was a condition annexed,' said Hartley gravely.

'That of rendering yourself acceptable to a girl you have known for so many years?' said Middlemas, with a half-suppressed sneer. 'No great difficulty in that, I should think, for such a person as Mr. Hartley, with Doctor Gray's favour to back him. No, no—there could be no great obstacle there.'

'Both you and I know the contrary, Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley very seriously.

'I know?—How should I know anything more than yourself about the state of Miss Gray's inclinations?' said Middlemas. 'I am sure we have had equal access to know them.'

'Perhaps so; but some know better how to avail themselves of opportunities. Mr. Middlemas, I have long suspected that you have had the inestimable advantage of possessing Miss Gray's affections, and'——

'I?' interrupted Middlemas; 'you are jesting, or you are jealous. You do yourself less and me more, than justice; but the compliment is so great, that I am obliged to you for the mistake.'

'That you may know,' answered Hartley, 'I do not speak either by guess, or from what you call jealousy, I tell you frankly that Menie Gray herself told me the state of her affections. I naturally communicated to her the discourse I had with her father. I told her I was but too well convinced that at the present moment I did not possess that interest in her heart, which alone might entitle me to request her acquiescence in the views which her father's goodness held out to me; but I entreated her not at once to decide against me, but give me an opportunity to make way in her affections, if possible, trusting that time, and the services which I should render to her father, might have an ultimate effect in my favour.'

'A most natural and modest request. But what did the young lady say in reply?'

'She is a noble-hearted girl, Richard Middlemas; and for her frankness alone, even without her beauty and her good sense, deserves an emperor. I cannot express the graceful modesty with which she told me that she knew too well the kindliness, as she was pleased to call it, of my heart, to expose me to the protracted pain of an unrequited passion. She candidly informed me that she had been long engaged to you in secret—that you had exchanged portraits;—and though without her father's consent she would never become yours, yet she felt it impossible that she should ever so far change her sentiments as to afford the most distant prospect of success to another.'

'Upon my word,' said Middlemas, 'she has been extremely candid indeed, and I am very much obliged to her!'

'And upon *my* honest word, Mr. Middlemas,' returned Hartley, 'you do Miss Gray the greatest injustice—nay, you are ungrateful to her, if you are displeased at her making this declaration. She loves you as a woman loves the first object of her affection—she loves you better'—— He stopped, and Middlemas completed the sentence.

'Better than I deserve, perhaps?—Faith, it may well be so, and I love her dearly in return. But, after all, you know, the secret was mine as well as hers, and it would have been better that she had consulted me before making it public.'

'Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley earnestly, 'if the least of this feeling, on your part, arises from the apprehension that your secret is less safe because it is in my keeping, I can assure you that such is my grateful sense of Miss Gray's goodness, in communicating, to save me pain, an affair of such delicacy to herself and you, that wild horses should tear me limb from limb before they forced a word of it from my lips.'

'Nay, nay, my dear friend,' said Middlemas, with a frankness of manner indicating a cordiality that had not existed between them for some time, 'you must allow me to be a little jealous in my turn. Your true lover cannot have a title to the name, unless he be sometimes unreasonable; and, somehow, it seems odd she should have chosen for a confidant one whom I have often thought a formidable rival; and yet I am so far from being displeased, that I do not know that the dear sensible girl could after all have made a better choice. It is time that the foolish

coldness between us should be ended, as you must be sensible that its real cause lay in our rivalry. I have much need of good advice, and who can give it to me better than the old companion, whose soundness of judgment I have always envied, even when some injudicious friends have given me credit for quicker parts?'

Hartley accepted Richard's proffered hand, but without any of the buoyancy of spirit with which it was offered.

'I do not intend,' he said, 'to remain many days in this place, perhaps not very many hours. But if, in the meanwhile, I can benefit you, by advice or otherwise, you may fully command me. It is the only mode in which I can be of service to Menie Gray.'

'Love my mistress, love me; a happy *pendant* to the old proverb, Love me, love my dog. Well, then, for Menie Gray's sake, if not for Dick Middlemas's (plague on that vulgar tell-tale name), will you, that are a stander-by, tell us, who are the unlucky players, what you think of this game of ours?'

'How can you ask such a question, when the field lies so fair before you? I am sure that Doctor Gray would retain you as his assistant upon the same terms which he proposed to me. You are the better match, in all worldly respects, for his daughter, having some capital to begin the world with.'

'All true—but methinks Mr. Gray has showed no great predilection for me in this matter.'

'If he has done injustice to your indisputable merit,' said Hartley dryly, 'the preference of his daughter has more than atoned for it.'

'Unquestionably; and dearly, therefore, do I love her; otherwise, Adam, I am not a person to grasp at the leavings of other people.'

'Richard,' replied Hartley, 'that pride of yours, if you do not check it, will render you both ungrateful and miserable. Mr. Gray's ideas are most friendly. He told me plainly that his choice of me as an assistant, and as a member of his family, had been a long time balanced by his early affection for you, until he thought he had remarked in you a decisive discontent with such limited prospects as his offer contained, and a desire to go abroad into the world, and push, as it is called, your fortune. He said, that although it was very probable that you might love his daughter well enough to relinquish these ambitious ideas for her sake, yet the demons of Ambition and Avarice would return after the exorciser Love had exhausted the force of his spells, and then he thought he would have just reason to be anxious for his daughter's happiness.'

'By my faith, the worthy senior speaks scholarly and wisely,' answered Richard; 'I did not think he had been so clear-sighted. To say the truth, but for the beautiful Menie Gray, I should feel like a mill-horse, walking my daily round in this dull country, while other gay rovers are trying how the world will receive them. For instance, where do you yourself go?'

'A cousin of my mother's commands a ship in the Company's service. I intend to go with him as surgeon's mate. If I like the sea service, I will continue in it; if not, I will enter some other line.' This Hartley said with a sigh.

'To India!' answered Richard; 'happy dog—to India! You may well bear with equanimity all disappointments sustained on this side of the globe. O Delhi! O Golconda! have your names no power to conjure down idle recollections!—India, where gold is won by steel; where a brave man cannot pitch his desire of fame and wealth so high, but that he may realize it, if he have fortune to his friend! Is it possible that the bold adventurer can fix his thoughts on you, and still be dejected at the thoughts that a bonnie blue-eyed lass looked favourably on a less lucky fellow than himself? Can this be?'

'Less lucky?' said Hartley. 'Can you, the accepted lover of Menie Gray, speak in that tone, even though it be in jest?'

'Nay, Adam,' said Richard, 'don't be angry with me, because, being thus far successful, I rate my good fortune not quite so rapturously as perhaps you do, who have missed the luck of it. Your philosophy should tell you that the object which we attain, or are sure of attaining, loses, perhaps, even by that very certainty, a little of the extravagant and ideal value which attached to it while the object of feverish hopes and aguish fears. But for all that, I cannot live without my sweet Menie. I would wed her to-morrow, with all my soul, without thinking a minute on the clog which so early a marriage would fasten on our heels. But to spend two additional years in this infernal wilderness, cruising after crowns and half-crowns, when worse men are making lacs and crores of rupees—It is a sad falling off, Adam. Counsel me, my friend,—can you not suggest some mode of getting off from these two years of destined dulness?'

'Not I,' replied Hartley, scarce repressing his displeasure; 'and if I could induce Doctor Gray to dispense with so reasonable a condition, I should be very sorry to do so. You are but twenty-one, and if such a period of probation was, in the Doctor's prudence, judged necessary for me, who am full two years older, I have no idea that he will dispense with it in yours.'

'Perhaps not,' replied Middlemas; 'but do you not think that these two, or call them three, years of probation had better be spent in India, where much may be done in a little while, than here, where nothing can be done save just enough to get salt to our broth, or broth to our salt? Methinks I have a natural turn for India, and so I ought. My father was a soldier, by the conjecture of all who saw him, and gave me a love of the sword, and an arm to use one. My mother's father was a rich trafficker, who loved wealth, I warrant me, and knew how to get it. This petty two hundred a-year, with its miserable and precarious possibilities, to be shared with the old gentleman, sounds in the ears of one like me, who have the world for the winning, and a sword to cut my way through it, like something little better than a decent kind of beggary. Menie is in herself a gem—a diamond—I admit it. But then, one would not set such a precious jewel in lead or copper, but in pure gold; ay, and add a circlet of brilliants to set it off with. Be a good fellow, Adam, and undertake the setting my project in proper colours before the

Doctor. I am sure, the wisest thing for him and Menie both is to permit me to spend this short time of probation in the land of cowries. I am sure my heart will be there at any rate, and while I am bleeding some bumpkin for an inflammation, I shall be in fancy relieving some nabob, or rajapoot, of his plethora of wealth. Come—will you assist, will you be auxiliary? Ten chances but you plead your own cause, man, for I may be brought up by a sabre or a bowstring, before I make my pack up; then your road to Menie will be free and open, and, as you will be possessed of the situation of comforter *ex officio*, you may take her "with the tear in her ee," as old saws advise.'

'Mr. Richard Middlemas,' said Hartley, 'I wish it were possible for me to tell you, in the few words which I intend to bestow on you, whether I pity you or despise you the most. Heaven has placed happiness, competence, and content within your power, and you are willing to cast them away, to gratify ambition and avarice. Were I to give an advice on this subject, either to Doctor Gray or his daughter, it would be to break off all connection with a man who, however clever by nature, may soon show himself a fool, and, however honestly brought up, may also, upon temptation, prove himself a villain.—You may lay aside the sneer, which is designed to be a sarcastic smile. I will not attempt to do this, because I am convinced that my advice would be of no use, unless it could come unattended with suspicion of my motives. I will hasten my departure from this house, that we may not meet again; and I will leave it to God Almighty to protect honesty and innocence against the dangers which must attend vanity and folly.' So saying, he turned contemptuously from the youthful votary of ambition, and left the garden.

'Stop,' said Middlemas, struck with the picture which had been held up to his conscience—'Stop Adam Hartley, and I will confess to you'—— But his words were uttered in a faint and hesitating manner, and either never reached Hartley's ear, or failed in changing his purpose of departure.

When he was out of the garden, Middlemas began to recall his usual boldness of disposition—'Had he stayed a moment longer,' he said, 'I would have turned Papist, and made him my ghostly confessor. The yeomanly churl!—I would give something to know how he has got such a hank over me. What are Menie Gray's engagements to him? She has given him his answer, and what right has he to come betwixt her and me? If old Monçada had done a grandfather's duty, and made suitable settlements on me, this plan of marrying the sweet girl, and settling here in her native place, might have done well enough. But to live the life of the poor drudge her father—to be at the command and call of every boor for twenty miles round!—why, the labours of a higgler, who travels scores of miles to barter pins, ribbons, snuff and tobacco, against the housewife's private stock of eggs, mort-skins, and tallow, is more profitable, less laborious, and faith, I think, equally respectable. No, no,—unless I can find wealth nearer home, I will seek it where every one can have it for the gathering; and so I will down to the Swan Inn, and hold a final consultation with my friend.'

CHAPTER V.

The friend whom Middlemas expected to meet at the Swan was a person already mentioned in this history by the name of Tom Hillary, bred an attorney's clerk in the ancient town of Novum Castrum*—*doctus utriusque juris*, as far as a few months in the service of Mr. Lawford, town-clerk of Middlemas, could render him so. The last mention that we made of this gentleman was when his gold-laced hat veiled its splendour before the fresher mounted beavers of the 'prentices of Doctor Gray. That was now about five years since, and it was within six months that he had made his appearance in Middlemas, a very different sort of personage from that which he seemed at his departure.

He was now called Captain; his dress was regimental, and his language martial. He appeared to have plenty of cash, for he not only, to the great surprise of the parties, paid certain old debts, which he had left unsettled behind him, and that notwithstanding his having, as his old practice told him, a good defence of prescription, but even sent the minister a guinea, to the assistance of the parish poor. These acts of justice and benevolence were bruited abroad, greatly to the honour of one, who, so long absent, had neither forgotten his just debts, nor hardened his heart against the cries of the needy. His merits were thought the higher, when it was understood he had served the Honourable East India Company—that wonderful company of merchants, who may indeed, with the strictest propriety, be termed princes. It was about the middle of the eighteenth century, and the directors in Leadenhall Street were silently laying the foundation of that immense empire, which afterwards rose like an exhalation, and now astonishes Europe, as well as Asia, with its formidable extent, and stupendous strength.† Britain had now begun to lend a wondering ear to the account of battles fought and cities won in the East; and was surprised by the return of individuals who had left their native country as adventurers, but now reappeared there surrounded by Oriental wealth and Oriental luxury, which dimmed even the splendour of the most wealthy of the British nobility. In this newfound El-Dorado,‡ Hillary had, it seems, been a labourer, and, if he told truth, to some purpose, though he was far from having completed the harvest which he meditated. He spoke, indeed, of making investments, and, as a mere matter of fancy, he consulted his old master, Clerk Lawford, concerning the purchase of a moorland farm of three thousand acres, for which he would be content to give three or four thousand guineas, providing the game was plenty, and the trouting in the brook such as

* [The Latin name of New-castle.]

† [The East India Company was dissolved, and its powers assumed by the Crown, in 1858.]

‡ [A fabulous city of gold, somewhere in South America, that Sir Walter Raleigh tried to discover.]

had been represented by advertisement. But he did not wish to make any extensive landed purchase at present. It was necessary to keep up his interest in Leadenhall Street; and, in that view, it would be impolitic to part with his India stock and India bonds. In short, it was folly to think of settling on a poor thousand or twelve hundred a-year, when one was in the prime of life, and had no liver complaint; and so he was determined to double the Cape once again, ere he retired to the chimney-corner for life. All he wished was to pick up a few clever fellows for his regiment, or rather for his own company; and as in all his travels he had never seen finer fellows than about Middlemas, he was willing to give them the preference in completing his levy. In fact, it was making men of them at once, for a few white faces never failed to strike terror into these black rascals; and then, not to mention the good things that were going at the storming of a pettah, or the plundering of a pagoda, most of these tawny dogs carried so much treasure about their persons, that a won battle was equal to a mine of gold to the victors.

The natives of Middlemas listened to the noble captain's marvels with different feelings, as their temperaments were saturnine or sanguine. But none could deny that such things had been; and, as the narrator was known to be a bold, dashing fellow, possessed of some abilities, and, according to the general opinion, not likely to be withheld by any peculiar scruples of conscience, there was no giving any good reason why Hillary should not have been as successful as others in the field which India, agitated as it was by war and intestine disorders, seemed to offer to every enterprising adventurer. He was accordingly received by his old acquaintances at Middlemas rather with the respect due to his supposed wealth, than in a manner corresponding with his former humble pretensions.

Some of the notables of the village did indeed keep aloof. Among these, the chief was Doctor Gray, who was an enemy to everything that approached to fanfaronade, and knew enough of the world to lay it down as a sort of general rule, that he who talks a great deal of fighting is seldom a brave soldier, and he who always speaks about wealth is seldom a rich man at bottom. Clerk Lawford was also shy, notwithstanding his *communings* with Hillary upon the subject of his intended purchase. The coolness of the captain's old employer towards him was by some supposed to arise out of certain circumstances attending their former connection; but as the clerk himself never explained what these were, it is unnecessary to make any conjectures upon the subject.

Richard Middlemas very naturally renewed his intimacy with his former comrade, and it was from Hillary's conversation that he had adopted the enthusiasm respecting India which we have heard him express. It was indeed impossible for a youth, at once inexperienced in the world, and possessed of a most sanguine disposition, to listen without sympathy to the glowing descriptions of Hillary, who, though only a recruiting captain, had all the eloquence of a recruiting sergeant. Palaces rose like mushrooms in his descriptions; groves of lofty trees, and aromatic shrubs unknown to the chilly soils of Europe, were tenanted by every object of the chase, from the royal tiger down to the jackal. The luxuries of a nautch, and the peculiar Oriental beauty of the enchantresses who performed their voluptuous Eastern dances for the pleasure of the haughty English conquerors, were no less attractive than the battles and sieges on which the captain at other times expatiated. Not a stream did he mention but flowed over sands of gold, and not a palace that was inferior to those of the celebrated Fata Morgana.* His descriptions seemed steeped in odours, and his every phrase perfumed in ottar of roses. The interviews at which these descriptions took place often ended in a bottle of choicer wine than the Swan Inn afforded, with some other appendages of the table, which the captain, who was a *bon-vivant*, had procured from Edinburgh. From this good cheer Middlemas was doomed to retire to the homely evening meal of his master, where not all the simple beauties of Menie were able to overcome his disgust at the coarseness of the provisions, or his unwillingness to answer questions concerning the diseases of the wretched peasants who were subjected to his inspection.

Richard's hopes of being acknowledged by his father had long since vanished, and the rough repulse and subsequent neglect on the part of Monçada had satisfied him that his grandfather was inexorable, and that neither then, nor at any future time, did he mean to realize the visions which Nurse Jamieson's splendid figments had encouraged him to entertain. Ambition, however, was not lulled to sleep, though it was no longer nourished by the same hopes which had at first awakened it. The Indian captain's lavish oratory supplied the themes which had been at first derived from the legends of the nursery; the exploits of a Lawrence and a Clive, as well as the magnificent opportunities of acquiring wealth to which these exploits opened the road, disturbed the slumbers of the young adventurer. There was nothing to counteract these except his love for Menie Gray, and the engagements into which it had led him. But his addresses had been paid to Menie as much for the gratification of his vanity as from any decided passion for that innocent and guileless being. He was desirous of carrying off the prize for which Hartley, whom he never loved, had the courage to contend with him. Then Menie Gray had been beheld with admiration by men his superiors in rank and fortune, but with whom his ambition incited him to dispute the prize. No doubt, though urged to play the gallant at first rather from vanity than any other cause, the frankness and modesty with which his suit was admitted made their natural impression on his heart. He was grateful to the beautiful creature who acknowledged the superiority of his person and accomplishments, and fancied himself as devotedly attached to her as her personal charms and mental merits would have rendered any one who was less vain or selfish than her lover. Still his passion for the surgeon's daughter ought not, he prudentially determined, to bear more

* [A fairy, sister of King Arthur, who figures in Boiardo's and Tasso's epics of romantic chivalry.]

than its due weight in a case so very important as the determining his line of life; and this he smoothed over to his conscience, by repeating to himself, that Menie's interest was as essentially concerned as his own in postponing their marriage to the establishment of his fortune. How many young couples had been ruined by a premature union!

The contemptuous conduct of Hartley in their last interview had done something to shake his comrade's confidence in the truth of this reasoning, and to lead him to suspect that he was playing a very sordid and unmanly part, in trifling with the happiness of this amiable and unfortunate young woman. It was in this doubtful humour that he repaired to the Swan Inn, where he was anxiously expected by his friend the captain.

When they were comfortably seated over a bottle of Paxarete,* Middlemas began, with characteristical caution, to sound his friend about the ease or difficulty with which an individual, desirous of entering the Company's service, might have an opportunity of getting a commission. If Hillary had answered truly, he would have replied that it was extremely easy; for at that time the East India service presented no charms to that superior class of people who have since struggled for admittance under its banners. But the worthy captain replied that, though, in the general case, it might be difficult for a young man to obtain a commission, without serving for some years as a cadet, yet, under his own protection, a young man entering his regiment, and fitted for such a situation, might be sure of an ensigncy, if not a lieutenancy, as soon as ever they set foot in India. 'If you, my dear fellow,' continued he, extending his hand to Middlemas, 'would think of changing sheep-head broth and haggis for mullagatawny and curry, I can only say that, though it is indispensable that you should enter the service at first simply as a cadet, yet, by ——, you should live like a brother on the passage with me; and no sooner were we through the surf at Madras, than I would put you in the way of acquiring both wealth and glory. You have, I think, some trifle of money —a couple of thousands or so?'

'About a thousand or twelve hundred,' said Richard, affecting the indifference of his companion, but feeling privately humbled by the scantiness of his resources.

'It is quite as much as you will find necessary for the outfit and passage,' said his adviser; 'and, indeed, if you had not a farthing, it would be the same thing; for if I once say to a friend, I'll help you, Tom Hillary is not the man to start for fear of the cowries. However, it is as well you have something of a capital of your own to begin upon.'

'Yes,' replied the proselyte; 'I should not like to be a burden on any one. I have some thoughts, to tell you the truth, to marry before I leave Britain; and in that case, you know, cash will be necessary, whether my wife goes out with us, or remains behind till she hear how luck goes with me. So, after all, I may have to borrow a few hundreds of you.'

'What the devil is that you say, Dick, about marrying and giving in marriage?' replied his friend. 'What can put it into the head of a gallant young fellow like you, just rising twenty-one, and six feet high on your stocking-soles, to make a slave of yourself for life? No, no, Dick, that will never do. Remember the old song,

> Bachelor Bluff, Bachelor Bluff,
> Hey for a heart that is rugged and tough!'

'Ay, ay, that sounds very well,' replied Middlemas; 'but then one must shake off a number of old recollections.'

'The sooner the better, Dick; old recollections are like old clothes, and should be sent off by wholesale; they only take up room in one's wardrobe, and it would be old-fashioned to wear them. But you look grave upon it. Who the devil is it that has made such a hole in your heart?'

'Pshaw!' answered Middlemas; 'I'm sure you must remember—Menie—my master's daughter.'

'What, Miss Green, the old pottercarrier's daughter?—a likely girl enough, I think.'

'My master is a surgeon,' said Richard, 'not an apothecary, and his name is Gray.'

'Ay, ay, Green or Gray, what does it signify? He sells his own drugs, I think, which we in the south call being a pottercarrier. The girl is a likely girl enough for a Scottish ballroom. But is she up to anything? Has she any *nouz?*'

'Why, she is a sensible girl, save in loving me,' answered Richard; 'and that, as Benedict† says, is no proof of her wisdom, and no great argument of her folly.'

'But has she spirit—spunk—dash—a spice of the devil about her?'

'Not a pennyweight—the kindest, simplest, and most manageable of human beings,' answered the lover.

'She won't do, then,' said the monitor, in a decisive tone. 'I am sorry for it, Dick; but she will never do. There are some women in the world that can bear their share in the bustling life we live in India—ay, and I have known some of them drag forward husbands that would otherwise have stuck fast in the mud till the day of judgment. Heaven knows how they paid the turnpikes they pushed them through! But these were none of your simple Susans, that think their eyes are good for nothing but to look at their husbands, or their fingers but to sew baby-clothes. Depend on it, you must give up your matrimony, or your views of preferment. If you wilfully tie a clog round your throat, never think of running a race; but do not suppose that your breaking off with the lass will make any very terrible catastrophe. A scene there may be at parting; but you will soon forget her among the native girls, and she will fall in love with Mr. Tapeitout, the minister's assistant and successor. She is not goods for the Indian market, I assure you.'

Among the capricious weaknesses of humanity, that one is particularly remarkable which inclines

* [A kind of sherry, grown near to Xeres, in the south of Spain.]

† [In *Much Ado about Nothing.*]

us to esteem persons and things not by their real value, or even by our own judgment, so much as by the opinion of others, who are often very incompetent judges. Dick Middlemas had been urged forward, in his suit to Menie Gray, by his observing how much her partner, a booby laird, had been captivated by her; and she was now lowered in his esteem, because an impudent, low-lived coxcomb had presumed to talk of her with disparagement. Either of these worthy gentlemen would have been as capable of enjoying the beauties of Homer, as judging of the merits of Menie Gray.

Indeed, the ascendancy which this bold-talking, promise-making soldier had acquired over Dick Middlemas, wilful as he was in general, was of a despotic nature; because the captain, though greatly inferior in information and talent to the youth whose opinions he swayed, had skill in suggesting those tempting views of rank and wealth, to which Richard's imagination had been from childhood most accessible. One promise he exacted from Middlemas, as a condition of the services which he was to render him—It was absolute silence on the subject of his destination for India, and the views upon which it took place. 'My recruits,' said the captain, 'have been all marched off for the depôt at the Isle of Wight; and I want to leave Scotland, and particularly this little burgh, without being worried to death, of which I must despair, should it come to be known that I can provide young griffins, as we call them, with commissions. Gad, I should carry off all the first-born of Middlemas as cadets, and none are so scrupulous as I am about making promises. I am as trusty as a Trojan for that; and you know I cannot do that for every one which I would for an old friend like Dick Middlemas.'

Dick promised secrecy, and it was agreed that the two friends should not even leave the burgh in company, but that the captain should set off first, and his recruit should join him at Edinburgh, where his enlistment might be attested; and then they were to travel together to town, and arrange matters for their Indian voyage.

Notwithstanding the definitive arrangement which was thus made for his departure, Middlemas thought from time to time with anxiety and regret about quitting Menie Gray, after the engagement which had passed between them. The resolution was taken, however; the blow was necessarily to be struck; and her ungrateful lover, long since determined against the life of domestic happiness which he might have enjoyed had his views been better regulated, was now occupied with the means, not indeed of breaking off with her entirely, but of postponing all thoughts of their union until the success of his expedition to India.

He might have spared himself all anxiety on this last subject. The wealth of that India to which he was bound would not have bribed Menie Gray to have left her father's roof against her father's commands; still less when, deprived of his two assistants, he must be reduced to the necessity of continued exertion in his declining life, and therefore might have accounted himself altogether deserted, had his daughter departed from him at the same time. But though it would have been her unalterable determination not to accept any proposal of an immediate union of their fortunes, Menie could not, with all a lover's power of self-deception, succeed in persuading herself to be satisfied with Richard's conduct towards her. Modesty, and a becoming pride, prevented her from seeming to notice, but could not prevent her from bitterly feeling, that her lover was preferring the pursuits of ambition to the humble lot which he might have shared with her, and which promised content at least, if not wealth.

'If he had loved me as he pretended,' such was the unwilling conviction that rose on her mind, 'my father would surely not have ultimately refused him the same terms which he held out to Hartley. His objections would have given way to my happiness, nay, to Richard's importunities, which would have removed his suspicions of the unsettled cast of his disposition. But I fear—I fear Richard hardly thought the terms proposed were worthy of his acceptance. Would it not have been natural, too, that he should have asked me, engaged as we stand to each other, to have united our fate before his quitting Europe, when I might either have remained here with my father, or accompanied him to India, in quest of that fortune which he is so eagerly pushing for? It would have been wrong—very wrong—in me to have consented to such a proposal, unless my father had authorized it; but surely it would have been natural that Richard should have offered it? Alas! men do not know how to love like women! Their attachment is only one of a thousand other passions and predilections,—they are daily engaged in pleasures which blunt their feelings, and in business which distracts them. We—we sit at home to weep, and to think how coldly our affections are repaid!'

The time was now arrived at which Richard Middlemas had a right to demand the property vested in the hands of the town-clerk and Doctor Gray. He did so, and received it accordingly. His late guardian naturally inquired what views he had formed on entering on life? The imagination of the ambitious aspirant saw in this simple question a desire, on the part of the worthy man, to offer, and perhaps press upon him, the same proposal which he had made to Hartley. He hastened, therefore, to answer dryly, that he had some hopes held out to him which he was not at liberty to communicate; but that the instant he reached London, he would write to the guardian of his youth, and acquaint him with the nature of his prospects, which, he was happy to say, were rather of a pleasing character.

Gideon, who supposed that, at this critical period of his life, the father or grandfather of the young man might perhaps have intimated a disposition to open some intercourse with him, only replied,—'You have been the child of mystery, Richard; and as you came to me, so you leave me. Then, I was ignorant from whence you came; and now, I know not whither you are going. It is not, perhaps, a very favourable point in your horoscope, that everything connected with you is a secret. But as I shall always think with kindness on him whom I

have known so long, so, when you remember the old man, you ought not to forget that he has done his duty to you, to the extent of his means and power, and taught you that noble profession, by means of which, wherever your lot casts you, you may always gain your bread, and alleviate, at the same time, the distresses of your fellow-creatures.' Middlemas was excited by the simple kindness of his master, and poured forth his thanks with the greater profusion, that he was free from the terror of the emblematical collar and chain, which a moment before seemed to glisten in the hand of his guardian, and gape to enclose his neck.

'One word more,' said Mr. Gray, producing a small ring-case. 'This valuable ring was forced upon me by your unfortunate mother. I have no right to it, having been amply paid for my services; and I only accepted it with the purpose of keeping it for you till this moment should arrive. It may be useful, perhaps, should there occur any question about your identity.'

'Thanks, once more, my more than father, for this precious relic, which may indeed be useful. You shall be repaid, if India has diamonds left.'

'India, and diamonds!' said Gray. 'Is your head turned, child?'

'I mean,' stammered Middlemas, 'if London has any Indian diamonds.'

'Pooh! you foolish lad,' answered Gray, 'how should you buy diamonds, or what should I do with them, if you gave me ever so many? Get you gone with you while I am angry;'—the tears were glistening in the old man's eyes;—'if I get pleased with you again, I shall not know how to part with you.'

The parting of Middlemas with poor Menie was yet more affecting. Her sorrow revived in his mind all the liveliness of a first love, and he redeemed his character for sincere attachment, by not only imploring an instant union, but even going so far as to propose renouncing his more splendid prospects, and sharing Mr. Gray's humble toil, if by doing so he could secure his daughter's hand. But though there was consolation in this testimony of her lover's faith, Menie Gray was not so unwise as to accept of sacrifices which might afterwards have been repented of.

'No, Richard,' she said, 'it seldom ends happily, when people alter, in a moment of agitated feeling, plans which have been adopted under mature deliberation. I have long seen that your views were extended far beyond so humble a station as this place affords promise of. It is natural they should do so, considering that the circumstances of your birth seemed connected with riches and with rank. Go, then, seek that riches and rank. It is possible your mind may be changed in the pursuit, and if so, think no more about Menie Gray. But if it should be otherwise, we may meet again, and do not believe for a moment that there can be a change in Menie Gray's feelings towards you.'

At this interview much more was said than it is necessary to repeat, much more thought than was actually said. Nurse Jamieson, in whose chamber it took place, folded her *bairns*, as she called them, in her arms, and declared that Heaven had made them for each other, and that she would not ask of Heaven to live beyond the day when she should see them bridegroom and bride.

At length it became necessary that the parting scene should end; and Richard Middlemas, mounting a horse which he had hired for the journey, set off for Edinburgh, to which metropolis he had already forwarded his heavy baggage. Upon the road the idea more than once occurred to him, that even yet he had better return to Middlemas, and secure his happiness by uniting himself at once to Menie Gray, and to humble competence. But from the moment that he rejoined his friend Hillary at their appointed place of rendezvous, he became ashamed even to hint at any change of purpose; and his late excited feelings were forgotten, unless in so far as they confirmed his resolution, that as soon as he had attained a certain portion of wealth and consequence, he would haste to share them with Menie Gray. Yet his gratitude to her father did not appear to have slumbered, if we may judge from the gift of a very handsome cornelian seal, set in gold, and bearing engraved upon it gules, a lion rampant within a bordure or, which was carefully despatched to Stevenlaw's Land, Middlemas, with a suitable letter. Menie knew the handwriting, and watched her father's looks as he read it, thinking, perhaps, that it had turned on a different topic. Her father pshawed and poohed a good deal when he had finished the billet, and examined the seal.

'Dick Middlemas,' he said, 'is but a fool after all, Menie. I am sure I am not like to forget him, that he should send me a token of remembrance; and if he would be so absurd, could he not have sent me the improved lithotomical apparatus? And what have I, Gideon Gray, to do with the arms of my Lord Gray?—No, no—my old silver stamp, with the double G upon it, will serve my turn—But put the bonnie dye* away, Menie, my dear—it was kindly meant, at any rate.'

The reader cannot doubt that the seal was safely and carefully preserved.

CHAPTER VI.

A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased.
MILTON.

AFTER the captain had finished his business, amongst which he did not forget to have his recruit regularly attested as a candidate for glory in the service of the Honourable East India Company, the friends left Edinburgh. From thence they got a passage by sea to Newcastle, where Hillary had also some regimental affairs to transact, before he joined his regiment. At Newcastle the captain had the good luck to find a small brig, commanded by an old acquaintance and schoolfellow, which was just about to sail for the Isle of Wight. 'I have arranged for our passage with him,' he said to Middlemas—'for when you are at the depôt, you can learn a little

* Pretty toy.

of your duty which cannot be so well taught on board of ship, and then I will find it easier to have you promoted.'

'Do you mean,' said Richard, 'that I am to stay at the Isle of Wight all the time that you are jigging it away in London?'

'Ay, indeed do I,' said his comrade, 'and it's best for you too; whatever business you have in London, I can do it for you as well, or something better than yourself.'

'But I choose to transact my own business myself, Captain Hillary,' said Richard.

'Then you ought to have remained your own master, Mr. Cadet Middlemas. At present you are an enlisted recruit of the Honourable East India Company; I am your officer, and should you hesitate to follow me aboard, why, you foolish fellow, I could have you sent on board in handcuffs.'

This was jestingly spoken; but yet there was something in the tone which hurt Middlemas's pride and alarmed his fears. He had observed of late that his friend, especially when in company of others, talked to him with an air of command or superiority, difficult to be endured, and yet so closely allied to the freedom often exercised betwixt two intimates, that he could not find any proper mode of rebuffing or resenting it. Such manifestations of authority were usually followed by an instant renewal of their intimacy; but in the present case that did not so speedily ensue.

Middlemas, indeed, consented to go with his companion to the Isle of Wight, perhaps because, if he should quarrel with him, the whole plan of his Indian voyage, and all the hopes built upon it, must fall to the ground. But he altered his purpose of entrusting his comrade with his little fortune, to lay out as his occasions might require, and resolved himself to overlook the expenditure of his money, which, in the form of Bank of England notes, was safely deposited in his travelling trunk. Captain Hillary, finding that some hint he had thrown out on this subject was disregarded, appeared to think no more about it.

The voyage was performed with safety and celerity; and, having coasted the shores of that beautiful island, which he who once sees never forgets, through whatever part of the world his future path may lead him, the vessel was soon anchored off the little town of Ryde, and as the waves were uncommonly still, Richard felt the sickness diminish, which, for a considerable part of the passage, had occupied his attention more than anything else.

The master of the brig, in honour to his passengers, and affection to his old schoolfellow, had formed an awning upon deck, and proposed to have the pleasure of giving them a little treat before they left his vessel. Lobscouse, sea-pie, and other delicacies of a naval description had been provided in a quantity far disproportionate to the number of the guests. But the punch which succeeded was of excellent quality, and portentously strong. Captain Hillary pushed it round, and insisted upon his companion taking his full share in the merry bout, the rather that, as he facetiously said, there had been some dryness between them, which good liquor would be sovereign in removing. He renewed, with additional splendours, the various panoramic scenes of India and Indian adventures, which had first excited the ambition of Middlemas, and assured him that even if he should not be able to get him a commission instantly, yet a short delay would only give him time to become better acquainted with his military duties; and Middlemas was too much elevated by the liquor he had drunk to see any difficulty which could oppose itself to his fortunes. Whether those who shared in the compotation were more seasoned topers — whether Middlemas drank more than they—or whether, as he himself afterwards suspected, his cup had been drugged, like those of King Duncan's body-guard,* it is certain that, on this occasion, he passed with unusual rapidity through all the different phases of the respectable state of drunkenness—laughed, sung, whooped and hallooed, was maudlin in his fondness and frantic in his wrath, and at length fell into a fast and imperturbable sleep.

The effect of the liquor displayed itself, as usual, in a hundred wild dreams of parched deserts, and of serpents whose bite inflicted the most intolerable thirst—of the suffering of the Indian on the death-stake—and the torments of the infernal regions themselves; when at length he awakened, and it appeared that the latter vision was in fact realized. The sounds which had at first influenced his dreams, and at length broken his slumbers, were of the most horrible, as well as the most melancholy description. They came from the ranges of pallet beds, which were closely packed together in a species of military hospital, where a burning fever was the prevalent complaint. Many of the patients were under the influence of a high delirium, during which they shouted, shrieked, laughed, blasphemed, and uttered the most horrible imprecations. Others, sensible of their condition, bewailed it with low groans, and some attempts at devotion, which showed their ignorance of the principles, and even the forms of religion. Those who were convalescent talked ribaldry in a loud tone, or whispered to each other in cant language, upon schemes which, as far as a passing phrase could be understood by a novice, had relation to violent and criminal exploits.

Richard Middlemas's astonishment was equal to his horror. He had but one advantage over the poor wretches with whom he was classed, and it was in enjoying the luxury of a pallet to himself—most of the others being occupied by two unhappy beings. He saw no one who appeared to attend to the wants, or to heed the complaints, of the wretches around him, or to whom he could offer any appeal against his present situation. He looked for his clothes, that he might arise and extricate himself from this den of horrors; but his clothes were nowhere to be seen, nor did he see his portmanteau or sea-chest. It was much to be apprehended he would never see them more.

Then, but too late, he remembered the insinuations which had passed current respecting his friend the captain, who was supposed to have been discharged by Mr. Lawford on account of

* [An allusion to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.]

some breach of trust in the town-clerk's service. But that he should have trepanned the friend who had reposed his whole confidence in him—that he should have plundered him of his fortune, and placed him in this house of pestilence, with the hope that death might stifle his tongue—were iniquities not to have been anticipated, even if the worst of these reports were true.

But Middlemas resolved not to be awanting to himself. This place must be visited by some officer, military or medical, to whom he would make an appeal, and alarm his fears at least, if he could not awaken his conscience. While he revolved these distracting thoughts, tormented at the same time by a burning thirst which he had no means of satisfying, he endeavoured to discover if, amongst those stretched upon the pallets nearest him, he could not discern some one likely to enter into conversation with him, and give him some information about the nature and customs of this horrid place. But the bed nearest him was occupied by two fellows, who, although, to judge from their gaunt cheeks, hollow eyes, and ghastly looks, they were apparently recovering from the disease, and just rescued from the jaws of death, were deeply engaged in endeavouring to cheat each other of a few halfpence at a game of cribbage, mixing the terms of the game with oaths not loud but deep; each turn of luck being hailed by the winner as well as the loser with execrations, which seemed designed to blight both body and soul, now used as the language of triumph, and now as reproaches against fortune.

Next to the gamblers was a pallet, occupied indeed by two bodies, but only one of which was living—the other sufferer had been recently relieved from his agony.

'He is dead—he is dead!' said the wretched survivor.

'Then do you die too, and be d—d,' answered one of the players, 'and then there will be a pair of you, as Pugg * says.'

'I tell you he is growing stiff and cold,' said the poor wretch—'the dead is no bedfellow for the living—For God's sake, help to rid me of the corpse.'

'Ay, and get the credit of having *done* him—as may be the case with yourself, friend—for he had some two or three hoggs about him'——

'You know you took the last rap from his breeches-pocket not an hour ago,' expostulated the poor convalescent—'But help me to take the body out of the bed, and I will not tell the *jigger-dubber* that you have been beforehand with him.'

'You tell the *jigger-dubber!*' answered the cribbage-player. 'Such another word, and I will twist your head round till your eyes look at the drummer's handwriting on your back. Hold your peace, and don't bother our game with your gammon, or I will make you as mute as your bedfellow.'

The unhappy wretch, exhausted, sunk back beside his hideous companion, and the usual jargon of the game, interlarded with execrations, went on as before.

From this specimen of the most obdurate indifference, contrasted with the last excess of misery, Middlemas became satisfied how little could be made of an appeal to the humanity of his fellow-sufferers. His heart sank within him, and the thoughts of the happy and peaceful home, which he might have called his own, arose before his over-heated fancy, with a vividness of perception that bordered upon insanity. He saw before him the rivulet which wanders through the burgh-muir of Middlemas, where he had so often set little mills for the amusement of Menie when she was a child. One draught of it would have been worth all the diamonds of the East, which of late he had worshipped with such devotion; but that draught was denied to him as to Tantalus.†

Rallying his senses from this passing illusion, and knowing enough of the practice of the medical art to be aware of the necessity of preventing his ideas from wandering if possible, he endeavoured to recollect that he was a surgeon, and, after all, should not have the extreme fear for the interior of a military hospital which its horrors might inspire into strangers to the profession. But though he strove, by such recollections, to rally his spirits, he was not the less aware of the difference betwixt the condition of a surgeon who might have attended such a place in the course of his duty, and a poor inhabitant who was at once a patient and a prisoner.

A footstep was now heard in the apartment, which seemed to silence all the varied sounds of woe that filled it. The cribbage party hid their cards, and ceased their oaths; other wretches, whose complaints had arisen to frenzy, left off their wild exclamations and entreaties for assistance. Agony softened her shriek, Insanity hushed its senseless clamours, and even Death seemed desirous to stifle his parting groan in the presence of Captain Seelencooper. This official was the superintendent, or, as the miserable inhabitants termed him, the governor of the hospital. He had all the air of having been originally a turnkey in some ill-regulated jail—a stout, short, bandy-legged man, with one eye, and a double portion of ferocity in that which remained. He wore an old-fashioned tarnished uniform, which did not seem to have been made for him; and the voice in which this minister of humanity addressed the sick was that of a boatswain shouting in the midst of a storm. He had pistols and a cutlass in his belt; for his mode of administration being such as provoked even hospital patients to revolt, his life had been more than once in danger amongst them. He was followed by two assistants, who carried handcuffs and strait-jackets.

As Seelencooper made his rounds, complaint and pain were hushed, and the flourish of the bamboo which he bore in his hand seemed powerful as the wand of a magician to silence all complaint and remonstrance.

'I tell you the meat is as sweet as a nosegay—and for the bread, it's good enough, and too good, for a set of lubbers, that lie shamming

* [The mischievous little goblin in Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass.*]

† [For a punishment, Tantalus, according to the ancient Greek myth, was fastened in a lake, the waters of which always flowed away from him when he stooped to drink of them.]

Abraham,* and consuming the Right Honourable Company's victuals—I don't speak to them that are really sick, for God knows I am always for humanity.'

'If that be the case, sir,' said Richard Middlemas, whose lair the captain had approached, while he was thus answering the low and humble complaints of those by whose bedside he passed —'if that be the case, sir, I hope your humanity will make you attend to what I say.'

'And who the devil are you?' said the governor, turning on him his single eye of fire, while a sneer gathered on his harsh features, which were so well qualified to express it.

'My name is Middlemas—I come from Scotland, and have been sent here by some strange mistake. I am neither a private soldier, nor am I indisposed, more than by the heat of this cursed place.'

'Why, then, friend, all I have to ask you is, whether you are an attested recruit or not?'

'I was attested at Edinburgh,' said Middlemas, 'but'——

'But what the devil would you have, then?—You are enlisted—the captain and the doctor sent you here—surely they know best whether you are private or officer, sick or well.'

'But I was promised,' said Middlemas, 'promised by Tom Hillary'——

'Promised, were you? Why, there is not a man here that has not been promised something by somebody or another, or perhaps has promised something to himself. This is the land of promise, my smart fellow, but you know it is India that must be the land of performance. So good morning to you. The doctor will come his rounds presently, and put you all to rights.'

'Stay but one moment—one moment only—I have been robbed.'

'Robbed! look you there now,' said the governor—'everybody that comes here has been robbed. —Egad, I am the luckiest fellow in Europe — other people in my line have only thieves and blackguards upon their hands; but none come to my ken but honest, decent, unfortunate gentlemen, that have been robbed!'

'Take care how you treat this so lightly, sir,' said Middlemas; 'I have been robbed of a thousand pounds.'

Here Governor Seelencooper's gravity was totally overcome, and his laugh was echoed by several of the patients, either because they wished to curry favour with the superintendent, or from the feeling which influences evil spirits to rejoice in the tortures of those who are sent to share their agony.

'A thousand pounds!' exclaimed Captain Seelencooper, as he recovered his breath,—'Come, that's a good one—I like a fellow that does not make two bites of a cherry—why, there is not a cull in the ken that pretends to have lost more than a few hoggs, and here is a servant to the Honourable Company that has been robbed of a thousand pounds! Well done, Mr. Tom of Ten Thousand—you're a credit to the house, and to the service, and so good morning to you.'

He passed on, and Richard, starting up in a storm of anger and despair, found, as he would have called after him, that his voice, betwixt thirst and agitation, refused its office. 'Water, water!' he said, laying hold, at the same time, of one of the assistants who followed Seelencooper by the sleeve. The fellow looked carelessly round; there was a jug stood by the side of the cribbage-players, which he reached to Middlemas, bidding him 'Drink and be d—d.'

The man's back was no sooner turned, than the gamester threw himself from his own bed into that of Middlemas, and, grasping firm hold of the arm of Richard ere he could carry the vessel to his head, swore he should not have his booze. It may be readily conjectured that the pitcher thus anxiously and desperately reclaimed contained something better than the pure element. In fact, a large proportion of it was gin. The jug was broken in the struggle, and the liquor spilt. Middlemas dealt a blow to the assailant, which was amply and heartily repaid, and a combat would have ensued, but for the interference of the superintendent and his assistants, who, with a dexterity that showed them well acquainted with such emergencies, clapped a strait-waistcoat upon each of the antagonists. Richard's efforts at remonstrance only procured him a blow from Captain Seelencooper's rattan, and a tender admonition to hold his tongue, if he valued a whole skin.

Irritated at once by sufferings of the mind and of the body, tormented by raging thirst, and by the sense of his own dreadful situation, the mind of Richard Middlemas seemed to be on the point of becoming unsettled. He felt an insane desire to imitate and reply to the groans, oaths, and ribaldry, which, as soon as the superintendent quitted the hospital, echoed around him. He longed, though he struggled against the impulse, to vie in curses with the reprobate, and in screams with the maniac. But his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, his mouth itself seemed choked with ashes; there came upon him a dimness of sight, a rushing sound in his ears, and the powers of life were for a time suspended.

CHAPTER VII.

> A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,
> Is more than armies to the common weal.
> POPE'S HOMER

As Middlemas returned to his senses, he was sensible that his blood felt more cool; that the feverish throb of his pulsation was diminished; that the ligatures on his person were removed, and his lungs performed their functions more freely. One assistant was binding up a vein, from which a considerable quantity of blood had been taken; another, who had just washed the face of the patient, was holding aromatic vinegar to his nostrils. As he began to open his eyes, the person who had just completed the bandage said in Latin, but in a very low tone, and without raising his head, 'An non sis Ricardus ille Middlemassiense? Responde in lingua Latina.'

'Sum ille miserrimus,' replied Richard, again shutting his eyes; for, strange as it may seem,

[To sham sickness.]

the voice of his comrade, Adam Hartley, though his presence might be of so much consequence in this emergency, conveyed a pang to his wounded pride. He was conscious of unkindly, if not hostile, feelings towards his old companion; he remembered the tone of superiority which he used to assume over him, and thus to lie stretched at his feet, and in a manner at his mercy, aggravated his distress, by the feelings of the dying chieftain, 'Earl Percy sees my fall.' This was, however, too unreasonable an emotion to subsist above a minute. In the next, he availed himself of the Latin language, with which both were familiar (for in that time the medical studies at the celebrated University of Edinburgh were, in a great measure, conducted in Latin), to tell in a few words his own folly and the villany of Hillary.

'I must be gone instantly,' said Hartley—'Take courage—I trust to be able to assist you. In the meantime, take food and physic from none but my servant, who you see holds the sponge in his hand. You are in a place where a man's life has been taken for the sake of his gold sleeve-buttons.'

'Stay yet a moment,' said Middlemas—'Let me remove this temptation from my dangerous neighbours.'

He drew a small packet from his under waistcoat, and put it into Hartley's hands.

'If I die,' he said, 'be my heir. You deserve her better than I.'

All answer was prevented by the hoarse voice of Seelencooper.

'Well, Doctor, will you carry through your patient?'

'Symptoms are dubious yet,' said the doctor—'That was an alarming swoon. You must have him carried into the private ward, and my young man shall attend him.'

'Why, if you command it, Doctor, needs must; but I can tell you there is a man we both know, that has a thousand reasons at least for keeping him in the public ward.'

'I know nothing of your thousand reasons,' said Hartley; 'I can only tell you that this young fellow is as well-limbed and likely a lad as the Company have among their recruits. It is my business to save him for their service, and if he dies by your neglecting what I direct, depend upon it I will not allow the blame to lie at my door. I will tell the General the charge I have given you.'

'The General!' said Seelencooper, much embarrassed—'Tell the General?—ay, about his health. But you will not say anything about what he may have said in his light-headed fits? My eyes! if you listen to what feverish patients say when the tantivy is in their brain, your back will soon break with tale-bearing, for I will warrant you plenty of them to carry.'

'Captain Seelencooper,' said the doctor, 'I do not meddle with your department in the hospital; my advice to you is, not to trouble yourself with mine. I suppose, as I have a commission in the service, and have besides a regular diploma as a physician, I know when my patient is light-headed or otherwise. So do you let the man be carefully looked after, at your peril.'

Thus saying, he left the hospital, but not till, under pretext of again consulting the pulse, he pressed the patient's hand, as if to assure him once more of his exertions for his liberation.

'My eyes!' muttered Seelencooper, 'this cockerel crows gallant, to come from a Scotch roost; but I would know well enough how to fetch the youngster off the perch, if it were not for the cure he has done on the General's pickaninnies.'

Enough of this fell on Richard's ear to suggest hopes of deliverance, which were increased when he was shortly afterwards removed to a separate ward, a place much more decent in appearance, and inhabited only by two patients, who seemed petty officers. Although sensible that he had no illness, save that weakness which succeeds violent agitation, he deemed it wisest to suffer himself still to be treated as a patient, in consideration that he should thus remain under his comrade's superintendence. Yet, while preparing to avail himself of Hartley's good offices, the prevailing reflection of his secret bosom was the ungrateful sentiment, 'Had Heaven no other means of saving me than by the hands of him I like least on the face of the earth?'

Meanwhile, ignorant of the ungrateful sentiments of his comrade, and indeed wholly indifferent how he felt towards him, Hartley proceeded in doing him such service as was in his power, without any other object than the discharge of his own duty as a man and as a Christian. The manner in which he became qualified to render his comrade assistance requires some short explanation.

Our story took place at a period when the Directors of the East India Company, with that hardy and persevering policy which has raised to such a height the British Empire in the East, had determined to send a large reinforcement of European troops to the support of their power in India, then threatened by the kingdom of Mysore, of which the celebrated Hyder Ali had usurped the government, after dethroning his master. Considerable difficulty was found in obtaining recruits for that service. Those who might have been otherwise disposed to be soldiers, were afraid of the climate, and of the species of banishment which the engagement implied; and doubted also how far the engagements of the Company might be faithfully observed towards them, when they were removed from the protection of the British laws. For these and other reasons, the military service of the king was preferred, and that of the Company could only procure the worst recruits, although their zealous agents scrupled not to employ the worst means. Indeed, the practice of kidnapping, or crimping, as it is technically called, was at that time general, whether for the colonies, or even for the king's troops; and as the agents employed in such transactions must be of course entirely unscrupulous, there was not only much villany committed in the direct prosecution of the trade, but it gave rise incidentally to remarkable cases of robbery, and even murder. Such atrocities were of course concealed from the authorities for whom the levies were made, and the necessity of obtaining soldiers made men, whose conduct was otherwise

unexceptionable, cold in looking closely into the mode in which their recruiting service was conducted.

The principal depôt of the troops which were by these means assembled was in the Isle of Wight, where, the season proving unhealthy, and the men themselves being many of them of a bad habit of body, a fever of a malignant character broke out amongst them, and speedily crowded with patients the military hospital, of which Mr. Seelencooper, himself an old and experienced crimp and kidnapper, had obtained the superintendence. Irregularities began to take place also among the soldiers who remained healthy, and the necessity of subjecting them to some discipline before they sailed was so evident, that several officers of the Company's naval service expressed their belief that otherwise there would be dangerous mutinies on the passage.

To remedy the first of these evils, the Court of Directors sent down to the island several of their medical servants, amongst whom was Hartley, whose qualifications had been amply certified by a medical board, before which he had passed an examination, besides his possessing a diploma from the University of Edinburgh as M.D.

To enforce the discipline of their soldiers, the Court committed full power to one of their own body, General Witherington. The general was an officer who had distinguished himself highly in their service. He had returned from India five or six years before, with a large fortune, which he had rendered much greater by an advantageous marriage with a rich heiress. The general and his lady went little into society, but seemed to live entirely for their infant family, those in number being three, two boys and a girl. Although he had retired from the service, he willingly undertook the temporary charge committed to him, and, taking a house at a considerable distance from the town of Ryde, he proceeded to enrol the troops into separate bodies, appoint officers of capacity to each, and, by regular training and discipline, gradually to bring them into something resembling good order. He heard their complaints of ill usage in the articles of provisions and appointments, and did them upon all occasions the strictest justice, save that he was never known to restore one recruit to his freedom from the service, however unfairly or even illegally his attestation might have been obtained.

'It is none of my business,' said General Witherington, 'how you became soldiers, — soldiers I found you, and soldiers I will leave you. But I will take especial care that as soldiers you shall have everything, to a penny or a pin's head, that you are justly entitled to.' He went to work without fear or favour, reported many abuses to the Board of Directors, had several officers, commissaries, etc., removed from the service, and made his name as great a terror to the peculators at home, as it had been to the enemies of Britain in Hindostan.

Captain Seelencooper and his associates in the hospital department heard and trembled, fearing that their turn should come next; but the general, who elsewhere examined all with his own eyes, showed a reluctance to visit the hospital in person. Public report industriously imputed this to fear of infection. Such was certainly the motive; though it was not fear for his own safety that influenced General Witherington, but he dreaded lest he should carry the infection home to the nursery, on which he doated. The alarm of his lady was yet more unreasonably sensitive; she would scarcely suffer the children to walk abroad, if the wind but blew from the quarter where the hospital was situated.

But Providence baffles the precautions of mortals. In a walk across the fields, chosen as the most sheltered and sequestered, the children, with their train of Eastern and European attendants, met a woman who carried a child that was recovering from the small-pox. The anxiety of the father, joined to some religious scruples on the mother's part, had postponed inoculation, which was then scarcely come into general use. The infection caught like a quick-match, and ran like wildfire through all those in the family who had not previously had the disease. One of the general's children, the second boy, died, and two of the *ayas*, or black female servants, had the same fate. The hearts of the father and mother would have been broken for the child they had lost, had not their grief been suspended by anxiety for the fate of those who lived, and who were confessed to be in imminent danger. They were like persons distracted, as the symptoms of the poor patients appeared gradually to resemble more nearly that of the child already lost.

While the parents were in this agony of apprehension, the general's principal servant, a native of Northumberland like himself, informed him one morning that there was a young man from the same county among the hospital doctors, who had publicly blamed the mode of treatment observed towards the patients, and spoken of another which he had seen practised with eminent success.

'Some impudent quack,' said the general, 'who would force himself into business by bold assertions. Doctor Tourniquet and Doctor Lancelot are men of high reputation.'

'Do not mention their reputation,' said the mother, with a mother's impatience; 'did they not let my sweet Reuben die? What avails the reputation of the physician, when the patient perisheth?'

'If his honour would but see Doctor Hartley,' said Winter, turning half towards the lady, then turning back again to his master. 'He is a very decent young man, who, I am sure, never expected what he said to reach your honour's ears; and he is a native of Northumberland.'

'Send a servant with a led horse,' said the general; 'let the young man come hither instantly.'

It is well known that the ancient mode of treating the small-pox was to refuse to the patient everything which Nature urged him to desire; and, in particular, to confine him to heated rooms, beds loaded with blankets, and spiced wine, when nature called for cold water and fresh air. A different mode of treatment had of late been adventured upon by some

practitioners who preferred reason to authority, and Gideon Gray had followed it for several years with extraordinary success.

When General Witherington saw Hartley, he was startled at his youth; but when he heard him modestly, but with confidence, state the difference of the two modes of treatment, and the *rationale* of his practice, he listened with the most serious attention. So did his lady, her streaming eyes turning from Hartley to her husband, as if to watch what impression the arguments of the former were making upon the latter. General Witherington was silent for a few minutes after Hartley had finished his exposition, and seemed buried in profound reflection.—'To treat a fever,' he said, 'in a manner which tends to produce one, seems indeed to be adding fuel to fire.'

'It is—it is,' said the lady. 'Let us trust this young man, General Witherington. We shall at least give our darlings the comforts of the fresh air and cold water for which they are pining.'

But the general remained undecided. 'Your reasoning,' he said to Hartley, 'seems plausible; but still it is only hypothesis. What can you show to support your theory, in opposition to the general practice?'

'My own observation,' replied the young man. 'Here is a memorandum-book of medical cases which I have witnessed. It contains twenty cases of small-pox, of which eighteen were recoveries.'

'And the two others?' said the general.

'Terminated fatally,' replied Hartley; 'we can as yet but partially disarm this scourge of the human race.'

'Young man,' continued the general, 'were I to say that a thousand gold mohurs were yours in case my children live under your treatment, what have you to peril in exchange?'

'My reputation,' answered Hartley firmly.

'And you could warrant on your reputation the recovery of your patients?'

'God forbid I should be presumptuous! But I think I could warrant my using those means which, with God's blessing, afford the fairest chance of a favourable result.'

'Enough—you are modest and sensible, as well as bold, and I will trust you.'

The lady, on whom Hartley's words and manner had made a great impression, and who was eager to discontinue a mode of treatment which subjected the patients to the greatest pain and privation, and had already proved unfortunate, eagerly acquiesced, and Hartley was placed in full authority in the sick-room.

Windows were thrown open, fires reduced or discontinued, loads of bed-clothes removed, cooling drinks superseded mulled wines and spices. The sick-nurses cried out murder. Doctors Tourniquet and Lancelot retired in disgust, menacing something like a general pestilence, in vengeance of what they termed rebellion against the neglect of the aphorisms of Hippocrates.* Hartley proceeded quietly and steadily, and the patients got into a fair road of recovery.

* [A celebrated ancient Greek physician.]

The young Northumbrian was neither conceited nor artful; yet, with all his plainness of character, he could not but know the influence which a successful physician obtains over the parents of the children whom he has saved from the grave, and especially before the cure is actually completed. He resolved to use his influence in behalf of his old companion, trusting that the military tenacity of General Witherington would give way on consideration of the obligation so lately conferred upon him.

On his way to the general's house, which was at present his constant place of residence, he examined the packet which Middlemas had put into his hand. It contained the picture of Menie Gray, plainly set, and the ring with brilliants, which Doctor Gray had given to Richard as his mother's last gift. The first of these tokens extracted from honest Hartley a sigh, perhaps a tear, of sad remembrance. 'I fear,' he said, 'she has not chosen worthily; but she shall be happy, if I can make her so.'

Arrived at the residence of General Witherington, our doctor went first to the sick apartment, and then carried to their parents the delightful account, that the recovery of the children might be considered as certain.

'May the God of Israel bless thee, young man!' said the lady, trembling with emotion; 'thou hast wiped the tear from the eye of the despairing mother. And yet—alas! alas! still it must flow when I think of my cherub Reuben.—O, Mr. Hartley, why did we not know you a week sooner?—my darling had not then died.'

'God gives and takes away, my lady,' answered Hartley; 'and you must remember that two are restored to you out of three. It is far from certain that the treatment I have used towards the convalescents would have brought through their brother; for the case, as reported to me, was of a very inveterate description.'

'Doctor,' said Witherington, his voice testifying more emotion than he usually or willingly gave way to, 'you can comfort the sick in spirit as well as the sick in body. But it is time we settle our wager. You betted your reputation, which remains with you, increased by all the credit due to your eminent success, against a thousand gold mohurs, the value of which you will find in that pocket-book.'

'General Witherington,' said Hartley, 'you are wealthy, and entitled to be generous—I am poor, and not entitled to decline whatever may be, even in a liberal sense, a compensation for my professional attendance. But there is a bound to extravagance, both in giving and accepting; and I must not hazard the newly-acquired reputation with which you flatter me, by giving room to have it said that I fleeced the parents, when their feelings were all afloat with anxiety for their children.—Allow me to divide this large sum; one half I will thankfully retain as a most liberal recompense for my labour; and if you still think you owe me anything, let me have it in the advantage of your good opinion and countenance.'

'If I acquiesce in your proposal, Doctor Hartley,' said the general, reluctantly receiving back a part of the contents of the pocket-book, 'it is

because I hope to serve you with my interest, even better than with my purse.'

'And indeed, sir,' replied Hartley, 'it was upon your interest that I am just about to make a small claim.'

The general and his lady spoke both in the same breath, to assure him his boon was granted before asked.

'I am not so sure of that,' said Hartley; 'for it respects a point on which I have heard say that your Excellency is rather inflexible—the discharge of a recruit.'

'My duty makes me so,' replied the general—'You know the sort of fellows that we are obliged to content ourselves with — they get drunk — grow pot-valiant — enlist over-night, and repent next morning. If I am to dismiss all those who pretend to have been trepanned, we should have few volunteers remain behind. Every one has some idle story of the promises of a swaggering Sergeant Kite—It is impossible to attend to them. But let me hear yours, however.'

'Mine is a very singular case. The party has been robbed of a thousand pounds.'

'A recruit for this service possessing a thousand pounds! My dear Doctor, depend upon it, the fellow has gulled you. Bless my heart, would a man who had a thousand pounds think of enlisting as a private sentinel?'

'He had no such thoughts,' answered Hartley. 'He was persuaded by the rogue whom he trusted that he was to have a commission.'

'Then his friend must have been Tom Hillary, or the devil; for no other could possess so much cunning and impudence. He will certainly find his way to the gallows at last. Still this story of the thousand pounds seems a touch even beyond Tom Hillary. What reason have you to think that this fellow ever had such a sum of money?'

'I have the best reason to know it for certain,' answered Hartley; 'he and I served our time together, under the same excellent master; and when he came of age, not liking the profession which he had studied, and obtaining possession of his little fortune, he was deceived by the promises of this same Hillary.'

'Who has had him locked up in our well-ordered hospital yonder?' said the general.

'Even so, please your Excellency,' replied Hartley; 'not, I think, to cure him of any complaint, but to give him the opportunity of catching one, which would silence all inquiries.'

'The matter shall be closely looked into. But how miserably careless the young man's friends must have been to let a raw lad go into the world with such a companion and guide as Tom Hillary, and such a sum as a thousand pounds in his pocket. His parents had better have knocked him on the head. It certainly was not done like canny Northumberland, as my servant Winter calls it.'

'The youth must indeed have had strangely hard-hearted or careless parents,' said Mrs. Witherington, in accents of pity.

'He never knew them, madam,' said Hartley; 'there was a mystery on the score of his birth. A cold, unwilling, and almost unknown hand dealt him out his portion when he came of lawful age, and he was pushed into the world like a bark forced from shore, without rudder, compass, or pilot.'

Here General Witherington involuntarily looked to his lady, while, guided by a similar impulse, her looks were turned upon him. They exchanged a momentary glance of deep and peculiar meaning, and then the eyes of both were fixed on the ground.

'Were you brought up in Scotland?' said the lady, addressing herself, in a faltering voice, to Hartley—'And what was your master's name?'

'I served my apprenticeship with Mr. Gideon Gray, of the town of Middlemas,' said Hartley.

'Middlemas! Gray!' repeated the lady, and fainted away.

Hartley offered the succours of his profession; the husband flew to support her head, and the instant that Mrs. Witherington began to recover, he whispered to her, in a tone betwixt entreaty and warning, 'Zilia, beware—beware!'

Some imperfect sounds, which she had begun to frame, died away upon her tongue.

'Let me assist you to your dressing-room, my love,' said her obviously anxious husband.

She arose with the action of an automaton, which moves at a touch of a spring, and, half hanging upon her husband, half dragging herself on by her own efforts, had nearly reached the door of the room, when Hartley, following, asked if he could be of any service.

'No, sir,' said the general sternly; 'this is no case for a stranger's interference; when you are wanted I will send for you.'

Hartley stepped back on receiving a rebuff in a tone so different from that which General Witherington had used towards him in their previous intercourse, and felt disposed, for the first time, to give credit to public report, which assigned to that gentleman, with several good qualities, the character of a very proud and haughty man. Hitherto, he thought, I have seen him tamed by sorrow and anxiety; now the mind is regaining its natural tension. But he must in decency interest himself for this unhappy Middlemas.

The general returned into the apartment a minute or two afterwards, and addressed Hartley in his usual tone of politeness, though apparently still under great embarrassment, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal.

'Mrs. Witherington is better,' he said, 'and will be glad to see you before dinner. You dine with us, I hope?'

Hartley bowed.

'Mrs. Witherington is rather subject to this sort of nervous fits, and she has been much harassed of late by grief and apprehension. When she recovers from them, it is a few minutes before she can collect her ideas, and during such intervals—to speak very confidentially to you, my dear Doctor Hartley—she speaks sometimes about imaginary events which have never happened, and sometimes about distressing occurrences in an early period of life. I am not, therefore, willing that any one but myself, or her old attendant, Mrs. Lopez, should be with her on such occasions.'

Hartley admitted that a certain degree of light-headedness was often the consequence of nervous fits.

The general proceeded. 'As to this young man—this friend of yours—this Richard Middlemas—did you not call him so?'

'Not that I recollect,' answered Hartley; 'but your Excellency has hit upon his name.'

'That is odd enough — Certainly you said something about Middlemas?' replied General Witherington.

'I mentioned the name of the town,' said Hartley.

'Ay, and I caught it up as the name of the recruit—I was indeed occupied at the moment by my anxiety about my wife. But this Middlemas, since such is his name, is a wild young fellow, I suppose?'

'I should do him wrong to say so, your Excellency. He may have had his follies like other young men; but his conduct has, so far as I know, been respectable; but, considering we lived in the same house, we were not very intimate.'

'That is bad—I should have liked him—that is—it would have been happy for him to have had a friend like you. But I suppose you studied too hard for him? He would be a soldier, ha?—Is he good-looking?'

'Remarkably so,' replied Hartley; 'and has a very prepossessing manner.'

'Is his complexion dark or fair?' asked the general.

'Rather uncommonly dark,' said Hartley,—'darker, if I may use the freedom, than your Excellency's.'

'Nay, then, he must be a black ouzel indeed!—Does he understand languages?'

'Latin and French tolerably well.'

'Of course he cannot fence or dance?'

'Pardon me, sir, I am no great judge; but Richard is reckoned to do both with uncommon skill.'

'Indeed!—Sum this up, and it sounds well. Handsome, accomplished in exercises, moderately learned, perfectly well-bred, not unreasonably wild. All this comes too high for the situation of a private sentinel. He must have a commission, Doctor—entirely for your sake.'

'Your Excellency is generous.'

'It shall be so; and I will find means to make Tom Hillary disgorge his plunder, unless he prefers being hanged, a fate he has long deserved. You cannot go back to the hospital to-day. You dine with us, and you know Mrs. Witherington's fears of infection; but to-morrow find out your friend. Winter shall see him equipped with everything needful. Tom Hillary shall repay advances, you know; and he must be off with the first detachment of the recruits, in the Middlesex Indiaman, which sails from the Downs on Monday fortnight; that is, if you think him fit for the voyage. I daresay the poor fellow is sick of the Isle of Wight?'

'Your Excellency will permit the young man to pay his respects to you before his departure?'

'To what purpose, sir?' said the general hastily and peremptorily; but instantly added, 'You are right—I should like to see him. Winter shall let him know the time, and take horses to fetch him hither. But he must have been out of the hospital for a day or two; so the sooner you can set him at liberty the better. In the meantime, take him to your own lodgings, Doctor; and do not let him form any intimacies with the officers, or any others, in this place, where he may light on another Hillary.'

Had Hartley been as well acquainted as the reader with the circumstances of young Middlemas's birth, he might have drawn decisive conclusions from the behaviour of General Witherington, while his comrade was the topic of conversation. But as Mr. Gray and Middlemas himself were both silent on the subject, he knew little of it but from general report, which his curiosity had never induced him to scrutinize minutely. Nevertheless, what he did apprehend interested him so much, that he resolved upon trying a little experiment, in which he thought there could be no great harm. He placed on his finger the remarkable ring entrusted to his care by Richard Middlemas, and endeavoured to make it conspicuous in approaching Mrs. Witherington; taking care, however, that this occurred during her husband's absence. Her eyes had no sooner caught a sight of the gem, than they became riveted to it, and she begged a nearer sight of it, as strongly resembling one which she had given to a friend. Taking the ring from his finger, and placing it in her emaciated hand, Hartley informed her it was the property of the friend in whom he had just been endeavouring to interest the general. Mrs. Witherington retired in great emotion, but next day summoned Hartley to a private interview, the particulars of which, so far as are necessary to be known, shall be afterwards related.

On the succeeding day after these important discoveries, Middlemas, to his great delight, was rescued from his seclusion in the hospital, and transferred to his comrade's lodgings in the town of Ryde, of which Hartley himself was a rare inmate; the anxiety of Mrs. Witherington detaining him at the general's house long after his medical attendance might have been dispensed with.

Within two or three days a commission arrived for Richard Middlemas, as a lieutenant in the service of the East India Company. Winter, by his master's orders, put the wardrobe of the young officer on a suitable footing; while Middlemas, enchanted at finding himself at once emancipated from his late dreadful difficulties, and placed under the protection of a man of such importance as the general, obeyed implicitly the hints transmitted to him by Hartley, and enforced by Winter, and abstained from going into public, or forming acquaintances with any one. Even Hartley himself he saw seldom; and, deep as were his obligations, he did not perhaps greatly regret the absence of one whose presence always affected him with a sense of humiliation and abasement.

CHAPTER VIII.

The evening before he was to sail for the Downs, where the Middlesex lay ready to weigh anchor, the new lieutenant was summoned by Winter to attend him to the general's residence, for the purpose of being introduced to his patron,

to thank him at once, and to bid him farewell. On the road, the old man took the liberty of schooling his companion concerning the respect which he ought to pay to his master, 'who was, though a kind and generous man as ever came from Northumberland, extremely rigid in punctiliously exacting the degree of honour which was his due.'

While they were advancing towards the house, the general and his wife expected their arrival with breathless anxiety. They were seated in a superb drawing-room, the general behind a large chandelier, which, shaded opposite to his face, threw all the light to the other side of the table, so that he could observe any person placed there, without becoming the subject of observation in turn. On a heap of cushions, wrapped in a glittering drapery of gold and silver muslins, mingled with shawls, a luxury which was then a novelty in Europe, sat, or rather reclined, his lady, who, past the full meridian of beauty, retained charms enough to distinguish her as one who had been formerly a very fine woman, though her mind seemed occupied by the deepest emotion.

'Zilia,' said her husband, 'you are unable for what you have undertaken—take my advice—retire—you shall know all and everything that passes—but retire. To what purpose should you cling to the idle wish of beholding for a moment a being whom you can never again look upon?'

'Alas!' answered the lady, 'and is not your declaration that I shall never see him more, a sufficient reason that I should wish to see him now—should wish to imprint on my memory the features and the form which I am never again to behold while we are in the body? Do not, my Richard, be more cruel than was my poor father, even when his wrath was in its bitterness. He let me look upon my infant, and its cherub face dwelt with me, and was my comfort, among the years of unutterable sorrow in which my youth wore away.'

'It is enough, Zilia—you have desired this boon—I have granted it—and, at whatever risk, my promise shall be kept. But think how much depends on this fatal secret—your rank and estimation in society—my honour interested that that estimation should remain uninjured. Zilia, the moment that the promulgation of such a secret gives prudes and scandal-mongers a right to treat you with scorn, will be fraught with unutterable misery, perhaps with bloodshed and death, should a man dare to take up the rumour.'

'You shall be obeyed, my husband,' answered Zilia, 'in all that the frailness of nature will permit. But, O God of my fathers, of what clay hast thou fashioned us poor mortals, who dread so much the shame which follows sin, yet repent so little for the sin itself!' In a minute afterwards steps were heard—the door opened—Winter announced Lieutenant Middlemas, and the unconscious son stood before his parents.

Witherington started involuntarily up, but immediately constrained himself to assume the easy deportment with which a superior receives a dependent, and which, in his own case, was usually mingled with a certain degree of hauteur. The mother had less command of herself. She too sprang up, as if with the intention of throwing herself on the neck of her son, for whom she had travailed and sorrowed. But the warning glance of her husband arrested her as if by magic, and she remained standing, with her beautiful head and neck somewhat advanced, her hands clasped together, and extended forward in the attitude of motion, but motionless, nevertheless, as a marble statue, to which the sculptor has given all the appearance of life, but cannot impart its powers. So strange a gesture and posture might have excited the young officer's surprise; but the lady stood in the shade, and he was so intent in looking upon his patron, that he was scarce even conscious of Mrs. Witherington's presence.

'I am happy in this opportunity,' said Middlemas, observing that the general did not speak, 'to return my thanks to General Witherington, to whom they never can be sufficiently paid.'

The sound of his voice, though uttering words so indifferent, seemed to dissolve the charm which kept his mother motionless. She sighed deeply, relaxed the rigidity of her posture, and sunk back on the cushions from which she had started up. Middlemas turned a look towards her at the sound of the sigh, and the rustling of her drapery. The general hastened to speak.

'My wife, Mr. Middlemas, has been unwell of late—your friend, Mr. Hartley, might mention it to you—an affection of the nerves.'

Mr. Middlemas was, of course, sorry and concerned.

'We have had distress in our family, Mr. Middlemas, from the ultimate and heart-breaking consequences of which we have escaped by the skill of your friend, Mr. Hartley. We will be happy if it is in our power to repay a part of our obligations in services to his friend and *protégé*, Mr. Middlemas.'

'I am only acknowledged as *his protégé*, then,' *thought* Richard; but he *said*, 'Every one must envy his friend in having had the distinguished good fortune to be of use to General Witherington and his family.'

'You have received your commission, I presume. Have you any particular wish or desire respecting your destination?'

'No, may it please your Excellency,' answered Middlemas. 'I suppose Hartley would tell your Excellency my unhappy state—that I am an orphan, deserted by the parents who cast me on the wide world, an outcast about whom nobody knows or cares, except to desire that I should wander far enough, and live obscurely enough, not to disgrace them by their connection with me.'

Zilia wrung her hands as he spoke, and drew her muslin veil closely around her head, as if to exclude the sounds which excited her mental agony.

'Mr. Hartley was not particularly communicative about your affairs,' said the general; 'nor do I wish to give you the pain of entering into them. What I desire to know is, if you are pleased with your destination to Madras?'

'Perfectly, please your Excellency—anywhere, so that there is no chance of meeting the villain Hillary.'

O! Hillary's services are too necessary in the purlieus of Saint Giles's, the Lowlights of Newcastle, and such-like places, where human carrion can be picked up, to be permitted to go to India. However, to show you the knave has some grace, there are the notes of which you were robbed. You will find them the very same paper which you lost, except a small sum which the rogue had spent, but which a friend has made up, in compassion for your sufferings.'

Richard Middlemas sunk on one knee, and kissed the hand which restored him to independence.

'Pshaw!' said the general, 'you are a silly young man;' but he withdrew not his hand from his caresses. This was one of the occasions on which Dick Middlemas could be oratorical.

'O, my more than father,' he said, 'how much greater a debt do I owe to you than to the unnatural parents who brought me into this world by their sin, and deserted me through their cruelty!'

Zilia, as she heard these cutting words, flung back her veil, raising it on both hands till it floated behind her like a mist, and then, giving a faint groan, sunk down in a swoon. Pushing Middlemas from him with a hasty movement, General Witherington flew to his lady's assistance, and carried her in his arms, as if she had been a child, into the anteroom, where an old servant waited with the means of restoring suspended animation, which the unhappy husband too truly anticipated might be useful. These were hastily employed, and succeeded in calling the sufferer to life, but in a state of mental emotion that was dreadful.

Her mind was obviously impressed by the last words which her son had uttered.—'Did you hear him, Richard?' she exclaimed, in accents terribly loud, considering the exhausted state of her strength—'Did you hear the words? It was Heaven speaking our condemnation by the voice of our own child. But do not fear, my Richard, do not weep! I will answer the thunder of heaven with its own music.'

She flew to a harpsichord which stood in the room, and, while the servant and master gazed on each other as if doubting whether her senses were about to leave her entirely, she wandered over the keys, producing a wilderness of harmony, composed of passages recalled by memory, or combined by her own musical talent, until at length her voice and instrument united in one of those magnificent hymns in which her youth had praised her Maker, with voice and harp, like the Royal Hebrew who composed it. The tear ebbed insensibly from the eyes which she turned upwards—her vocal tones, combining with those of the instrument, rose to a pitch of brilliancy seldom attained by the most distinguished performers, and then sunk into a dying cadence, which fell, never again to rise,—for the songstress had died with her strain.

The horror of the distracted husband may be conceived, when all efforts to restore life proved totally ineffectual. Servants were despatched for medical men—Hartley, and every other who could be found. The general precipitated himself into the apartment they had so lately left, and in his haste ran against Middlemas, who, at the sound of the music from the adjoining apartment, had naturally approached nearer to the door, and, surprised and startled by the sort of clamour, hasty steps, and confused voices which ensued, had remained standing there, endeavouring to ascertain the cause of so much disorder.

The sight of the unfortunate young man awakened the general's stormy passions to frenzy. He seemed to recognise his son only as the cause of his wife's death. He seized him by the collar, and shook him violently, as he dragged him into the chamber of mortality.

'Come hither,' he said, 'thou for whom a life of lowest obscurity was too good a fate—come hither, and look on the parents whom thou hast so much envied—whom thou hast so often cursed. Look at that pale emaciated form, a figure of wax, rather than flesh and blood—that is thy mother—that is the unhappy Zilia Monçada, to whom thy birth was the source of shame and misery, and to whom thy ill-omened presence has now brought death itself. And behold me'—he pushed the lad from him, and stood up erect, looking well-nigh in gesture and figure the apostate spirit he described—'Behold me'—he said, 'see you not my hair streaming with sulphur, my brow scathed with lightning? I am the arch-fiend—I am the father whom you seek—I am the accursed Richard Tresham, the seducer of Zilia, and the father of her murderer!'

Hartley entered while this horrid scene was passing. All attention to the deceased, he instantly saw, would be thrown away; and understanding, partly from Winter, partly from the tenor of the general's frantic discourse, the nature of the disclosure which had occurred, he hastened to put an end, if possible, to the frightful and scandalous scene which had taken place. Aware how delicately the general felt on the subject of reputation, he assailed him with remonstrances on such conduct, in presence of so many witnesses. But the mind had ceased to answer to that once powerful key-note.

'I care not if the whole world hear my sin and my punishment,' said Witherington. 'It shall not be again said of me, that I fear shame more than I repent sin. I feared shame only for Zilia, and Zilia is dead!'

'But her memory, general—spare the memory of your wife, in which the character of your children is involved.'

'I have no children!' said the desperate and violent man. 'My Reuben is gone to heaven to prepare a lodging for the angel who has now escaped from earth in a flood of harmony, which can only be equalled where she is gone. The other two cherubs will not survive their mother. I shall be, nay, I already feel myself, a childless man.'

'Yet I am your son,' replied Middlemas, in a tone sorrowful, but at the same time tinged with sullen resentment—'your son by your wedded wife. Pale as she lies there, I call upon you both to acknowledge my rights, and all who are present to bear witness to them.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the maniac father, 'canst thou think of thine own sordid rights in the midst of death and frenzy? My son!—thou art the fiend who hast occasioned my wretchedness in this world, and who will share my eternal

misery in the next. Hence from my sight, and my curse go with thee!'

His eyes fixed on the ground, his arms folded on his breast, the haughty and dogged spirit of Middlemas yet seemed to meditate reply. But Hartley, Winter, and other bystanders interfered, and forced him from the apartment. As they endeavoured to remonstrate with him, he twisted himself out of their grasp, ran to the stables, and, seizing the first saddled horse that he found, out of many that had been in haste got ready to seek for assistance, he threw himself on its back, and rode furiously off. Hartley was about to mount and follow him; but Winter and the other domestics threw themselves around him, and implored him not to desert their unfortunate master, at a time when the influence which he had acquired over him might be the only restraint on the violence of his passions.

'He had a *coup de soleil* in India,' whispered Winter, 'and is capable of anything in his fits. These cowards cannot control him, and I am old and feeble.'

Satisfied that General Witherington was a greater object of compassion than Middlemas, whom, besides, he had no hope of overtaking, and who he believed was safe in his own keeping, however violent might be his present emotions, Hartley returned where the greater emergency demanded his immediate care.

He found the unfortunate general contending with the domestics, who endeavoured to prevent his making his way to the apartment where his children slept, and exclaiming furiously—'Rejoice, my treasures—rejoice!—He has fled who would proclaim your father's crime and your mother's dishonour!—He has fled, never to return, whose life has been the death of one parent and the ruin of another!—Courage, my children, your father is with you—he will make his way to you through a hundred obstacles!'

The domestics, intimidated and undecided, were giving way to him, when Adam Hartley approached, and, placing himself before the unhappy man, fixed his eye firmly on the general's, while he said in a low but stern voice—'Madman, would you kill your children?'

The general seemed staggered in his resolution, but still attempted to rush past him. But Hartley, seizing him by the collar of his coat on each side, 'You are my prisoner,' he said; 'I command you to follow me.'

'Ha! prisoner, and for high treason? Dog, thou hast met thy death!'

The distracted man drew a poniard from his bosom, and Hartley's strength and resolution might not perhaps have saved his life, had not Winter mastered the general's right hand, and contrived to disarm him.

'I am your prisoner, then,' he said; 'use me civilly—and let me see my wife and children.'

'You shall see them to-morrow,' said Hartley; 'follow us instantly, and without the least resistance.'

General Witherington followed like a child, with the air of one who is suffering for a cause in which he glories.

'I am not ashamed of my principles,' he said—'I am willing to die for my king.'

Without exciting his frenzy, by contradicting the fantastic idea which occupied his imagination, Hartley continued to maintain over his patient the ascendancy he had acquired. He caused him to be led to his apartment, and beheld him suffer himself to be put to bed. Administering then a strong composing draught, and causing a servant to sleep in the room, he watched the unfortunate man till dawn of morning.

General Witherington awoke in his full senses, and apparently conscious of his real situation, which he testified by low groans, sobs, and tears. When Hartley drew near his bedside, he knew him perfectly, and said, 'Do not fear me—the fit is over—leave me now, and see after yonder unfortunate. Let him leave Britain as soon as possible, and go where his fate calls him, and where we can never meet more. Winter knows my ways, and will take care of me.'

Winter gave the same advice. 'I can answer,' he said, 'for my master's security at present; but, in Heaven's name, prevent his ever meeting again with that obdurate young man.'

CHAPTER IX.

> Well, then, the world's mine oyster,
> Which I with sword will open.
> MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

WHEN Adam Hartley arrived at his lodgings in the sweet little town of Ryde, his first inquiries were after his comrade. He had arrived last night late, man and horse all in a foam. He made no reply to any questions about supper or the like, but, snatching a candle, ran upstairs into his apartment, and shut and double-locked the door. The servants only supposed that, being something intoxicated, he had ridden hard, and was unwilling to expose himself.

Hartley went to the door of his chamber, not without some apprehensions; and, after knocking and calling more than once, received at length the welcome return, 'Who is there?'

On Hartley announcing himself, the door opened and Middlemas appeared, well dressed, and with his hair arranged and powdered; although, from the appearance of the bed, it had not been slept in on the preceding night, and Richard's countenance, haggard and ghastly, seemed to bear witness to the same fact. It was, however, with an affectation of indifference that he spoke.

'I congratulate you on your improvement in worldly knowledge, Adam. It is just the time to desert the poor heir, and to stick by him that is in immediate possession of the wealth.'

'I stayed last night in General Witherington's,' answered Hartley, 'because he is extremely ill.'

'Tell him to repent of his sins, then,' said Richard. 'Old Gray used to say, a doctor had as good a title to give ghostly advice as a parson. Do you remember Doctor Dulberry, the minister, calling him an interloper? Ha! ha! ha!'

'I am surprised at this style of language from one in your circumstances.'

'Why, ay,' said Middlemas, with a bitter smile—'it would be difficult to most men to

keep up their spirits, after gaining and losing father, mother, and a good inheritance, all in the same day. But I had always a turn for philosophy.'

'I really do not understand you, Mr. Middlemas.'

'Why, I found my parents yesterday, did I not?' answered the young man. 'My mother, as you know, had waited but that moment to die, and my father to become distracted; and I conclude both were contrived purposely to cheat me of my inheritance, as he has taken up such a prejudice against me.'

'Inheritance?' repeated Hartley, bewildered by Richard's calmness, and half suspecting that the insanity of the father was hereditary in the family. 'In Heaven's name, recollect yourself, and get rid of these hallucinations. What inheritance are you dreaming of?'

'That of my mother, to be sure, who must have inherited old Monçada's wealth—and to whom should it descend save to her children?—I am the eldest of them—that fact cannot be denied.'

'But consider, Richard—recollect yourself.'

'I do,' said Richard; 'and what then?'

'Then you cannot but remember,' said Hartley, 'that unless there was a will in your favour, your birth prevents you from inheriting.'

'You are mistaken, sir; I am legitimate.—Yonder sickly brats, whom you rescued from the grave, are not more legitimate than I am.—Yes! our parents could not allow the air of heaven to breathe on them—me they committed to the winds and the waves—I am nevertheless their lawful child, as well as their puling offspring of advanced age and decayed health. I saw them, Adam—Winter showed the nursery to me while they were gathering courage to receive me in the drawing-room. There they lay, the children of predilection, the riches of the East expended that they might sleep soft and wake in magnificence. I, the eldest brother—the heir—I stood beside their bed in the borrowed dress which I had so lately exchanged for the rags of an hospital. Their couches breathed the richest perfumes, while I was reeking from a pest-house; and I—I repeat it—the heir, the produce of their earliest and best love, was thus treated. No wonder that my look was that of a basilisk.'

'You speak as if you were possessed with an evil spirit,' said Hartley; 'or else you labour under a strange delusion.'

'You think those only are legally married over whom a drowsy parson has read the ceremony from a dog's-eared prayer-book? It may be so in your English law—but Scotland makes Love himself the priest. A vow betwixt a fond couple, the blue heaven alone witnessing, will protect a confiding girl against the perjury of a fickle swain, as much as if a dean had performed the rites in the loftiest cathedral in England. Nay more; if the child of love be acknowledged by the father at the time when he is baptized—if he present the mother to strangers of respectability as his wife, the laws of Scotland will not allow him to retract the justice which has, in these actions, been done to the female whom he has wronged, or the offspring of their mutual love. This General Tresham, or Witherington, treated my unhappy mother as his wife before Gray and others, quartered her as such in the family of a respectable man, gave her the same name by which he himself chose to pass for the time. He presented me to the priest as his lawful offspring! and the law of Scotland, benevolent to the helpless child, will not allow him now to disown what he so formally admitted. I know my rights, and am determined to claim them.'

'You do not then intend to go on board the Middlesex? Think a little—You will lose your voyage, and your commission.'

'I will save my birthright,' answered Middlemas. 'When I thought of going to India, I knew not my parents, or how to make good the rights which I had through them. That riddle is solved. I am entitled to at least a third of Monçada's estate, which, by Winter's account, is considerable. But for you, and your mode of treating the small-pox, I should have had the whole. Little did I think, when old Gray was likely to have his wig pulled off, for putting out fires, throwing open windows, and exploding whisky-and-water, that the new system of treating the small-pox was to cost me so many thousand pounds.'

'You are determined, then,' said Hartley, 'on this wild course?'

'I know my rights, and am determined to make them available,' answered the obstinate youth.

'Mr. Richard Middlemas, I am sorry for you.'

'Mr. Adam Hartley, I beg to know why I am honoured by your sorrow.'

'I pity you,' answered Hartley, 'both for the obstinacy and selfishness, which can think of wealth after the scene you saw last night, and for the idle vision which leads you to believe that you can obtain possession of it.'

'Selfish!' cried Middlemas; 'why, I am a dutiful son, labouring to clear the memory of a calumniated mother—And am I a visionary?—Why, it was to this hope that I awakened, when old Monçada's letter to Gray, devoting me to perpetual obscurity, first roused me to a sense of my situation, and dispelled the dreams of my childhood. Do you think that I would ever have submitted to the drudgery which I shared with you, but that, by doing so, I kept in view the only traces of these unnatural parents, by means of which I proposed to introduce myself to their notice, and, if necessary, enforce the rights of a legitimate child? The silence and death of Monçada broke my plans, and it was then only I reconciled myself to the thoughts of India.'

'You were very young to have known so much of the Scottish law, at the time when we were first acquainted,' said Hartley. 'But I can guess your instructor.'

'No less authority than Tom Hillary's,' replied Middlemas. 'His good counsel on that head is a reason why I do not now prosecute him to the gallows.'

'I judged as much,' replied Hartley; 'for I heard him, before I left Middlemas, debating the point with Mr. Lawford; and I recollect perfectly that he stated the law to be such as you now lay down,'

'And what said Lawford in answer?' demanded Middlemas.

'He admitted, replied Hartley, 'that in circumstances where the case was doubtful, such presumptions of legitimacy might be admitted. But he said they were liable to be controlled by positive and precise testimony, as, for instance, the evidence of the mother declaring the illegitimacy of the child.'

'But there can exist none such in my case,' said Middlemas hastily, and with marks of alarm.

'I will not deceive you, Mr. Middlemas, though I fear I cannot help giving you pain. I had yesterday a long conference with your mother, Mrs. Witherington, in which she acknowledged you as her son, but a son born before marriage. This express declaration will, therefore, put an end to the suppositions on which you ground your hopes. If you please, you may hear the contents of her declaration, which I have in her own handwriting.'

'Confusion! is the cup to be for ever dashed from my lips?' muttered Richard; but recovering his composure, by exertion of the self-command of which he possessed so large a portion, he desired Hartley to proceed with his communication. Hartley accordingly proceeded to inform him of the particulars preceding his birth, and those which followed after it; while Middlemas, seated on a sea-chest, listened with inimitable composure to a tale which went to root up the flourishing hopes of wealth which he had lately so fondly entertained.

Zilia Monçada was the only child of a Portuguese Jew of great wealth, who had come to London in prosecution of his commerce. Among the few Christians who frequented his house, and occasionally his table, was Richard Tresham, a gentleman of a high Northumbrian family, deeply engaged in the service of Charles Edward during his short invasion, and, though holding a commission in the Portuguese service, still an object of suspicion to the British government, on account of his well-known courage and Jacobitical principles. The high-bred elegance of this gentleman, together with his complete acquaintance with the Portuguese language and manners, had won the intimacy of old Monçada, and, alas! the heart of the inexperienced Zilia, who, beautiful as an angel, had as little knowledge of the world and its wickedness as the lamb that is but a week old.

Tresham made his proposals to Monçada, perhaps in a manner which too evidently showed that he conceived the high-born Christian was degrading himself in asking an alliance with the wealthy Jew. Monçada rejected his proposals, forbade him his house, but could not prevent the lovers from meeting in private. Tresham made a dishonourable use of the opportunities which the poor Zilia so incautiously afforded, and the consequence was her ruin. The lover, however, had every purpose of righting the injury which he had inflicted, and, after various plans of secret marriage, which were rendered abortive by the difference of religion and other circumstances, flight for Scotland was determined on. The hurry of the journey, the fear and anxiety to which Zilia was subject, brought on her confinement several weeks before the usual time, so that they were compelled to accept of the assistance and accommodation offered by Mr. Gray, They had not been there many hours ere Tresham heard, by the medium of some sharp-sighted or keen-eared friend, that there were warrants out against him for treasonable practices. His correspondence with Charles Edward had become known to Monçada during the period of their friendship; he betrayed it in vengeance to the British cabinet, and warrants were issued, in which, at Monçada's request, his daughter's name was included. This might be of use, he apprehended, to enable him to separate his daughter from Tresham, should he find the fugitives actually married. How far he succeeded, the reader already knows, as well as the precautions which he took to prevent the living evidence of his child's frailty from being known to exist. His daughter he carried with him, and subjected her to severe restraint, which her own reflections rendered doubly bitter. It would have completed his revenge, had the author of Zilia's misfortunes been brought to the scaffold for his political offences. But Tresham skulked among friends in the Highlands, and escaped until the affair blew over.

He afterwards entered into the East India Company's service, under his mother's name of Witherington, which concealed the Jacobite and rebel, until these terms were forgotten. His skill in military affairs soon raised him to riches and eminence. When he returned to Britain, his first inquiries were after the family of Monçada. His fame, his wealth, and the late conviction that his daughter never would marry any but him who had her first love, induced the old man to give that encouragement to General Witherington which he had always denied to the poor and outlawed Major Tresham; and the lovers, after having been fourteen years separated, were at length united in wedlock.

General Witherington eagerly concurred in the earnest wish of his father-in-law, that every remembrance of former events should be buried, by leaving the fruit of the early and unhappy intrigue suitably provided for, but in a distant and obscure situation. Zilia thought far otherwise. Her heart longed, with a mother's longing, towards the object of her first maternal tenderness, but she dared not place herself in opposition at once to the will of her father and the decision of her husband. The former, his religious prejudices much effaced by his long residence in England, had given consent that she should conform to the established religion of her husband and her country,—the latter, haughty as we have described him, made it his pride to introduce the beautiful convert among his high-born kindred. The discovery of her former frailty would have proved a blow to her respectability, which he dreaded like death; and it could not long remain a secret from his wife, that, in consequence of a severe illness in India, even his reason became occasionally shaken by anything which violently agitated his feelings. She had therefore acquiesced in patience and silence in the course of policy which Monçada had devised, and which her husband anxiously and warmly approved. Yet her thoughts, even

when their marriage was blessed with other offspring, anxiously reverted to the banished and outcast child, who had first been clasped to the maternal bosom.

All these feelings, 'subdued and cherished long,' were set afloat in full tide by the unexpected discovery of this son, redeemed from a lot of extreme misery, and placed before his mother's imagination in circumstances so disastrous.

It was in vain that her husband had assured her that he would secure the young man's prosperity, by his purse and his interest. She could not be satisfied until she had herself done something to alleviate the doom of banishment to which her eldest-born was thus condemned. She was the more eager to do so, as she felt the extreme delicacy of her health, which was undermined by so many years of secret suffering.

Mrs. Witherington was, in conferring her maternal bounty, naturally led to employ the agency of Hartley, the companion of her son, and to whom, since the recovery of her younger children, she almost looked up as to a tutelar deity. She placed in his hands a sum of £2000, which she had at her own unchallenged disposal, with a request, uttered in the fondest and most affectionate terms, that it might be applied to the service of Richard Middlemas in the way Hartley should think most useful to him. She assured him of further support, as it should be needed; and a note to the following purport was also entrusted him, to be delivered when and where the prudence of Hartley should judge it proper to confide to him the secret of his birth:

'O Benoni! O child of my sorrow!' said this interesting document, 'why should the eyes of thy unhapppy mother be about to obtain permission to look on thee, since her arms were denied the right to fold thee to her bosom? May the God of Jews and of Gentiles watch over thee, and guard thee! May he remove, in his good time, the darkness which rolls between me and the beloved of my heart—the first-fruit of my unhappy, nay, unhallowed affection. Do not—do not, my beloved!—think thyself a lonely exile, while thy mother's prayers arise for thee at sunrise and at sunset, to call down every blessing on thy head—to invoke every power in thy protection and defence. Seek not to see me—O, why must I say so!—But let me humble myself in the dust, since it is my own sin, my own folly, which I must blame; but seek not to see or speak with me—it might be the death of both. Confide thy thoughts to the excellent Hartley, who hath been the guardian angel of us all—even as the tribes of Israel had each their guardian angel. What thou shalt wish, and he shall advise in thy behalf, shall be done, if in the power of a mother—And the love of a mother! Is it bounded by seas, or can deserts and distance measure its limits? O child of my sorrow! O Benoni! let thy spirit be with mine, as mine is with thee. Z. M.'

All these arrangements being completed, the unfortunate lady next insisted with her husband that she should be permitted to see her son in that parting interview which terminated so fatally. Hartley, therefore, now discharged, as her executor, the duty entrusted to him as her confidential agent.

'Surely,' he thought, as, having finished his communication, he was about to leave the apartment, 'surely the demons of Ambition and Avarice will unclose the talons which they have fixed upon this man, at a charm like this.'

And indeed Richard's heart had been formed of the nether millstone, had he not been duly affected by these first and last tokens of his mother's affection. He leant his head upon a table, and his tears flowed plentifully. Hartley left him undisturbed for more than an hour, and on his return found him in nearly the same attitude in which he had left him.

'I regret to disturb you at this moment,' he said, 'but I have still a part of my duty to discharge. I must place in your possession the deposit which your mother made in my hands—and I must also remind you that time flies fast, and that you have scarce an hour or two to determine whether you will prosecute your Indian voyage, under the new view of circumstances which I have opened to you.'

Middlemas took the bills which his mother had bequeathed him. As he raised his head, Hartley could observe that his face was stained with tears. Yet he counted over the money with mercantile accuracy; and though he assumed the pen for the purpose of writing a discharge with an air of inconsolable dejection, yet he drew it up in good set terms, like one who had his senses much at his command.

'And now,' he said, in a mournful voice, 'give me my mother's narrative.'

Hartley almost started, and answered hastily, 'You have the poor lady's letter, which was addressed to yourself—the narrative is addressed to me. It is my warrant for disposing of a large sum of money—it concerns the rights of third parties, and I cannot part with it.'

'Surely, surely it were better to deliver it into my hands, were it but to weep over it,' answered Middlemas. 'My fortune, Hartley, has been very cruel. You see that my parents purposed to have made me their undoubted heir; yet their purpose was disappointed by accident. And now my mother comes with well-intended fondness, and, while she means to advance my fortune, furnishes evidence to destroy it.—Come, come, Hartley—you must be conscious that my mother wrote those details entirely for my information. I am the rightful owner, and insist on having them.'

'I am sorry I must insist on refusing your demand,' answered Hartley, putting the papers in his pocket. 'You ought to consider that, if this communication has destroyed the idle and groundless hopes which you have indulged in, it has, at the same time, more than trebled your capital; and that if there are some hundreds or thousands in the world richer than yourself, there are many millions not half so well provided. Set a brave spirit, then, against your fortune, and do not doubt your success in life.'

His words seemed to sink into the gloomy mind of Middlemas. He stood silent for a moment, and then answered with a reluctant and insinuating voice,—

'My dear Hartley, we have long been com-

panions—you can have neither pleasure nor interest in ruining my hopes—you may find some in forwarding them. Monçada's fortune will enable me to allow five thousand pounds to the friend who should aid me in my difficulties.'

'Good morning to you, Mr. Middlemas,' said Hartley, endeavouring to withdraw.

'One moment—one moment,' said Middlemas, holding his friend by the button at the same time,—'I meant to say ten thousand—and—and—marry whomsoever you like—I will not be your hindrance.'

'You are a villain!' said Hartley, breaking from him, 'and I always thought you so.'

'And you,' answered Middlemas, 'are a fool, and I never thought you better. Off he goes—Let him—the game has been played and lost—I must hedge my bets: India must be my backplay.'

All was in readiness for his departure. A small vessel and a favouring gale conveyed him and several other military gentlemen to the Downs, where the Indiaman which was to transport them from Europe lay ready for their reception.

His first feelings were sufficiently disconsolate. But, accustomed from his infancy to conceal his internal thoughts, he appeared in the course of a week the gayest and best-bred passenger who ever dared the long and weary space betwixt Old England and her Indian possessions. At Madras, where the sociable feelings of the resident inhabitants give ready way to enthusiasm in behalf of any stranger of agreeable qualities, he experienced that warm hospitality which distinguishes the British character in the East.

Middlemas was well received in company, and in the way of becoming an indispensable guest at every entertainment in the place, when the vessel on board of which Hartley acted as surgeon's mate arrived at the same settlement. The latter would not, from his situation, have been entitled to expect much civility and attention; but this disadvantage was made up by his possessing the most powerful introductions from General Witherington, and from other persons of weight in Leadenhall Street, the general's friends, to the principal inhabitants in the settlement. He found himself once more, therefore, moving in the same sphere with Middlemas, and under the alternative of living with him on decent and distant terms, or of breaking off with him altogether.

The first of these courses might perhaps have been the wisest; but the other was most congenial to the blunt and plain character of Hartley, who saw neither propriety nor comfort in maintaining a show of friendly intercourse, to conceal hate, contempt, and mutual dislike.

The circle at Fort Saint George was much more restricted at that time than it has been since. The coldness of the young men did not escape notice; it transpired that they had been once intimates and fellow-students; yet it was now found that they hesitated at accepting invitations to the same parties. Rumour assigned many different and incompatible reasons for this deadly breach, to which Hartley gave no attention whatever, while Lieutenant Middlemas took care to countenance those which represented the cause of the quarrel most favourably to himself.

'A little bit of rivalry had taken place,' he said, when pressed by gentlemen for an explanation; 'he had only had the good luck to get further in the good graces of a fair lady than his friend Hartley, who had made a quarrel of it, as they saw. He thought it very silly to keep up spleen, at such a distance of time and space. He was sorry, more for the sake of the strangeness of the appearance of the thing than anything else, although his friend had really some very good points about him.'

While these whispers were working their effect in society, they did not prevent Hartley from receiving the most flattering assurances of encouragement and official promotion from the Madras government as opportunity should arise. Soon after, it was intimated to him that a medical appointment of a lucrative nature in a remote settlement was conferred on him, which removed him for some time from Madras and its neighbourhood.

Hartley accordingly sailed on his distant expedition; and it was observed that, after his departure, the character of Middlemas, as if some check had been removed, began to display itself in disagreeable colours. It was noticed that this young man, whose manners were so agreeable and so courteous during the first months after his arrival in India, began now to show symptons of a haughty and overbearing spirit. He had adopted, for reasons which the reader may conjecture, but which appeared to be mere whim at Fort Saint George, the name of Tresham, in addition to that by which he had hitherto been distinguished, and in this he persisted, with an obstinacy which belonged more to the pride than the craft of his character. The lieutenant-colonel of the regiment, an old cross-tempered martinet, did not choose to indulge the captain (such was now the rank of Middlemas) in this humour.

'He knew no officer,' he said, 'by any name save that which he bore in his commission;' and he Middlemas'd the captain on all occasions.

One fatal evening, the captain was so much provoked as to intimate peremptorily 'that he knew his own name best.'

'Why, Captain Middlemas,' replied the colonel, 'it is not every child that knows its own father, so how can every man be so sure of his own name?'

The bow was drawn at a venture, but the shaft found the rent in the armour, and stung deeply. In spite of all the interposition which could be attempted, Middlemas insisted on challenging the colonel, who could be persuaded to no apology.

'If Captain Middlemas,' he said, 'thought the cap fitted, he was welcome to wear it.'

The result was a meeting, in which, after the parties had exchanged shots, the seconds tendered their mediation. It was rejected by Middlemas, who, at the second fire, had the misfortune to kill his commanding officer. In consequence, he was obliged to fly from the British settlements; for, being universally blamed for having pushed the quarrel to extremity, there was little doubt that the whole severity of military discipline would be exercised upon the delinquent. Middlemas, therefore, vanished from

Fort Saint George, and, though the affair had made much noise at the time, was soon no longer talked of. It was understood, in general, that he had gone to seek that fortune at the court of some native prince, which he could no longer hope for in the British settlements.

CHAPTER X.

THREE years passed away after the fatal rencontre mentioned in the last chapter, and Doctor Hartley, returning from his appointed mission, which was only temporary, received encouragement to settle in Madras in a medical capacity; and, upon having done so, soon had reason to think he had chosen a line in which he might rise to wealth and reputation. His practice was not confined to his countrymen, but much sought after among the natives, who, whatever may be their prejudices against the Europeans in other respects, universally esteem their superior powers in the medical profession. This lucrative branch of practice rendered it necessary that Hartley should make the Oriental languages his study, in order to hold communication with his patients without the intervention of an interpreter. He had enough of opportunities to practise as a linguist, for, in acknowledgment, as he used jocularly to say, of the large fees of the wealthy Moslemah and Hindoos, he attended the poor of all nations gratis, whenever he was called upon.

It so chanced that one evening he was hastily summoned by a message from the secretary of the government, to attend a patient of consequence. 'Yet he is, after all, only a Fakir,' said the message. 'You will find him at the tomb of Cara Razi, the Mahomedan saint and doctor, about one coss from the fort. Inquire for him by the name of Barak el Hadgi. Such a patient promises no fees; but we know how little you care about the pagodas; and, besides, the government is your paymaster on this occasion.'

'That is the last matter to be thought on,' said Hartley, and instantly repaired in his palanquin to the place pointed out to him.

The tomb of the Owliah, or Mahomedan saint, Cara Razi, was a place held in much reverence by every good Mussulman. It was situated in the centre of a grove of mangos and tamarind-trees, and was built of red stone, having three domes, and minarets at every corner. There was a court in front, as usual, around which were cells constructed for the accommodation of the Fakirs who visited the tomb from motives of devotion, and made a longer or shorter residence there as they thought proper, subsisting upon the alms which the Faithful never fail to bestow on them in exchange for the benefit of their prayers. These devotees were engaged day and night in reading verses of the Koran before the tomb, which was constructed of white marble, inscribed with sentences from the book of the Prophet, and with the various titles conferred by the Koran upon the Supreme Being. Such a sepulchre, of which there are many, is, with its appendages and attendants, respected during wars and revolutions, and no less by Feringis (Franks, that is) and Hindoos, than by Mahomedans themselves. The Fakirs, in return, act as spies for all parties, and are often employed in secret missions of importance.

Complying with the Mahomedan custom, our friend Hartley laid aside his shoes at the gates of the holy precincts, and, avoiding to give offence by approaching near to the tomb, he went up to the principal Moullah, or priest, who was distinguishable by the length of his beard, and the size of the large wooden beads, with which the Mahomedans, like the Catholics, keep register of their prayers. Such a person, venerable by his age, sanctity of character, and his real or supposed contempt of worldly pursuits and enjoyments, is regarded as the head of an establishment of this kind.

The Moullah is permitted by his situation to be more communicative with strangers than his younger brethren, who in the present instance remained with their eyes fixed on the Koran, muttering their recitations without noticing the European, or attending to what he said, as he inquired at their superior for Barak el Hadgi.

The Moullah was seated on the earth, from which he did not arise, or show any mark of reverence; nor did he interrupt the tale of his beads, which he continued to count assiduously while Hartley was speaking. When he finished, the old man raised his eyes, and, looking at him with an air of distraction, as if he was endeavouring to recollect what he had been saying, he at length pointed to one of the cells, and resumed his devotions like one who felt impatient of whatever withdrew his attention from his sacred duties, were it but for an instant.

Hartley entered the cell indicated, with the usual salutation of Salam Alaikum. His patient lay on a little carpet in a corner of the small white-washed cell. He was a man of about forty, dressed in the black robe of his order, very much torn and patched. He wore a high conical cap of Tartarian* felt, and had round his neck the string of black beads belonging to his order. His eyes and posture indicated suffering, which he was enduring with stoical patience.

'Salam Alaikum,' said Hartley; 'you are in pain, my father?'—a title which he gave rather to the profession than to the years of the person he addressed.

'*Salam Alaikum bema sebartem*,' answered the Fakir; 'Well is it for you that you have suffered patiently. The book saith, such shall be the greeting of the angels to those who enter paradise.'

The conversation being thus opened, the physician proceeded to inquire into the complaints of the patient, and to prescribe what he thought advisable. Having done this, he was about to retire, when, to his great surprise, the Fakir tendered him a ring of some value.

'The wise,' said Hartley, declining the present, and at the same time paying a suitable compliment to the Fakir's cap and robe,—'the wise of

* [Dressed and prepared by Tartars or in the lands they roam over.]

every country are brethren. My left hand takes no guerdon of my right.'

'A Feringi can then refuse gold!' said the Fakir. 'I thought they took it from every hand, whether pure as that of an houri, or leprous like Gehazi's—even as the hungry dog recketh not whether the flesh he eateth be of the camel of the prophet Saleth,* or of the ass of Degial †—on whose head be curses!'

'The book says,' replied Hartley, 'that it is Allah who closes and who enlarges the heart. Frank and Mussulman are all alike moulded by his pleasure.'

'My brother hath spoken wisely,' answered the patient. 'Welcome the disease, if it bring thee acquainted with a wise physician. For what saith the poet—"It is well to have fallen to the earth, if while grovelling there thou shalt discover a diamond."'

The physician made repeated visits to his patient, and continued to do so even after the health of El Hadgi was entirely restored. He had no difficulty in discerning in him one of those secret agents frequently employed by Asiatic sovereigns. His intelligence, his learning, above all, his versatility and freedom from prejudices of every kind, left no doubt of Barak's possessing the necessary qualifications for conducting such delicate negotiations; while his gravity of habit and profession could not prevent his features from expressing occasionally a perception of humour, not usually seen in devotees of his class.

Barak el Hadgi talked often, amidst their private conversations, of the power and dignity of the Nawaub of Mysore; and Hartley had little doubt that he came from the court of Hyder Ali, on some secret mission, perhaps for achieving a more solid peace betwixt that able and sagacious prince and the East India Company's Government,—that which existed for the time being regarded on both parts as little more than a hollow and insincere truce. He told many stories to the advantage of this prince, who certainly was one of the wisest that Hindostan could boast; and amidst great crimes, perpetrated to gratify his ambition, displayed many instances of princely generosity, and, what was a little more surprising, of even-handed justice.

On one occasion, shortly before Barak el Hadgi left Madras, he visited the doctor, and partook of his sherbet, which he preferred to his own, perhaps because a few glasses of rum or brandy were usually added to enrich the compound. It might be owing to repeated applications to the jar which contained this generous fluid, that the pilgrim became more than usually frank in his communications, and, not contented with praising his Nawaub with the most hyperbolic eloquence, he began to insinuate the influence which he himself enjoyed with the Invincible, the Lord and Shield of the Faith of the Prophet.

'Brother of my soul,' he said, 'do but think if thou needest aught that the all-powerful Hyder Ali Khan Bohauder can give; and then use not the intercession of those who dwell in palaces, and wear jewels in their turbans, but seek the cell of thy brother at the Great City, which is Seringapatam. And the poor Fakir, in his torn cloak, shall better advance thy suit with the Nawaub' (for Hyder did not assume the title of Sultaun) 'than they who sit upon seats of honour in the divan.'

With these and sundry other expressions of regard, he exhorted Hartley to come into the Mysore, and look upon the face of the Great Prince, whose glance inspired wisdom, and whose nod conferred wealth, so that Folly or Poverty could not appear before him. He offered at the same time to requite the kindness which Hartley had evinced to him, by showing him whatever was worthy the attention of a sage in the land of Mysore.

Hartley was not reluctant to promise to undertake the proposed journey, if the continuance of good understanding betwixt their governments should render it practicable, and in reality looked forward to the possibility of such an event with a good deal of interest. The friends parted with mutual good wishes, after exchanging, in the Oriental fashion, such gifts as became sages, to whom knowledge was to be supposed dearer than wealth. Barak el Hadgi presented Hartley with a small quantity of the balsam of Mecca, very hard to be procured in an unadulterated form, and gave him at the same time a passport in a peculiar character, which he assured him would be respected by every officer of the Nawaub, should his friend be disposed to accomplish his visit to the Mysore. 'The head of him who should disrespect this safe-conduct,' he said, 'shall not be more safe than that of the barley-stalk which the reaper has grasped in his hand.'

Hartley requited these civilities by the present of a few medicines little used in the East, but such as he thought might, with suitable directions, be safely entrusted to a man so intelligent as his Moslem friend.

It was several months after Barak had returned to the interior of India, that Hartley was astonished by an unexpected rencontre.

The ships from Europe had but lately arrived, and had brought over their usual cargo of boys longing to be commanders, and young women without any purpose of being married, but whom a pious duty to some brother, some uncle, or other male relative, brought to India to keep his house, until they should find themselves unexpectedly in one of their own. Doctor Hartley happened to attend a public breakfast given on this occasion by a gentleman high in the service. The roof of his friend had been recently enriched by a consignment of three nieces, whom the old gentleman, justly attached to his quiet hookah, and, it was said, to a pretty girl of colour, desired to offer to the public, that he might have the fairest chance to get rid of his new guests as soon as possible. Hartley, who was thought a fish worth casting a fly for, was contemplating this fair investment with very little interest, when he heard one of the company say to another in a low voice,—

* [In the Koran the prophet Salih or Saleth proves his divine mission by causing a she-camel to come miraculously out of a rock.]

† [Dejjal is the antichrist or false prophet of the Mohammedans, who will come riding on an ass, in mockery of Jesus.]

'Angels and ministers! there is our old acquaintance, the Queen of Sheba, returned upon our hands like unsaleable goods.'

Hartley looked in the same direction with the two who were speaking, and his eye was caught by a Semiramis*-looking person, of unusual stature and amplitude, arrayed in a sort of riding habit, but so formed, and so looped and gallooned with lace, as made it resemble the upper tunic of a native chief. Her robe was composed of crimson silk, rich with flowers of gold. She wore wide trousers of light blue silk, a fine scarlet shawl around her waist, in which was stuck a creeze with a richly-ornamented handle. Her throat and arms were loaded with chains and bracelets, and her turban, formed of a shawl similar to that worn around her waist, was decorated by a magnificent aigrette, from which a blue ostrich plume flowed in one direction, and a red one in another. The brow, of European complexion, on which this tiara rested, was too lofty for beauty, but seemed made for command; the aquiline nose retained its form, but the cheeks were a little sunken, and the complexion so very brilliant, as to give strong evidence that the whole countenance had undergone a thorough repair since the lady had left her couch. A black female slave, richly dressed, stood behind her with a chowry, or cow's tail, having a silver handle, which she used to keep off the flies. From the mode in which she was addressed by those who spoke to her, this lady appeared a person of too much importance to be affronted or neglected, and yet one with whom none desired further communication than the occasion seemed in propriety to demand.

She did not, however, stand in need of attention. The well-known captain of an East Indian vessel lately arrived from Britain was sedulously polite to her; and two or three gentlemen, whom Hartley knew to be engaged in trade, tended upon her as they would have done upon the safety of a rich argosy.

'For Heaven's sake, what is that for a Zenobia?'† said Hartley to the gentleman whose whisper had first attracted his attention to this lofty dame.

'Is it possible you do not know the Queen of Sheba?' said the person of whom he inquired, no way loth to communicate the information demanded. 'You must know, then, that she is the daughter of a Scotch emigrant, who lived and died at Pondicherry, a sergeant in Lally's‡ regiment. She managed to marry a partizan officer named Montreville, a Swiss or Frenchman, I cannot tell which. After the surrender of Pondicherry, this hero and heroine—But hey—what the devil are you thinking of?—If you stare at her that way, you will make a scene; for she will think nothing of scolding you across the table.'

But without attending to his friend's remonstrances, Hartley bolted from the table at which he sat, and made his way, with something less than the decorum which the rules of society enjoin, towards the place where the lady in question was seated.

'The Doctor is surely mad this morning'—said his friend, Major Mercer, to old Quartermaster Calder.

Indeed, Hartley was not perhaps strictly in his senses; for, looking at the Queen of Sheba as he listened to Major Mercer, his eye fell on a light female form beside her, so placed as if she desired to be eclipsed by the bulky form and flowing robes we have described, and, to his extreme astonishment, he recognised the friend of his childhood, the love of his youth—Menie Gray herself!

To see her in India was in itself astonishing. To see her apparently under such strange patronage, greatly increased his surprise. To make his way to her, and address her, seemed the natural and direct mode of satisfying the feelings which her appearance excited.

His impetuosity was, however, checked, when, advancing close upon Miss Gray and her companion, he observed that the former, though she looked at him, exhibited not the slightest token of recognition, unless he could interpret as such, that she slightly touched her upper lip with her forefinger, which, if it happened otherwise than by mere accident, might be construed to mean, 'Do not speak to me just now.' Hartley, adopting such an interpretation, stood stock still, blushing deeply; for he was aware that he made for the moment but a silly figure.

He was the rather convinced of this, when, with a voice which in the force of its accents corresponded with her commanding air, Mrs. Montreville addressed him in English, which savoured slightly of a Swiss patois, — 'You haave come to us very fast, sir, to say nothing at all. Are you sure you did not get your tongue stolen by de way?'

'I thought I had seen an old friend in that lady, madam,' stammered Hartley, 'but it seems I am mistaken.'

'The good people do tell me that you are one Doctors Hartley, sir. Now, my friend and I do not know Doctors Hartley at all.'

'I have not the presumption to pretend to your acquaintance, madam, but him'——

Here Menie repeated the sign in such a manner that, though it was only momentary, Hartley could not misunderstand its purpose; he therefore changed the end of his sentence, and added, 'But I have only to make my bow, and ask pardon for my mistake.'

He retired back accordingly among the company, unable to quit the room, and inquiring at those whom he considered as the best newsmongers for such information as—'Who is that stately-looking woman, Mr. Butler?'

'O, the Queen of Sheba, to be sure.'

'And who is that pretty girl, who sits beside her?'

'Or rather behind her,' answered Butler, a military chaplain; 'faith, I cannot say—Pretty did you call her?' turning his opera-glass that way—'Yes, faith, she is pretty—very pretty—Gad, she shoots her glances as smartly from

* [A mythical queen or empress of the East, wife of the founder of Nineveh, and herself ruler of Assyria.

† [A warlike queen, reigned at Palmyra in the Syrian desert towards the end of the 3rd century A.D.]

‡ [Count Lally, an officer of Irish extraction, who commanded the French forces in India in 1758-61.]

behind the old pile yonder, as Teucer from behind Ajax Telamon's * shield.'

'But who is she, can you tell me?'

'Some fair-skinned speculation of old Montreville's, I suppose, that she has got either to toady herself, or take in some of her black friends with.—Is it possible you have never heard of old Mother Montreville?'

'You know I have been so long absent from Madras'——

'Well,' continued Butler, 'this lady is the widow of a Swiss officer in the French service, who, after the surrender of Pondicherry, went off into the interior, and commenced soldier on his own account. He got possession of a fort, under pretence of keeping it for some simple Rajah or other; assembled around him a parcel of desperate vagabonds, of every colour in the rainbow; occupied a considerable territory, of which he raised the duties in his own name, and declared for independence. But Hyder Naig understood no such interloping proceedings, and down he came, besieged the fort and took it, though some pretend it was betrayed to him by this very woman. Be that as it may, the poor Swiss was found dead on the ramparts. Certain it is, she received large sums of money, under pretence of paying off her troops, surrendering of hill-forts, and Heaven knows what besides. She was permitted also to retain some insignia of royalty; and, as she was wont to talk of Hyder as the Eastern Solomon, she generally became known by the title of Queen of Sheba. She leaves her court when she pleases, and has been as far as Fort Saint George before now. In a word, she does pretty much as she likes. The great folks here are civil to her, though they look on her as little better than a spy. As to Hyder, it is supposed he has insured her fidelity by borrowing the greater part of her treasures, which prevents her from daring to break with him—besides other causes that smack of scandal of another sort.'

'A singular story,' replied Hartley to his companion, while his heart dwelt on the question, How it was possible that the gentle and simple Menie Gray should be in the train of such a character as this adventuress?

'But Butler has not told you the best of it,' said Major Mercer, who by this time came round to finish his own story. 'Your old acquaintance, Mr. Tresham, or Mr. Middlemas, or whatever else he chooses to be called, has been complimented by a report that he stood very high in the good graces of this same Boadicea.† He certainly commanded some troops which she still keeps on foot, and acted at their head in the Nawaub's service, who craftily employed him in whatever could render him odious to his countrymen. The British prisoners were entrusted to his charge, and, to judge by what I felt myself, the devil might take a lesson from him in severity.'

'And was he attached to, or connected with, this woman?'

'So Mrs. Rumour told us in our dungeon. Poor Jack Ward had the bastinado for celebrating their merits in a parody on the playhouse song,

> Sure such a pair were never seen,
> So aptly formed to meet by nature.

Hartley could listen no longer. The fate of Menie Gray, connected with such a man and such a woman, rushed on his fancy in the most horrid colours, and he was struggling through the throng to get to some place where he might collect his ideas, and consider what could be done for her protection, when a black attendant touched his arm, and at the same time slipped a card into his hand. It bore, 'Miss Gray, Mrs. Montreville's, at the house of Ram Sing Cottah, in the Black Town.' On the reverse was written with a pencil, 'Eight in the morning.'

This intimation of her residence implied, of course, a permission, nay, an invitation, to wait upon her at the hour specified. Hartley's heart beat at the idea of seeing her once more, and still more highly at the thought of being able to serve her. At least, he thought, if there is danger near her, as is much to be suspected, she shall not want a counsellor, or, if necessary, a protector. Yet, at the same time, he felt the necessity of making himself better acquainted with the circumstances of her case, and the persons with whom she seemed connected. Butler and Mercer had both spoken to their disparagement; but Butler was a little of a coxcomb, and Mercer a great deal of a gossip. While he was considering what credit was due to their testimony, he was unexpectedly encountered by a gentleman of his own profession, a military surgeon, who had had the misfortune to have been in Hyder's prison, till set at freedom by the late pacification. Mr. Esdale, for so he was called, was generally esteemed a rising man, calm, steady, and deliberate in forming his opinions. Hartley found it easy to turn the subject on the Queen of Sheba, by asking whether her Majesty was not somewhat of an adventuress.

'On my word, I cannot say,' answered Esdale, smiling; 'we are all upon the adventure in India, more or less; but I do not see that the Begum Montreville is more so than the rest.'

'Why, that Amazonian dress and manner,' said Hartley, 'savour a little of the *picaresca*.'

'You must not,' said Esdale, 'expect a woman who has commanded soldiers, and may again, to dress and look entirely like an ordinary person. But I assure you that even at this time of day, if she wished to marry, she might easily find a respectable match.'

'Why, I heard that she had betrayed her husband's fort to Hyder.'

'Ay, that is a specimen of Madras gossip. The fact is that she defended the place long after her husband fell, and afterwards surrendered it by capitulation. Hyder, who piques himself on observing the rules of justice, would not otherwise have admitted her to such intimacy.'

'Yes; I have heard,' replied Hartley, 'that their intimacy was rather of the closest.'

'Another calumny, if you mean any scandal,' answered Esdale. 'Hyder is too zealous a Mahomedan to entertain a Christian mistress;

* [An incident in Homer's *Iliad*.]

† [A warlike queen of the ancient Britons.]

and, besides, to enjoy the sort of rank which is yielded to a woman in her condition, she must refrain, in appearance at least, from all correspondence in the way of gallantry. Just so they said that the poor woman had a connection with poor Middlemas of the ——— regiment.'

'And was that also a false report?' said Hartley, in breathless anxiety.

'On my soul, I believe it was,' answered Mr. Esdale. 'They were friends, Europeans in an Indian court, and therefore intimate; but I believe nothing more. By the bye, though, I believe there was some quarrel between Middlemas, poor fellow, and you; yet I am sure that you will be glad to hear there is a chance of his affair being made up.'

'Indeed!' was again the only word which Hartley could utter.

'Ay, indeed,' answered Esdale. 'The duel is an old story now; and it must be allowed that poor Middlemas, though he was rash in that business, had provocation.'

'But his desertion—his accepting of command under Hyder—his treatment of our prisoners—How can all these be passed over?' replied Hartley.

'Why, it is possible—I speak to you as a cautious man, and in confidence—that he may do us better service in Hyder's capital, or Tippoo's camp, than he could have done if serving with his own regiment. And then, for his treatment of prisoners, I am sure I can speak nothing but good of him in that particular. He was obliged to take the office, because those that serve Hyder Naig must do or die. But he told me himself—and I believe him—that he accepted the office chiefly because, while he made a great bullying at us before the black fellows, he could privately be of assistance to us. Some fools could not understand this, and answered him with abuse and lampoons; and he was obliged to punish them, to avoid suspicion. Yes, yes, I and others can prove he was willing to be kind, if men would give him leave. I hope to thank him at Madras one day soon.—All this in confidence.—Good-morrow to you.'

Distracted by the contradictory intelligence he had received, Hartley went next to question old Captain Capstern, the captain of the Indiaman, whom he had observed in attendance upon the Begum Montreville. On inquiring after that commander's female passengers, he heard a pretty long catalogue of names, in which that he was so much interested in did not occur. On closer inquiry, Capstern recollected that Menie Gray, a young Scotchwoman, had come out under charge of Mrs. Duffer, the master's wife. 'A good decent girl,' Capstern said, 'and kept the mates and guinea-pigs at a respectable distance. She came out,' he believed, 'to be a sort of female companion, or upper servant, in Madame Montreville's family. Snug berth enough,' he concluded, 'if she can find the length of the old girl's foot.'

This was all that could be made of Capstern; so Hartley was compelled to remain in a state of uncertainty until the next morning, when an explanation might be expected with Menie Gray in person.

CHAPTER XI.

The exact hour assigned, found Hartley at the door of the rich native merchant, who, having some reasons for wishing to oblige the Begum Montreville, had relinquished, for her accommodation and that of her numerous retinue, almost the whole of his large and sumptuous residence in the Black Town of Madras, as that district of the city is called which the natives occupy.

A domestic at the first summons ushered the visitor into an apartment, where he expected to be joined by Miss Gray. The room opened on one side into a small garden or parterre, filled with the brilliant-coloured flowers of Eastern climates; in the midst of which the waters of a fountain rose upwards in a sparkling jet, and fell back again into the white marble cistern.

A thousand dizzy recollections thronged on the mind of Hartley, whose early feelings towards the companion of his youth, if they had slumbered during distance and the various casualties of a busy life, were revived when he found himself placed so near her, and in circumstances which interested from their unexpected occurrence and mysterious character. A step was heard—the door opened—a female appeared—but it was the portly form of Madame de Montreville.

'What do you please to want, sir?' said the lady; 'that is, if you have found your tongue this morning, which you had lost yesterday.'

'I proposed myself the honour of waiting upon the young person whom I saw in your Excellency's company yesterday morning,' answered Hartley, with assumed respect. 'I have had long the honour of being known to her in Europe, and I desire to offer my services to her in India.'

'Much obliged—much obliged; but Miss Gray is gone out and does not return for one or two days. You may leave your commands with me.'

'Pardon me, madam,' replied Hartley; 'but I have some reason to hope you may be mistaken in this matter—And here comes the lady herself.'

'How is this, my dear?' said Mrs. Montreville, with unruffled front, to Menie, as she entered; 'are you not gone out for two or three days, as I tell this gentleman?—*mais c'est égal*—it is all one thing. You will say, How d'ye do, and good-bye, to Monsieur, who is so polite as to come to ask after our healths, and as he sees us both very well, he will go away home again.'

'I believe, madam,' said Miss Gray, with appearance of effort, 'that I must speak with this gentleman for a few minutes in private, if you will permit me.'

'That is to say, get you gone? but I do not allow that—I do not like private conversation between young man and pretty young woman *cela n'est pas honnête*. It cannot be in my house.'

'It may be out of it, then, madam,' answered Miss Gray, not pettishly nor pertly, but with the utmost simplicity.—'Mr. Hartley, will you step into that garden?—and you, madam, may ob

serve us from the window, if it be the fashion of the country to watch so closely.'

As she spoke this, she stepped through a lattice-door into the garden, and with an air so simple, that she seemed as if she wished to comply with her patroness's ideas of decorum, though they appeared strange to her. The Queen of Sheba, notwithstanding her natural assurance, was disconcerted by the composure of Miss Gray's manner, and left the room, apparently in displeasure. Menie turned back to the door which opened into the garden, and said in the same manner as before, but with less nonchalance,—

'I am sure I would not willingly break through the rules of a foreign country; but I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of speaking to so old a friend,—if indeed,' she added, pausing and looking at Hartley, who was much embarrassed, 'it be as much pleasure to Mr. Hartley as it is to me.'

'It would have been,' said Hartley, scarce knowing what he said—'it must be a pleasure to me in every circumstance—But this extraordinary meeting—But your father'——

Menie Gray's handkerchief was at her eyes.—'He is gone, Mr. Hartley. After he was left unassisted, his toilsome business became too much for him—he caught a cold, which hung about him, as you know he was the last to attend to his own complaints, till it assumed a dangerous, and, finally, a fatal character. I distress you, Mr. Hartley, but it becomes you well to be affected. My father loved you dearly.'

'O, Miss Gray,' said Hartley, 'it should not have been thus with my excellent friend at the close of his useful and virtuous life!—Alas! wherefore—the question bursts from me involuntarily—wherefore could you not have complied with his wishes? wherefore'——

'Do not ask me,' said she, stopping the question which was on his lips; 'we are not the formers of our own destiny. It is painful to talk on such a subject; but for once, and for ever, let me tell you that I should have done Mr. Hartley wrong, if, even to secure his assistance to my father, I had accepted his hand, while my wayward affections did not accompany the act.'

'But wherefore do I see you here, Menie?—Forgive me, Miss Gray, my tongue as well as my heart turns back to long-forgotten scenes—But why here—why with this woman?'

'She is not, indeed, everything that I expected,' answered Menie; 'but I must not be prejudiced by foreign manners, after the step I have taken. She is, besides, attentive, and generous in her way, and I shall soon'—she paused a moment, and then added, 'be under better protection.'

'That of Richard Middlemas?' said Hartley, with a faltering voice.

'I ought not, perhaps, to answer the question,' said Menie; 'but I am a bad dissembler, and those whom I trust, I trust entirely. You have guessed right, Mr. Hartley,' she added, colouring a good deal; 'I have come hither to unite my fate to that of your old comrade.'

'It is, then, just as I feared!' exclaimed Hartley.

'And why should Mr. Hartley fear?' said Menie Gray. 'I used to think you too generous—surely the quarrel which occurred long since ought not to perpetuate suspicion and resentment.'

'At least, if the feeling of resentment remained in my own bosom, it would be the last I should intrude upon you, Miss Gray,' answered Hartley. 'But it is for you, and for you alone, that I am watchful. This person—this gentleman whom you mean to entrust with your happiness—do you know where he is—and in what service?'

'I know both, more distinctly perhaps than Mr. Hartley can do. Mr. Middlemas has erred greatly, and has been severely punished. But it was not in the time of his exile and sorrow, that she who has plighted her faith to him should, with the flattering world, turn her back upon him. Besides, you have, doubtless, not heard of his hopes of being restored to his country and his rank?'

'I have,' answered Hartley, thrown off his guard; 'but I see not how he can deserve it, otherwise than by becoming a traitor to his new master, and thus rendering himself even more unworthy of confidence than I hold him to be at this moment.'

'It is well that he hears you not,' answered Menie Gray, resenting, with natural feeling, the imputation on her lover. Then, instantly softening her tone, she added, 'My voice ought not to aggravate, but to soothe your quarrel. Mr. Hartley, I plight my word to you that you do Richard wrong.'

She said these words with affecting calmness, suppressing all appearance of that displeasure, of which she was evidently sensible, upon this depreciation of a beloved object.

Hartley compelled himself to answer in the same strain.

'Miss Gray,' he said, 'your actions and motives will always be those of an angel; but let me entreat you to view this most important matter with the eyes of worldly wisdom and prudence. Have you well weighed the risks attending the course which you are taking in favour of a man who—nay, I will not again offend you—who may, I hope, deserve your favour?'

'When I wished to see you in this manner, Mr. Hartley, and declined a communication in public, where we could have had less freedom of conversation, it was with the view of telling you everything. Some pain I thought old recollections might give, but I trusted it would be momentary; and, as I desire to retain your friendship, it is proper I should show that I still deserve it. I must then first tell you my situation after my father's death. In the world's opinion we were always poor, you know; but in the proper sense I had not known what real poverty was, until I was placed in dependence upon a distant relation of my poor father, who made our relationship a reason for casting upon me all the drudgery of her household, while she would not allow that it gave me a claim to countenance, kindness, or anything but the relief of my most pressing wants. In these circumstances I received from Mr. Middlemas a letter, in which he related his fatal duel, and its consequence. He had not dared to write to me to share his misery.—Now, when he was in

a lucrative situation, under the patronage of a powerful prince, whose wisdom knew how to prize and protect such Europeans as entered his service—now, when he had every prospect of rendering our government such essential service by his interest with Hyder Ali, and might eventually nourish hopes of being permitted to return and stand his trial for the death of his commanding officer—now, he pressed me to come to India, and share his reviving fortunes, by accomplishing the engagement into which we had long ago entered. A considerable sum of money accompanied this letter. Mrs. Duffer was pointed out as a respectable woman, who would protect me during the passage. Mrs. Montreville, a lady of rank, having large possessions and high interest in the Mysore, would receive me on my arrival at Fort Saint George, and conduct me safely to the dominions of Hyder. It was further recommended that, considering the peculiar situation of Mr. Middlemas, his name should be concealed in the transaction, and that the ostensible cause of my voyage should be to fill an office in that lady's family—What was I to do?—My duty to my poor father was ended, and my other friends considered the proposal as too advantageous to be rejected. The references given, the sum of money lodged, were considered as putting all scruples out of the question, and my immediate protectress and kinswoman was so earnest that I should accept of the offer made me, as to intimate that she would not encourage me to stand in my own light, by continuing to give me shelter and food (she gave me little more), if I was foolish enough to refuse compliance.'

'Sordid wretch!' said Hartley; 'how little did she deserve such a charge!'

'Let me speak a proud word, Mr. Hartley, and then you will not perhaps blame my relations so much. All their persuasions, and even their threats, would have failed in inducing me to take a step which has an appearance, at least, to which I found it difficult to reconcile myself. But I had loved Middlemas—I love him still—why should I deny it?—and I have not hesitated to trust him. Had it not been for the small still voice which reminded me of my engagements, I had maintained more stubbornly the pride of womanhood, and, as you would perhaps have recommended, I might have expected, at least, that my lover should have come to Britain in person, and might have had the vanity to think,' she added, smiling faintly, 'that if I were worth having I was worth fetching.'

'Yet now—even now,' answered Hartley, 'be just to yourself while you are generous to your lover.—Nay, do not look angrily, but hear me. I doubt the propriety of your being under the charge of this unsexed woman, who can no longer be termed a European. I have interest enough with females of the highest rank in the settlement—this climate is that of generosity and hospitality—there is not one of them who, knowing your character and history, will not desire to have you in her society, and under her protection, until your lover shall be able to vindicate his title to your hand in the face of the world. I myself will be no cause of suspicion to him, or of inconvenience to you, Menie. Let me but have your consent to the arrangement I propose, and the same moment that sees you under honourable and unsuspected protection, I will leave Madras, not to return till your destiny is in one way or other permanently fixed.'

'No, Hartley,' said Miss Gray. 'It may, it must be, friendly in you thus to advise me; but it would be most base in me to advance my own affairs at the expense of your prospects. Besides, what would this be but taking the chance of contingencies, with the view of sharing poor Middlemas's fortunes should they prove prosperous, and casting him off should they be otherwise? Tell me only, do you, of your own positive knowledge, aver that you consider this woman as an unworthy and unfit protectress for so young a person as I am?'

'Of my own knowledge I can say nothing; nay, I must own that reports differ even concerning Mrs. Montreville's character. But surely the mere suspicion'——

'The mere suspicion, Mr. Hartley, can have no weight with me, considering that I can oppose to it the testimony of the man with whom I am willing to share my future fortunes. You acknowledge the question is but doubtful; and should not the assertion of him of whom I think so highly decide my belief in a doubtful matter? What, indeed, must he be, should this Madame Montreville be other than he represented her?'

'What must he be, indeed!' thought Hartley internally, but his lips uttered not the words. He looked down in a deep reverie, and at length started from it at the words of Miss Gray.

'It is time to remind you, Mr. Hartley, that we must needs part. God bless and preserve you.'

'And you, dearest Menie,' exclaimed Hartley, as he sunk on one knee, and pressed to his lips the hand which she held out to him. 'God bless you!—you must deserve blessing. God protect you!—you must need protection.—O, should things prove different from what you hope, send for me instantly, and, if man can aid you, Adam Hartley will!'

He placed in her hand a card containing his address. He then rushed from the apartment. In the hall he met the lady of the mansion, who made him a haughty reverence in token of adieu, while a native servant of the upper class, by whom she was attended, made a low and reverential salam.

Hartley hastened from the Black Town, more satisfied than before that some deceit was about to be practised towards Menie Gray—more determined than ever to exert himself for her preservation; yet more completely perplexed, when he began to consider the doubtful character of the danger to which she might be exposed, and the scanty means of protection which she had to oppose to it.

CHAPTER XII.

As Hartley left the apartment in the house of Ram Sing Cottah by one mode of exit, Miss Gray retired by another to an apartment destined for her private use. She, too, had reason for secret

and anxious reflection, since all her love for Middlemas, and her full confidence in his honour, could not entirely conquer her doubts concerning the character of the person whom he had chosen for her temporary protectress. And yet she could not rest these doubts upon anything distinctly conclusive; it was rather a dislike of her patroness's general manners, and a disgust at her masculine notions and expressions, that displeased her, than anything else.

Meantime, Madame Montreville, followed by her black domestic, entered the apartment where Hartley and Menie had just parted. It appeared, from the conversation which follows, that they had from some place of concealment overheard the dialogue we have narrated in the former chapter.

'It is good luck, Sadoc,' said the lady, 'that there is in this world the great fool.'

'And the great villain,' answered Sadoc, in good English, but in a most sullen tone.

'This woman, now,' continued the lady, 'is what in Frangistan* you call an angel.'

'Ay, and I have seen those in Hindostan you may well call devil.'

'I am sure that this—how you call him—Hartley is a meddling devil. For what has he to do? She will not have any of him. What is his business who has her? I wish we were well up the Ghauts† again, my dear Sadoc.'

'For my part,' answered the slave, 'I am half determined never to ascend the Ghauts more. Hark you, Adela, I begin to sicken of the plan we have laid. This creature's confiding purity—call her angel or woman, as you will—makes my practices appear too vile, even in my own eyes. I feel myself unfit to be your companion farther in the daring paths which you pursue. Let us part, and part friends.'

'Amen, coward. But the woman remains with me,' answered the Queen of Sheba.‡

'With thee!' replied the seeming black—'never. No, Adela. She is under the shadow of the British flag, and she shall experience its protection.'

'Yes—and what protection will it afford to you yourself?' retorted the Amazon. 'What if I should clap my hands, and command a score of my black servants to bind you like a sheep, and then send word to the Governor of the Presidency that one Richard Middlemas, who had been guilty of mutiny, murder, desertion, and serving of the enemy against his countrymen, is here, at Ram Sing Cottah's house, in the disguise of a black servant?' Middlemas covered his face with his hands, while Madame Montreville proceeded to load him with reproaches.—'Yes,' she said, 'slave and son of a slave! Since you wear the dress of my household, you shall obey me as fully as the rest of them, otherwise,—whips, fetters,—the scaffold, renegade,—the gallows, murderer! Dost thou dare to reflect on the abyss of misery from which I raised thee, to share my wealth and my affections? Dost thou not remember that the picture of this pale, cold, unimpassioned girl was then so indifferent to thee, that thou didst sacrifice it as a tribute due to the benevolence of her who relieved thee, to the affection of her who, wretch as thou art, condescended to love thee?'

'Yes, fell woman,' answered Middlemas; 'but was it I who encouraged the young tyrant's outrageous passion for a portrait, or who formed the abominable plan of placing the original within his power?'

'No—for to do so required brain and wit. But it was thine, flimsy villain, to execute the device which a bolder genius planned; it was thine to entice the woman to this foreign shore, under pretence of a love, which, on thy part, cold-blooded miscreant, never had existed.'

'Peace, screech-owl!' answered Middlemas; 'nor drive me to such madness as may lead me to forget thou art a woman.'

'A woman, dastard! Is this thy pretext for sparing me?—what, then, art thou, who tremblest at a woman's looks, a woman's word?—I am a woman, renegade, but one who wears a dagger, and despises alike thy strength and thy courage. I am a woman who has looked on more dying men than thou hast killed deer and antelopes. Thou must traffic for greatness?—thou hast thrust thyself, like a five-years' child, into the rough sports of men, and wilt only be borne down and crushed for thy pains. Thou wilt be a double traitor, forsooth—betray thy betrothed to the Prince, in order to obtain the means of betraying the Prince to the English, and thus gain thy pardon from thy countrymen. But me thou shalt not betray. I will not be made the tool of thy ambition—I will not give thee the aid of my treasures and my soldiers, to be sacrificed at last to this northern icicle. No, I will watch thee as the fiend watches the wizard. Show but a symptom of betraying me while we are here, and I denounce thee to the English, who might pardon the successful villain, but not him who can only offer prayers for his life, in place of useful services. Let me see thee flinch when we are beyond the Ghauts, and the Nawaub shall know thy intrigues with the Nizam§ and the Mahrattas,‖ and thy resolution to deliver up Bangalore¶ to the English, when the imprudence of Tippoo shall have made thee *killedar*. Go where thou wilt, slave, thou shalt find me thy mistress.'

'And a fair though an unkind one,' said the counterfeit Sadoc, suddenly changing his tone to an affectation of tenderness. 'It is true I pity this unhappy woman; true I would save her if I could—but most unjust to suppose I would in any circumstances prefer her to my Nourjehan, my Light of the World, my Mootee Mahul, my Pearl of the Palace'——

'All false coin and empty compliment,' said the Begum. 'Let me hear, in two brief words, that you leave this woman to my disposal.'

'But not to be interred alive under your seat,

* [Europe.]

† [Mountain chains on each side of Mysore, the kingdom of Hyder Ali and his son Tippoo, in Southern India.]

‡ In order to maintain uninjured the tone of passion throughout this dialogue, it has been judged expedient to discard, in the language of the Begum, the *patois* of Madame Montreville.

§ [The title of the ruler of the State of Hyderabad.]

‖ [A group of States on the west side of India, the people being of mixed race.]

¶ [A city of Southern India, in the State of Mysore.]

like the Circassian of whom you were jealous,' said Middlemas, shuddering.

'No, fool; her lot shall not be worse than that of being the favourite of a prince. Hast thou, fugitive and criminal as thou art, a better fate to offer her?'

'But,' replied Middlemas, blushing even through his base disguise at the consciousness of his abject conduct, 'I will have no force on her inclinations.'

'Such truce she shall have as the laws of the zenana allow,' replied the female tyrant. 'A week is long enough for her to determine whether she will be the willing mistress of a princely and generous lover.'

'Ay,' said Richard, 'and before that week expires'—— He stopped short.

'What will happen before the week expires?' said the Begum Montreville.

'No matter—nothing of consequence. I leave the woman's fate with you.'

''Tis well—we march to-night on our return, so soon as the moon rises. Give orders to our retinue.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied the seeming slave, and left the apartment.

The eyes of the Begum remained fixed on the door through which he had passed. 'Villain—double-dyed villain,' she said, 'I see thy drift; thou wouldst betray Tippoo, in policy alike and in love. But me thou canst not betray.—Ho there, who waits? Let a trusty messenger be ready to set off instantly with letters, which I will presently make ready. His departure must be a secret to every one—And now shall this pale phantom soon know her destiny, and learn what it is to have rivalled Adela Montreville.'

While the Amazonian princess meditated plans of vengeance against her innocent rival and the guilty lover, the latter plotted as deeply for his own purposes. He had waited until such brief twilight as India enjoys rendered his disguise complete, then set out in haste for the part of Madras inhabited by the Europeans, or, as it is termed, Fort Saint George.

'I will save her yet,' he said; 'ere Tippoo can seize his prize, we will raise around his ears a storm which would drive the God of War from the arms of the Goddess of Beauty. The trap shall close its fangs upon this Indian tiger, ere he has time to devour the bait which enticed him into the snare.'

While Middlemas cherished these hopes, he approached the Residency. The sentinel on duty stopped him, as of course, but he was in possession of the countersign, and entered without opposition. He rounded the building in which the President of the Council resided, an able and active, but unconscientious man, who, neither in his own affairs, nor in those of the Company, was supposed to embarrass himself much about the means which he used to attain his object. A tap at a small postern gate was answered by a black slave, who admitted Middlemas to that necessary appurtenance of every government, a back stair, which, in its turn, conducted him to the office of the Bramin* Paupiah, the *dubash* or steward of the great man, and by whose means chiefly he communicated with the native courts, and carried on many mysterious intrigues, which he did not communicate to his brethren at the Council board.

It is perhaps justice to the guilty and unhappy Middlemas to suppose that if the agency of a British officer had been employed, he might have been induced to throw himself on his mercy, might have explained the whole of his nefarious bargain with Tippoo, and, renouncing his guilty projects of ambition, might have turned his whole thoughts upon saving Menie Gray, ere she was transported beyond the reach of British protection. But the thin dusky form which stood before him, wrapped in robes of muslin embroidered with gold, was that of Paupiah, known as a master-counsellor of dark projects, an Oriental Machiavel,† whose premature wrinkles were the result of many an intrigue, in which the existence of the poor, the happiness of the rich, the honour of men, and the chastity of women, had been sacrificed without scruple, to attain some private or political advantage. He did not even inquire by what means the renegade Briton proposed to acquire that influence with Tippoo which might enable him to betray him—he only desired to be assured that the fact was real.

'You speak at the risk of your head, if you deceive Paupiah, or make Paupiah the means of deceiving his master. I know, so does all Madras, that the Nawaub has placed his young son Tippoo as vice-regent of his newly-conquered territory of Bangalore, which Hyder hath lately added to his dominions. But that Tippoo should bestow the government of that important place on an apostate Feringi, seems more doubtful.'

'Tippoo is young,' answered Middlemas, 'and to youth the temptation of the passions is what a lily on the surface of the lake is to childhood—they will risk life to reach it, though, when obtained, it is of little value. Tippoo has the cunning of his father and his military talents, but he lacks his cautious wisdom.'

'Thou speakest truth—But when thou art governor of Bangalore, hast thou forces to hold the place till thou art relieved by the Mahrattas, or by the British?'

'Doubt it not—the soldiers of the Begum Mootee Mahul, whom the Europeans call Montreville, are less hers than mine. I am myself her *bukshee* (general), and her *sirdars* are at my devotion. With these I could keep Bangalore for two months, and the British army may be before it in a week. What do you risk by advancing General Smith's army nearer to the frontier?'

'We risk a settled peace with Hyder,' answered Paupiah, 'for which he has made advantageous offers. Yet I say not but thy plan may be most advantageous. Thou sayest Tippoo's treasures are in the fort?'

'His treasures and his zenana; I may even be able to secure his person.'

'That were a goodly pledge,' answered the Hindoo minister.

* [A Brahmin is a Hindu of the highest caste, or religious class.]

† [A Florentine statesman of the sixteenth century, renowned for craft and intrigue.]

'And you consent that the treasures shall be divided to the last rupee, as in the scroll?'

'The share of Paupiah's master is too small,' said the Bramin; 'and the name of Paupiah is unnoticed.'

'The share of the Begum may be divided between Paupiah and his master,' answered Middlemas.

'But the Begum will expect her proportion,' replied Paupiah.

'Let me alone to deal with her,' said Middlemas. 'Before the blow is struck, she shall not know of our private treaty, and afterwards her disappointment will be of little consequence. And now, remember my stipulations—my rank to be restored—my full pardon to be granted.'

'Ay,' replied Paupiah cautiously, 'should you succeed. But were you to betray what has here passed, I will find the dagger of a *lootie* which shall reach thee, wert thou sheltered under the folds of the Nawaub's garment. In the meantime, take this missive, and when you are in possession of Bangalore, despatch it to General Smith, whose division shall have orders to approach as near the frontiers of Mysore as may be, without causing suspicion.'

Thus parted this worthy pair; Paupiah to report to his principal the progress of these dark machinations, Middlemas to join the Begum on her return to the Mysore. The gold and diamonds of Tippoo, the importance which he was about to acquire, the ridding himself at once of the capricious authority of the irritable Tippoo, and the troublesome claims of the Begum, were such agreeable subjects of contemplation, that he scarcely thought of the fate of his European victim, unless to salve his conscience with the hope that the sole injury she could sustain might be the alarm of a few days, during the course of which he would acquire the means of delivering her from the tyrant in whose zenana she was to remain a temporary prisoner. He resolved, at the same time, to abstain from seeing her till the moment he could afford her protection, justly considering the danger which his whole plan might incur, if he again awakened the jealousy of the Begum. This he trusted was now asleep; and, in the course of their return to Tippoo's camp, near Bangalore, it was his study to sooth this ambitious and crafty female by blandishments, intermingled with the more splendid prospects of wealth and power to be opened to them both, as he pretended, by the success of his present enterprise.*

CHAPTER XIII.

It appears that the jealous and tyrannical Begum did not long suspend her purpose of agonizing her rival by acquainting her with her intended fate. By prayers or rewards, Menie Gray prevailed on a servant of Ram Sing Cottah to deliver to Hartley the following distracted note:—

'All is true your fears foretold—He has delivered me up to a cruel woman, who threatens to sell me to the tyrant Tippoo. Save me if you can—if you have not pity, or cannot give me aid, there is none left upon earth.—M. G.'

The haste with which Doctor Hartley sped to the fort, and demanded an audience of the Governor, was defeated by the delays interposed by Paupiah.

It did not suit the plans of this artful Hindoo that any interruption should be opposed to the departure of the Begum and her favourite, considering how much the plans of the last corresponded with his own. He affected incredulity on the charge, when Hartley complained of an Englishwoman being detained in the train of the Begum against her consent, treated the complaint of Miss Gray as the result of some female quarrel unworthy of particular attention, and when at length he took some steps for examining further into the matter, he contrived they should be so tardy, that the Begum and her retinue were far beyond the reach of interruption.

Hartley let his indignation betray him into reproaches against Paupiah, in which his principal was not spared. This only served to give the impassible Bramin a pretext for excluding him from the Residency, with a hint, that if his language continued to be of such an imprudent character, he might expect to be removed from Madras, and stationed at some hill-fort or village among the mountains, where his medical knowledge would find full exercise in protecting himself and others from the unhealthiness of the climate.

As he retired, bursting with ineffectual indignation, Esdale was the first person whom Hartley chanced to meet with, and to him, stung with impatience, he communicated what he termed the infamous conduct of the Governor's dubash, connived at, as he had but too much reason to suppose, by the Governor himself; exclaiming against the want of spirit which they betrayed, in abandoning a British subject to the fraud of renegades, and the force of a tyrant.

Esdale listened with that sort of anxiety which prudent men betray when they feel themselves like to be drawn into trouble by the discourse of an imprudent friend.

'If you desire to be personally righted in this matter,' said he at length, 'you must apply to Leadenhall Street, where I suspect—betwixt ourselves—complaints are accumulating fast, both against Paupiah and his master.'

'I care for neither of them,' said Hartley; 'I need no personal redress—I desire none—I only want succour for Menie Gray.'

'In that case,' said Esdale, 'you have only one resource—you must apply to Hyder himself'——

'To Hyder—to the usurper—the tyrant?'

'Yes, to this usurper and tyrant,' answered Esdale, 'you must be contented to apply. His pride is, to be thought a strict administrator of

* It is scarce necessary to say that such things could only be acted in the earlier period of our Indian settlements, when the check of the Directors was imperfect, and that of the Crown did not exist. My friend Mr. Fairscribe is of opinion that there is an anachronism in the introduction of Paupiah, the Bramin dubash of the English governor.—C. C.

justice; and perhaps he may on this, as on other occasions, choose to display himself in the light of an impartial magistrate.'

'Then I go to demand justice at his footstool,' said Hartley.

'Not so fast, my dear Hartley,' answered his friend; 'first consider the risk. Hyder is just by reflection, and perhaps from political considerations; but by temperament, his blood is as unruly as ever beat under a black skin, and if you do not find him in the vein of judging, he is likely enough to be in that of killing. Stakes and bowstrings are as frequently in his head as the adjustment of the scales of justice.'

'No matter—I will instantly present myself at his durbar. The Governor cannot for very shame refuse me letters of credence.'

'Never think of asking them,' said his more experienced friend; 'it would cost Paupiah little to have them so worded as to induce Hyder to rid our sable dubash, at once and for ever, of the sturdy, free-spoken Doctor Adam Hartley. A *vakeel*, or messenger of Government, sets out to-morrow for Seringapatam; contrive to join him on the road, his passport will protect you both. Do you know none of the chiefs about Hyder's person?'

'None, excepting his late emissary to this place, Barak el Hadgi,' answered Hartley.

'His support,' said Esdale, 'although only a Fakir, may be as effectual as that of persons of more essential consequence. And, to say the truth, where the caprice of a despot is the question in debate, there is no knowing upon what it is best to reckon.—Take my advice, my dear Hartley, leave this poor girl to her fate. After all, by placing yourself in an attitude of endeavouring to save her, it is a hundred to one that you only insure your own destruction.'

Hartley shook his head, and bade Esdale hastily farewell; leaving him in the happy and self-applauding state of mind proper to one who has given the best advice possible to a friend, and may conscientiously wash his hands of all consequences.

Having furnished himself with money, and with the attendance of three trusty native servants, mounted like himself on Arab horses, and carrying with them no tent, and very little baggage, the anxious Hartley lost not a moment in taking the road to Mysore, endeavouring, in the meantime, by recollecting every story he had ever heard of Hyder's justice and forbearance, to assure himself that he should find the Nawaub disposed to protect a helpless female, even against the future heir of his empire.

Before he crossed the Madras territory, he overtook the vakeel, or messenger of the British Government, of whom Esdale had spoken. This man, accustomed for a sum of money to permit adventurous European traders who desired to visit Hyder's capital, to share his protection, passport, and escort, was not disposed to refuse the same good office to a gentleman of credit at Madras; and, propitiated by an additional gratuity, undertook to travel as speedily as possible. It was a journey which was not prosecuted without much fatigue and considerable danger, as they had to traverse a country frequently exposed to all the evils of war, more especially when they approached the Ghauts, those tremendous mountain-passes which descend from the tableland of Mysore, and through which the mighty streams that arise in the centre of the Indian peninsula find their way to the ocean.

The sun had set ere the party reached the foot of one of these perilous passes, up which lay the road to Seringapatam. A narrow path, which in summer resembled an empty watercourse, winding upwards among immense rocks and precipices, was at one time completely overshadowed by dark groves of teak-trees, and at another found its way beside impenetrable jungles, the habitation of jackals and tigers.

By means of this unsocial path the travellers threaded their way in silence,—Hartley, whose impatience kept him before the vakeel, eagerly inquiring when the moon would enlighten the darkness, which, after the sun's disappearance, closed fast around them. He was answered by the natives, according to their usual mode of expression, that the moon was in her dark side, and that he was not to hope to behold her bursting through a cloud to illuminate the thickets and strata of black and slaty rocks, amongst which they were winding. Hartley had therefore no resource, save to keep his eye steadily fixed on the lighted match of the sowar, or horseman, who rode before him, which, for sufficient reasons, was always kept in readiness to be applied to the priming of the matchlock. The vidette, on his part, kept a watchful eye on the *dowrah*, a guide supplied at the last village, who, having got more than half-way from his own house, was much to be suspected of meditating how to escape the trouble of going farther.*

The dowrah, on the other hand, conscious of the lighted match and loaded gun behind him, hollowed from time to time to show that he was on his duty, and to accelerate the march of the travellers. His cries were answered by an occasional ejaculation of Ulla from the black soldiers who closed the rear, and who were meditating on former adventures, the plundering of a *kaffila* (party of travelling merchants), or some such exploit, or perhaps reflecting that a tiger, in the neighbouring jungle, might be watching patiently for the last of the party, in order to spring upon him, according to his usual practice.

The sun, which appeared almost as suddenly as it had left them, served to light the travellers in the remainder of the ascent, and called forth from the Mahomedans belonging to the party the morning prayer of Alla Akber, which resounded in long notes among the rocks and ravines, and they continued with better advantage their forced march until the pass opened upon a boundless extent of jungle, with a single high mud fort rising through the midst of it. Upon this plain rapine and war had suspended

* In every village, the *dowrah*, or guide, is an official person, upon the public establishment, and receives a portion of the harvest or other revenue, along with the smith, the sweeper, and the barber. As he gets nothing from the travellers whom it is his office to conduct, he never scruples to shorten his own journey and prolong theirs by taking them to the nearest village, without reference to the most direct line of route, and sometimes deserts them entirely. If the regular dowrah is sick or absent, no wealth can procure a substitute.

the labours of industry, and the rich vegetation of the soil had in a few years converted a fertile champaign country into an almost impenetrable thicket. Accordingly, the banks of a small *nullah*, or brook, were covered with the foot-marks of tigers and other animals of prey.

Here the travellers stopped to drink, and to refresh themselves and their horses; and it was near this spot that Hartley saw a sight which forced him to compare the subject which engrossed his own thoughts with the distress that had afflicted another.

At a spot not far distant from the brook, the guide called their attention to a most wretched-looking man, overgrown with hair, who was seated on the skin of a tiger. His body was covered with mud and ashes, his skin sunburnt, his dress a few wretched tatters. He appeared not to observe the approach of the strangers, neither moving nor speaking a word, but remaining with his eyes fixed on a small and rude tomb, formed of the black slate stones which lay around, and exhibiting a small recess for a lamp. As they approached the man, and placed before him a rupee or two, and some rice, they observed that a tiger's skull and bones lay beside him, with a sabre almost consumed by rust.

While they gazed on this miserable object, the guide acquainted them with his tragical history. Sadhu Sing had been a *sipahee*, or soldier, and freebooter of course, the native and pride of a half-ruined village which they had passed on the preceding day. He was betrothed to the daughter of a sipahee who served in the mud fort which they saw at a distance rising above the jungle. In due time, Sadhu, with his friends, came for the purpose of the marriage, and to bring home the bride. She was mounted on a *tatoo*, a small horse belonging to the country, and Sadhu and his friends preceded her on foot, in all their joy and pride. As they approached the nullah near which the travellers were resting, there was heard a dreadful roar, accompanied by a shriek of agony. Sadhu Sing, who instantly turned, saw no trace of his bride, save that her horse ran wild in one direction, whilst in the other the long grass and reeds of the jungle were moving like the ripple of the ocean, when distorted by the course of a shark holding its way near the surface. Sadhu drew his sabre and rushed forward in that direction; the rest of the party remained motionless until roused by a short roar of agony. They then plunged into the jungle with their drawn weapons, where they speedily found Sadhu Sing holding in his arms the lifeless corpse of his bride, where a little farther lay the body of the tiger, slain by such a blow over the neck as desperation itself could alone have discharged.—The brideless bridegroom would permit none to interfere with his sorrow. He dug a grave for his Mora, and erected over it the rude tomb they saw, and never afterwards left the spot. The beasts of prey themselves seemed to respect or dread the extremity of his sorrow. His friends brought him food and water from the nullah, but he neither smiled nor showed any mark of acknowledgment, unless when they brought him flowers to deck the grave of Mora. Four or five years, according to the guide, had passed away, and there Sadhu Sing still remained among the trophies of his grief and his vengeance, exhibiting all the symptoms of advanced age, though still in the prime of youth. The tale hastened the travellers from their resting-place; the vakeel because it reminded him of the dangers of the jungle, and Hartley because it coincided too well with the probable fate of his beloved, almost within the grasp of a more formidable tiger than that whose skeleton lay beside Sadhu Sing.

It was at the mud fort already mentioned that the travellers received the first accounts of the progress of the Begum and her party, by a *peon* (or foot-soldier) who had been in their company, but was now on his return to the coast. They had travelled, he said, with great speed, until they ascended the Ghauts, where they were joined by a party of the Begum's own forces; and he and others, who had been brought from Madras as a temporary escort, were paid and dismissed to their homes. After this, he understood it was the purpose of the Begum Mootee Mahul to proceed by slow marches and frequent halts to Bangalore, the vicinity of which place she did not desire to reach until Prince Tippoo, with whom she desired an interview, should have returned from an expedition towards Vandicotta, in which he had lately been engaged.

From the result of his anxious inquiries, Hartley had reason to hope that, though Seringapatam was seventy-five miles more to the eastward than Bangalore, yet, by using diligence, he might have time to throw himself at the feet of Hyder, and beseech his interposition, before the meeting betwixt Tippoo and the Begum should decide the fate of Menie Gray. On the other hand, he trembled as the peon told him that the Begum's bukshee, or general, who had travelled to Madras with her in disguise, had now assumed the dress and character belonging to his rank, and it was expected he was to be honoured by the Mahommedan prince with some high office of dignity. With still deeper anxiety, he learned that a palanquin, watched with sedulous care by the slaves of Oriental jealousy, contained, it was whispered, a Feringi, or Frankish woman, beautiful as a houri, who had been brought from England by the Begum, as a present to Tippoo. The deed of villany was therefore in full train to be accomplished; it remained to see whether, by diligence on Hartley's side, its course could be interrupted.

When this eager vindicator of betrayed innocence arrived in the capital of Hyder, it may be believed that he consumed no time in viewing the temple of the celebrated Vishnoo,* or in surveying the splendid gardens called Loll-bang, which were the monument of Hyder's magnificence, and now hold his mortal remains. On the contrary, he was no sooner arrived in the city, than he hastened to the principal mosque, having no doubt that he was there most likely to learn some tidings of Barak el Hadgi. He approached accordingly the sacred spot, and as to enter it would have cost a Feringi his life, he employed the agency of a devout Mussulman to obtain information concerning the person

* [One of the chief gods of the Hindu faith.]

whom he sought. He was not long in learning that the Fakir Barak was within the mosque, as he had anticipated, busied with his holy office of reading passages from the Koran, and its most improved commentators. To interrupt him in his devout task was impossible, and it was only by a high bribe that he could prevail on the same Moslem whom he had before employed, to slip into the sleeve of the holy man's robe a paper containing his name, and that of the khan in which the vakeel had taken up his residence. The agent brought back for answer, that the Fakir, immersed, as was to be expected, in the holy service which he was in the act of discharging, had paid no visible attention to the symbol of intimation which the Feringi Sahib (European gentleman) had sent to him. Distracted with the loss of time, of which each moment was precious, Hartley next endeavoured to prevail on the Mussulman to interrupt the Fakir's devotions with a verbal message; but the man was indignant at the very proposal.

'Dog of a Christian!' he said, 'what art thou and thy whole generation, that Barak el Hadgi should lose a divine thought for the sake of an infidel like thee?'

Exasperated beyond self-possession, the unfortunate Hartley was now about to intrude upon the precincts of the mosque in person, in hopes of interrupting the formal prolonged recitation which issued from its recesses, when an old man laid his hand on his shoulder, and prevented him from a rashness which might have cost him his life, saying at the same time, 'You are a Sahib Angrezie' (English gentleman); 'I have been a *telinga*' (a private soldier) 'in the Company's service, and have eaten their salt. I will do your errand for you to the Fakir Barak el Hadgi.'

So saying, he entered the mosque, and presently returned with the Fakir's answer, in these enigmatical words:—'He who would see the sun rise must watch till the dawn.'

With this poor subject of consolation, Hartley retired to his inn, to meditate on the futility of the professions of the natives, and to devise some other mode of finding access to Hyder than that which he had hitherto trusted to. On this point, however, he lost all hope, being informed by his late fellow-traveller, whom he found at the khan, that the Nawaub was absent from the city on a secret expedition, which might detain him for two or three days. This was the answer which the vakeel himself had received from the dewan, with a further intimation that he must hold himself ready, when he was required, to deliver his credentials to Prince Tippoo, instead of the Nawaub; his business being referred to the former, in a way not very promising for the success of his mission.

Hartley was now nearly thrown into despair. He applied to more than one officer supposed to have credit with the Nawaub, but the slightest hint of the nature of his business seemed to strike all with terror. Not one of the persons he applied to would engage in the affair, or even consent to give it a hearing; and the dewan plainly told him, that to engage in opposition to Prince Tippoo's wishes, was the ready way to destruction, and exhorted him to return to the coast. Driven almost to distraction by his various failures, Hartley betook himself in the evening to the khan. The call of the muezzins, thundering from the minarets, had invited the faithful to prayers, when a black servant about fifteen years old stood before Hartley, and pronounced these words, deliberately, and twice over,—'Thus says Barak el Hadgi, the watcher in the mosque: He that would see the sun rise, let him turn towards the east.' He then left the caravanserai; and it may be well supposed that Hartley, starting from the carpet on which he had lain down to repose himself, followed his youthful guide with renewed vigour and palpitating hope.

CHAPTER XIV.

'Twas the hour when rites unholy
Called each Paynim voice to prayer,
And the star that faded slowly
Left to dews the freshen'd air.

Day his sultry fires had wasted,
Calm and cool the moonbeams shone;
To the Vizier's lofty palace
One bold Christian came alone.
THOMAS CAMPBELL, *quoted from memory.**

THE twilight darkened into night so fast, that it was only by his white dress that Hartley could discern his guide, as he tripped along the splendid bazaar of the city. But the obscurity was so far favourable, that it prevented the inconvenient attention which the natives might otherwise have bestowed upon the European in his native dress, a sight at that time very rare in Seringapatam.

The various turnings and windings through which he was conducted ended at a small door in a wall, which, from the branches that hung over it, seemed to surround a garden or grove.

The postern opened on a tap from his guide, and the slave having entered, Hartley prepared to follow, but stepped back as a gigantic African brandished at his head a scimitar three fingers broad. The young slave touched his countryman with a rod which he held in his hand, and it seemed as if the touch disabled the giant, whose arm and weapon sunk instantly. Hartley entered without further opposition, and was now in a grove of mango-trees, through which an infant moon was twinkling faintly amid the murmur of waters, the sweet song of the nightingale, and the odours of the rose, yellow jasmine, orange and citron flowers, and Persian narcissus. Huge domes and arches, which were seen imperfectly in the quivering light, seemed to intimate the neighbourhood of some sacred edifice, where the Fakir had doubtless taken up his residence.

Hartley pressed on with as much haste as he could, and entered a side-door and narrow vaulted passage, at the end of which was another door. Here his guide stopped, but pointed and made indications that the European should enter. Hartley did so, and found himself in a small cell, such as we have formerly described,

* [It is only in the two last lines that the Author has made a serious alteration on Campbell.]

wherein sat Barak el Hadgi, with another Fakir, who, to judge from the extreme dignity of a white beard, which ascended up to his eyes on each side, must be a man of great sanctity as well as importance.

Hartley pronounced the usual salutation of Salam Alaikum in the most modest and deferential tone; but his former friend was so far from responding in their former strain of intimacy, that, having consulted the eye of his older companion, he barely pointed to a third carpet, upon which the stranger seated himself cross-legged after the country fashion, and a profound silence prevailed for the space of several minutes. Hartley knew the Oriental customs too well to endanger the success of his suit by precipitation. He waited an intimation to speak. At length it came, and from Barak.

'When the pilgrim Barak,' he said, 'dwelt at Madras, he had eyes and a tongue; but now he is guided by those of his father, the holy Scheik Hali ben Khaledoun, the superior of his convent.'

This extreme humility Hartley thought inconsistent with the affectation of possessing superior influence, which Barak had shown while at the Presidency; but exaggeration of their own consequence is a foible common to all who find themselves in a land of strangers. Addressing the senior Fakir, therefore, he told him in as few words as possible the villanous plot which was laid to betray Menie Gray into the hands of the Prince Tippoo. He made his suit for the reverend father's intercession with the prince himself, and with his father the Nawaub, in the most persuasive terms. The Fakir listened to him with an inflexible and immoveable aspect, similar to that with which a wooden saint regards his eager supplicants. There was a second pause, when, after resuming his pleading more than once, Hartley was at length compelled to end it for want of matter.

The silence was broken by the elder Fakir, who, after shooting a glance at his younger companion by a turn of the eye, without the least alteration of the position of the head and body, said, 'The unbeliever has spoken like a poet. But does he think that the Nawaub Khan Hyder Ali Behauder will contest with his son Tippoo the Victorious, the possession of an infidel slave?'

Hartley received at the same time a side glance from Barak, as if encouraging him to plead his own cause. He suffered a minute to elapse, and then replied,—

'The Nawaub is in the place of the Prophet, a judge over the low as well as high. It is written, that when the Prophet decided a controversy between the two sparrows concerning a grain of rice, his wife Fatima said to him, "Doth the missionary of Allah well to bestow his time in distributing justice on a matter so slight, and between such despicable litigants?"—"Know, woman," answered the Prophet, "that the sparrows and the grain of rice are the creation of Allah. They are not worth more than thou hast spoken; but justice is a treasure of inestimable price, and it must be imparted by him who holdeth power to all who require it at his hand. The prince doth the will of Allah, who gives it alike in small matters as in great, and to the poor as well as the powerful. To the hungry bird a grain of rice is as a chaplet of pearls to a sovereign."—I have spoken.'

'Bismallah!—Praised be God! he hath spoken like a moullah,' said the elder Fakir, with a little more emotion, and some inclination of his head towards Barak, for on Hartley he scarcely deigned even to look.

'The lips have spoken it which cannot lie, replied Barak, and there was again a pause.

It was once more broken by Scheik Hali, who, addressing himself directly to Hartley, demanded of him, 'Hast thou heard, Feringi, of aught of treason meditated by this *kafr* (infidel) against the Nawaub Behauder?'

'Out of a traitor cometh treason,' said Hartley; 'but, to speak after my knowledge, I am not conscious of such design.'

'There is truth in the words of him,' said the Fakir, 'who accuseth not his enemy save on his knowledge. The things thou hast spoken shall be laid before the Nawaub; and as Allah and he will, so shall the issue be. Meantime, return to thy khan, and prepare to attend the vakeel of thy Government, who is to travel with dawn to Bangalore, the strong, the happy, the holy city. Peace be with thee!—Is it not so, my son?'

Barak, to whom this appeal was made, replied, 'Even as my father hath spoken.'

Hartley had no alternative but to arise and take his leave with the usual phrase, 'Salam—God's peace be with you!'

His youthful guide, who waited his return without, conducted him once more to his khan, through by-paths which he could not have found out without pilotage. His thoughts were in the meantime strongly engaged on his late interview. He knew the Moslem men of religion were not implicitly to be trusted. The whole scene might be a scheme of Barak, to get rid of the trouble of patronizing a European in a delicate affair; and he determined to be guided by what should seem to confirm or discredit the intimation which he had received.

On his arrival at the khan, he found the vakeel of the British Government in a great bustle, preparing to obey directions transmitted to him by the Nawaub's dewan, or treasurer, directing him to depart the next morning with break of day for Bangalore.

He expressed great discontent at the order, and when Hartley intimated his purpose of accompanying him, seemed to think him a fool for his pains, hinting the probability that Hyder meant to get rid of them both by means of the freebooters, through whose countries they were to pass with such a feeble escort. This fear gave way to another, when the time of departure came, at which moment there rode up about two hundred of the Nawaub's native cavalry. The sirdar who commanded these troops behaved with civility, and stated that he was directed to attend upon the travellers, and to provide for their safety and convenience on the journey; but his manner was reserved and distant, and the vakeel insisted that the force was intended to prevent their escape, rather than for their protection. Under such unpleasant auspices, the journey between Seringapatam and Bangalore was accomplished in two days and part of a third, the distance being nearly eighty miles.

On arriving in view of this fine and populous city, they found an encampment already established within a mile of its walls. It occupied a tope or knoll, covered with trees, and looked full on the gardens which Tippoo had created, in one quarter of the city. The rich pavilions of the principal persons flamed with silk and gold; and spears with gilded points, or poles supporting gold knobs, displayed numerous little banners inscribed with the name of the Prophet. This was the camp of the Begum Mootee Mahul, who, with a small body of her troops, about two hundred men, was waiting the return of Tippoo under the walls of Bangalore. Their private motives for desiring a meeting the reader is acquainted with; to the public the visit of the Begum had only the appearance of an act of deference, frequently paid by inferior and subordinate princes to the patrons whom they depend upon.

These facts ascertained, the sirdar of the Nawaub took up his own encampment within sight of that of the Begum, but at about half a mile's distance, despatching to the city a messenger to announce to the Prince Tippoo, as soon as he should arrive, that he had come hither with the English vakeel.

The bustle of pitching a few tents was soon over, and Hartley, solitary and sad, was left to walk under the shade of two or three mango-trees, and, looking to the displayed streamers of the Begum's encampment, to reflect that amid these insignia of Mahomedanism Menie Gray remained, destined by a profligate and treacherous lover to the fate of slavery to a heathen tyrant. The consciousness of being in her vicinity added to the bitter pangs with which Hartley contemplated her situation, and reflected how little chance there appeared of his being able to rescue her from it by the mere force of reason and justice, which was all he could oppose to the selfish passions of a voluptuous tyrant. A lover of romance might have meditated some means of effecting her release by force or address; but Hartley, though a man of courage, had no spirit of adventure, and would have regarded as desperate any attempt of the kind.

His sole gleam of comfort arose from the impression which he had apparently made upon the elder Fakir, which he could not help hoping might be of some avail to him. But on one thing he was firmly resolved, and that was not to relinquish the cause he had engaged in whilst a grain of hope remained. He had seen in his own profession a quickening and a revival of life in the patient's eye, even when glazed apparently by the hand of Death; and he was taught confidence amidst moral evil by his success in relieving that which was physical only.

While Hartley was thus meditating, he was roused to attention by a heavy firing of artillery from the high bastions of the town; and, turning his eyes in that direction, he could see advancing, on the northern side of Bangalore, a tide of cavalry, riding tumultuously forward, brandishing their spears in all different attitudes, and pressing their horses to a gallop. The clouds of dust which attended this vanguard, for such it was, combined with the smoke of the guns, did not permit Hartley to see distinctly the main body which followed; but the appearance of howdahed elephants and royal banners dimly seen through the haze, plainly intimated the return of Tippoo to Bangalore; while shouts, and irregular discharges of musketry, announced the real or pretended rejoicing of the inhabitants. The city gates received the living torrent which rolled towards them; the clouds of smoke and dust were soon dispersed, and the horizon was restored to serenity and silence.

The meeting between persons of importance, more especially of royal rank, is a matter of very great consequence in India, and generally much address is employed to induce the person receiving the visit to come as far as possible to meet the visitor. From merely rising up, or going to the edge of the carpet, to advancing to the gate of the palace, to that of the city, or, finally, to a mile or two on the road, is all subject to negotiation. But Tippoo's impatience to possess the fair European induced him to grant on this occasion a much greater degree of courtesy than the Begum had dared to expect, and he appointed his garden, adjacent to the city walls, and indeed included within the precincts of the fortifications, as the place of their meeting; the hour noon, on the day succeeding his arrival; for the natives seldom move early in the morning, or before having broken their fast. This was intimated to the Begum's messenger by the prince in person, as, kneeling before him, he presented the *nuzzar* (a tribute consisting of three, five, or seven gold mohurs, always an odd number), and received in exchange a *khelaut*, or dress of honour. The messenger, in return, was eloquent in describing the importance of his mistress, her devoted veneration for the prince, the pleasure which she experienced on the prospect of their *motakul*, or meeting, and concluded with a more modest compliment to his own extraordinary talents, and the confidence which the Begum reposed in him. He then departed; and orders were given that on the next day all should be in readiness for the *sowarree*, a grand procession, when the prince was to receive the Begum as his honoured guest at his pleasure-house in the gardens.

Long before the appointed hour, the rendezvous of Fakirs, beggars, and idlers, before the gate of the palace, intimated the excited expectations of those who usually attend processions; while a more urgent set of mendicants, the courtiers, were hastening thither, on horses or elephants, as their means afforded, always in a hurry to show their zeal, and with a speed proportioned to what they hoped or feared.

At noon precisely, a discharge of cannon, placed in the outer courts, as also of matchlocks and of small swivels, carried by camels (the poor animals shaking their long ears at every discharge), announced that Tippoo had mounted his elephant. The solemn and deep sound of the *naggra*, or state drum, borne upon an elephant, was then heard like the distant discharge of artillery, followed by a long roll of musketry, and was instantly answered by that of numerous trumpets and tom-toms (or common drums), making a discordant, but yet a martial din. The noise increased as the procession traversed the outer courts of the palace in succession, and

at length issued from the gates, having at their head the *chobdars*, bearing silver sticks and clubs, and shouting at the pitch of their voices the titles and the virtues of Tippoo, the great, the generous, the invincible—strong as Rustan,* just as Noushirvan †—with a short prayer for his continued health.

After these came a confused body of men on foot, bearing spears, matchlocks, and banners, and intermixed with horsemen, some in complete shirts of mail, with caps of steel under their turbans, some in a sort of defensive armour, consisting of rich silk dresses, rendered sabre-proof by being stuffed with cotton. These champions preceded the prince, as whose body-guards they acted. It was not till after this time that Tippoo raised his celebrated Tiger-regiment, disciplined and armed according to the European fashion. Immediately before the prince came, on a small elephant, a hard-faced, severe-looking man, by office the distributor of alms, which he flung in showers of small copper money among the Fakirs and beggars, whose scrambles to collect them seemed to augment their amount; while the grim-looking agent of Mahomedan charity, together with his elephant, which marched with half angry eyes, and its trunk curled upwards, seemed both alike ready to chastise those whom poverty should render too importunate.

Tippoo himself next appeared, richly apparelled, and seated on an elephant, which, carrying its head above all the others in the procession, seemed proudly conscious of superior dignity. The howdah, or seat which the prince occupied, was of silver, embossed and gilt, having behind a place for a confidential servant, who waved the great *chowry*, or cow-tail, to keep off the flies; but who could also occasionally perform the task of spokesman, being well versed in all terms of flattery and compliment. The caparisons of the royal elephant were of scarlet cloth, richly embroidered with gold. Behind Tippoo came the various courtiers and officers of the household, mounted chiefly on elephants, all arrayed in their most splendid attire, and exhibiting the greatest pomp.

In this manner the procession advanced down the principal street of the town, to the gate of the royal gardens. The houses were ornamented by broadcloth, silk shawls, and embroidered carpets of the richest colours, displayed from the verandahs and windows; even the meanest hut was adorned with some piece of cloth, so that the whole street had a singularly rich and gorgeous appearance.

This splendid procession, having entered the royal gardens, approached, through a long avenue of lofty trees, a *chabootra*, or platform of white marble, canopied by arches of the same material, which occupied the centre. It was raised four or five feet from the ground, covered with white cloth and Persian carpets. In the centre of the platform was the *musnud*, or state cushion of the prince, six feet square, composed of crimson velvet richly embroidered. By special grace, a small low cushion was placed on the right of the prince, for the occupation of the Begum. In front of this platform was a square tank, or pond of marble, four feet deep, and filled to the brim with water as clear as crystal, having a large jet or fountain in the middle, which threw up a column of it to the height of twenty feet.

The Prince Tippoo had scarcely dismounted from his elephant, and occupied the musnud, or throne of cushions, when the stately form of the Begum was seen advancing to the place of rendezvous. The elephant being left at the gate of the gardens opening into the country, opposite to that by which the procession of Tippoo had entered, she was carried in an open litter, richly ornamented with silver, and borne on the shoulders of six black slaves. Her person was as richly attired as silks and gems could accomplish.

Richard Middlemas, as the Begum's general or bukshee, walked nearest to her litter, in a dress as magnificent in itself as it was remote from all European costume, being that of a *banka*, or Indian courtier. His turban was of rich silk and gold, twisted very hard and placed on one side of his head, its ends hanging down on the shoulder. His mustaches were turned and curled, and his eyelids stained with antimony. The vest was of gold brocade, with a cummerband, or sash, around his waist, corresponding to his turban. He carried in his hand a large sword, sheathed in a scabbard of crimson velvet, and wore around his middle a broad embroidered sword-belt. What thoughts he had under this gay attire, and the bold bearing which corresponded to it, it would be fearful to unfold. His least detestable hopes were perhaps those which tended to save Menie Gray, by betraying the prince who was about to confide in him, and the Begum, at whose intercession Tippoo's confidence was to be reposed.

The litter stopped as it approached the tank, on the opposite side of which the prince was seated on his musnud. Middlemas assisted the Begum to descend, and led her, deeply veiled with silver muslin, towards the platform of marble. The rest of the retinue of the Begum followed in their richest and most gaudy attire, all males, however; nor was there a symptom of woman being in her train, except that a close litter, guarded by twenty black slaves, having their sabres drawn, remained at some distance in a thicket of flowering shrubs.

When Tippoo Saib, through the dim haze which hung over the waterfall, discerned the splendid train of the Begum advancing, he arose from his musnud, so as to receive her near the foot of his throne, and exchanged greetings with her upon the pleasure of meeting, and inquiries after their mutual health. He then conducted her to the cushion placed near to his own, while his courtiers anxiously showed their politeness in accommodating those of the Begum with places upon the carpets around, where they all sat down cross-legged—Richard Middlemas occupying a conspicuous situation.

The people of inferior note stood behind, and amongst them was the sirdar of Hyder Ali, with Hartley and the Madras vakeel. It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which Hartley recognised the apostate Middlemas and

* [A famous legendary hero of ancient Persia.]

† [Khosrau or Chosroes, surnamed Anosharvan, *i.e.* 'the Blessed,' a great king of ancient Persia, called also 'the Just.']

the Amazonian Mrs. Montreville. The sight of them worked up his resolution to make an appeal against them in full durbar, to the justice which Tippoo was obliged to render to all who should complain of injuries. In the meanwhile, the prince, who had hitherto spoken in a low voice while acknowledging, it is to be supposed, the services and the fidelity of the Begum, now gave the sign to his attendant, who said, in an elevated tone, 'Wherefore, and to requite these services, the mighty Prince, at the request of the mighty Begum, Mootee Mahul, beautiful as the moon, and wise as the daughter of Giamschid,* had decreed to take into his service the bukshee of her armies, and to invest him, as one worthy of all confidence, with the keeping of his beloved capital of Bangalore.'

The voice of the crier had scarce ceased, when it was answered by one as loud, which sounded from the crowd of bystanders, 'Cursed is he who maketh the robber Leik* his treasurer, or trusteth the lives of Moslemah to the command of an apostate!'

With unutterable satisfaction, yet with trembling doubt and anxiety, Hartley traced the speech to the elder Fakir, the companion of Barak. Tippoo seemed not to notice the interruption, which passed for that of some mad devotee, to whom the Moslem princes permit great freedoms. The durbar, therefore, recovered from their surprise; and, in answer to the proclamation, united in the shout of applause which is expected to attend every annunciation of the royal pleasure.

Their acclamation had no sooner ceased than Middlemas arose, bent himself before the musnud, and, in a set speech, declared his unworthiness of such high honour as had now been conferred, and his zeal for the prince's service. Something remained to be added, but his speech faltered, his limbs shook, and his tongue seemed to refuse its office.

The Begum started from her seat, though contrary to etiquette, and said, as if to supply the deficiency in the speech of her officer, 'My slave would say, that in acknowledgment of so great an honour conferred on my bukshee, I am so void of means, that I can only pray your Highness will deign to accept a lily from Frangistan, to plant within the recesses of the secret garden of thy pleasures. Let my lord's guards carry yonder litter to the zenana.'

A female scream was heard, as, at a signal from Tippoo, the guards of his seraglio advanced to receive the closed litter from the attendants of the Begum. The voice of the old Fakir was heard louder and sterner than before,—'Cursed is the prince who barters justice for lust! He shall die in the gate by the sword of the stranger.'

'This is too insolent!' said Tippoo. 'Drag forward that Fakir, and cut his robe into tatters on his back with your *chabouks*.'†

But a scene ensued like that in the hall of Seyd. All who attempted to obey the command of the incensed despot fell back from the Fakir, as they would from the Angel of Death. He flung his cap and fictitious beard on the ground, and the incensed countenance of Tippoo was subdued in an instant, when he encountered the stern and awful eye of his father. A sign dismissed him from the throne, which Hyder himself ascended, while the officious menials hastily disrobed him of his tattered cloak, and flung on him a robe of regal splendour, and placed on his head a jewelled turban. The durbar rung with acclamations to Hyder Ali Khan Behauder, 'the good, the wise, the discoverer of hidden things, who cometh into the divan like the sun bursting from the clouds.'

The Nawaub at length signed for silence, and was promptly obeyed. He looked majestically around him, and at length bent his look upon Tippoo, whose downcast eyes, as he stood before the throne with his arms folded on his bosom, were strongly contrasted with the haughty air of authority which he had worn but a moment before. 'Thou hast been willing,' said the Nawaub, 'to barter the safety of thy capital for the possession of a white slave. But the beauty of a fair woman caused Solomon ben David to stumble in his path; how much more, then, should the son of Hyder Naig remain firm under temptation!—That men may see clearly, we must remove the light which dazzles them. Yonder Feringi woman must be placed at my disposal.'

'To hear is to obey,' replied Tippoo, while the deep gloom on his brow showed what his forced submission cost his proud and passionate spirit. In the hearts of the courtiers present reigned the most eager curiosity to see the *dénouement* of the scene, but not a trace of that wish was suffered to manifest itself on features accustomed to conceal all internal sensations. The feelings of the Begum were hidden under her veil; while, in spite of a bold attempt to conceal his alarm, the perspiration stood in large drops on the brow of Richard Middlemas. The next words of the Nawaub sounded like music in the ear of Hartley.

'Carry the Feringi woman to the tent of the Sirdar Belash Cassim' (the chief to whom Hartley had been committed). 'Let her be tended in all honour, and let him prepare to escort her, with the vakeel and the hakim Hartley, to the Payeen-Ghaut' (the country beneath the passes), 'answering for their safety with his head.' The litter was on its road to the sirdar's tents ere the Nawaub had done speaking. 'For thee, Tippoo,' continued Hyder, 'I am not come hither to deprive thee of authority, or to disgrace thee before the durbar. Such things as thou hast promised to this Feringi, proceed to make them good. The sun calleth not back the splendour which he lends to the moon; and the father obscures not the dignity which he has conferred on the son. What thou hast promised, that do thou proceed to make good.'

The ceremony of investiture was therefore recommenced, by which the Prince Tippoo conferred on Middlemas the important government of the city of Bangalore, probably with the internal resolution, that, since he was himself deprived of the fair European, he would take an early opportunity to remove the new killedar from his charge; while Middlemas accepted it with the throbbing hope that he might yet outwit both father and son. The deed of investiture was read aloud; the robe of honour was put

* [Well-known personages in Persian legendary lore.]
† Long whips.

upon the newly-created killedar, and a hundred voices, while they blessed the prudent choice of Tippoo, wished the governor good fortune, and victory over his enemies.

A horse was led forward, as the prince's gift. It was a fine steed of the Cuttyawar * breed, high-crested, with broad hind-quarters; he was of a white colour, but had the extremity of his tail and mane stained red. His saddle was red velvet, the bridle and crupper studded with gilded knobs. Two attendants on lesser horses led this prancing animal, one holding the lance, and the other the long spear of their patron. The horse was shown to the applauding courtiers, and withdrawn, in order to be led in state through the streets, while the new killedar should follow on the elephant, another present usual on such an occasion, which was next made to advance, that the world might admire the munificence of the prince.

The huge animal approached the platform, shaking his large wrinkled head, which he raised and sunk, as if impatient, and curling upwards his trunk from time to time, as if to show the gulf of his tongueless mouth. Gracefully retiring with the deepest obeisance, the killedar, well pleased the audience was finished, stood by the neck of the elephant, expecting the conductor of the animal would make him kneel down, that he might ascend the gilded howdah, which awaited his occupancy.

'Hold, Feringi,' said Hyder. 'Thou hast received all that was promised thee by the bounty of Tippoo. Accept now what is the fruit of the justice of Hyder.'

As he spoke, he signed with his finger, and the driver of the elephant instantly conveyed to the animal the pleasure of the Nawaub. Curling his long trunk around the neck of the ill-fated European, the monster suddenly threw the wretch prostrate before him, and, stamping his huge shapeless foot upon his breast, put an end at once to his life and to his crimes. The cry which the victim uttered was mimicked by the roar of the monster, and a sound like a hysterical laugh mingling with a scream, which rung from under the veil of the Begum. The elephant once more raised his trunk aloft, and gaped fearfully.

The courtiers preserved a profound silence; but Tippoo, upon whose muslin robe a part of the victim's blood had spirted, held it up to the Nawaub, exclaiming in a sorrowful, yet resentful tone,—'Father—father—was it thus my promise should have been kept?'

'Know, foolish boy,' said Hyder Ali, 'that the carrion which lies there was in a plot to deliver Bangalore to the Feringis and the Mahrattas. This Begum' (she started when she heard herself named) 'has given us warning of the plot, and has so merited her pardon for having originally concurred in it,—whether altogether out of love to us we will not too curiously inquire.—Hence with that lump of bloody clay, and let the hakim Hartley and the English vakeel come before me.'

They were brought forward, while some of the attendants flung sand upon the bloody traces, and others removed the crushed corpse.

'Hakim,' said Hyder, 'thou shalt return with the Feringi woman, and with gold to compensate her injuries, wherein the Begum, as is fitting, shall contribute a share. Do thou say to thy nation, Hyder Ali acts justly.' The Nawaub then inclined himself graciously to Hartley; and then turning to the vakeel, who appeared much discomposed, 'You have brought to me,' he said, 'words of peace, while your masters meditated a treacherous war. It is not upon such as you that my vengeance ought to alight. But tell the kafr' (or infidel) 'Paupiah and his unworthy master, that Hyder Ali sees too clearly to suffer to be lost by treason the advantages he has gained by war. Hitherto I have been in the Carnatic as a mild prince—in future I will be a destroying tempest! Hitherto I have made inroads as a compassionate and merciful conqueror—hereafter I will be the messenger whom Allah sends to the kingdoms which he visits in judgment!'

It is well known how dreadfully the Nawaub kept this promise, and how he and his son afterwards sunk before the discipline and bravery of the Europeans. The scene of just punishment which he so faithfully exhibited might be owing to his policy, his internal sense of right, and to the ostentation of displaying it before an Englishman of sense and intelligence, or to all of these motives mingled together—but in what proportions it is not for us to distinguish.

Hartley reached the coast in safety with his precious charge, rescued from a dreadful fate when she was almost beyond hope. But the nerves and constitution of Menie Gray had received a shock from which she long suffered severely, and never entirely recovered. The principal ladies of the settlement, moved by the singular tale of her distress, received her with the utmost kindness, and exercised towards her the most attentive and affectionate hospitality. The Nawaub, faithful to his promise, remitted to her a sum of no less than ten thousand gold mohurs, extorted, as was surmised, almost entirely from the hoards of the Begum Mootee Mahul, or Montreville. Of the fate of that adventuress nothing was known for certainty; but her forts and government were taken into Hyder's custody, and report said that, her power being abolished and her consequence lost, she died by poison, either taken by herself, or administered by some other person.

It might be thought a natural conclusion of the history of Menie Gray, that she should have married Hartley, to whom she stood much indebted for his heroic interference in her behalf. But her feelings were too much and too painfully agitated, her health too much shattered, to permit her to entertain thoughts of a matrimonial connection, even with the acquaintance of her youth and the champion of her freedom. Time might have removed these obstacles, but not two years after their adventures in Mysore, the gallant and disinterested Hartley fell a victim to his professional courage, in withstanding the progress of a contagious distemper, which he at length caught, and under which he sunk. He left a considerable part of the moderate fortune

* [Now called Kathiawar, a peninsula on the west side of India, north of Bombay, formerly famous for its breed of horses.]

which he had acquired to Menie Gray, who, of course, did not want many advantageous offers of a matrimonial character. But she respected the memory of Hartley too much, to subdue in behalf of another the reasons which induced her to refuse the hand which he had so well deserved —nay, it may be thought, had so fairly won.

She returned to Britain—what seldom occurs —unmarried though wealthy; and, settling in her native village, appeared to find her only pleasure in acts of benevolence which seemed to exceed the extent of her fortune, had not her very retired life been taken into consideration. Two or three persons with whom she was intimate, could trace in her character that generous and disinterested simplicity and affection, which were the ground-work of her character. To the world at large her habits seemed those of the ancient Roman matron, which is recorded on her tomb in these four words,—

DOMUM SERVAVIT—LANAM FECIT.

MR. CROFTANGRY'S CONCLUSION.

If you tell a good jest,
And please all the rest,
Comes Dingley, and asks you, 'What was it?'
And before she can know,
Away she will go
To seek an old rag in the closet.

DEAN SWIFT.

WHILE I was inditing the goodly matter which my readers have just perused, I might be said to go through a course of breaking-in to stand criticism, like a shooting-pony to stand fire. By some of those venial breaches of confidence, which always take place on the like occasions, my private flirtations with the Muse of Fiction became a matter whispered in Miss Fairscribe's circle, some ornaments of which were, I suppose, highly interested in the progress of the affair, while others 'really thought Mr. Chrystal Croftangry might have had more wit at his time of day.' Then came the sly intimation, the oblique remark, all that sugar-lipped raillery which is fitted for the situation of a man about to do a foolish thing, whether it be to publish or to marry, and that accompanied with the discreet nods and winks of such friends as are in the secret, and the obliging eagerness of others to know all about it.

At length the affair became so far public, that I was induced to face a tea-party with my manuscript in my pocket, looking as simple and modest as any gentleman of a certain age need to do upon such an occasion. When tea had been carried round, handkerchiefs and smelling-bottles prepared, I had the honour of reading the Surgeon's Daughter for the entertainment of the evening. It went off excellently; my friend Mr. Fairscribe, who had been seduced from his desk to join the literary circle, only fell asleep twice, and readily recovered his attention by help of his snuff-box. The ladies were politely attentive, and when the cat or the dog, or a next neighbour, tempted an individual to relax, Katie Fairscribe was on the alert, like an active whipper-in, with look, touch, or whisper, to recall them to a sense of what was going on. Whether Miss Katie was thus active merely to enforce the literary discipline of her coterie, or whether she was really interested by the beauties of the piece, and desirous to enforce them on others, I will not venture to ask, in case I should end in liking the girl—and she is really a pretty one—better than wisdom would warrant, either for my sake or hers.

I must own, my story here and there flagged a good deal; perhaps there were faults in my reading, for while I should have been attending to nothing but how to give the words effect as they existed, I was feeling the chilling consciousness that they might have been, and ought to have been, a great deal better. However, we kindled up at last, when we got to the East Indies, although, on the mention of tigers, an old lady, whose tongue had been impatient for an hour, broke in with, I wonder if Mr. Croftangry ever heard the story of Tiger Tullideph? and had nearly inserted the whole narrative as an episode in my tale. She was, however, brought to reason, and the subsequent mention of shawls, diamonds, turbans, and cummerbands, had their usual effect in awakening the imaginations of the fair auditors. At the extinction of the faithless lover in a way so horribly new, I had, as indeed I expected, the good fortune to excite that expression of painful interest which is produced by drawing in the breath through the compressed lips; nay, one miss of fourteen actually screamed.

At length my task was ended, and the fair circle rained odours upon me, as they pelt beaux at the Carnival with sugar-plums, and drench them with scented spices. There was 'Beautiful,' and 'Sweetly interesting,' and 'O Mr. Croftangry,' and 'How much obliged,' and 'What a delightful evening,' and 'O Miss Katie, how could you keep such a secret so long?' While the dear souls were thus smothering me with rose-leaves, the merciless old lady carried them all off by a disquisition upon shawls, which she had the impudence to sayarose entirely out of mystory. Miss Katie endeavoured to stop the flow of her eloquence in vain; she threw all other topics out of the field, and from the genuine Indian, she made a digression to the imitation shawls now made at Paisley, out of real Thibet wool, not to be known from the actual country shawl, except by some inimitable cross-stitch in the border. 'It is well,' said the old lady, wrapping herself up in a rich Kashmere, 'that there is some way of knowing a thing that cost fifty guineas from an article that is sold for five; but I venture to say there is not one out of ten thousand that would understand the difference.'

The politeness of some of the fair ladies would now have brought back the conversation to the forgotten subject of our meeting. 'How could you Mr. Croftangry, collect all these hard words about India?—you were never there?'—'No, madam, I have not had that advantage; but, like the imitative operatives of Paisley, I have composed my shawl by incorporating into the woof a little Thibet wool, which my excellent friend and neighbour, Colonel Mackerris, one of the best fellows who ever trod a Highland moor, or dived into an Indian jungle, had the goodness to supply me with.'

My rehearsal, however, though not absolutely and altogether to my taste, has prepared me in some measure for the less tempered and guarded sentence of the world. So a man must learn to encounter a foil before he confronts a sword; and, to take up my original simile, a horse must be accustomed to a feu de joie, *before you can ride him against a volley of balls. Well, Corporal Nym's* philosophy is not the worst that has been preached—'Things must be as they may.' If my lucubrations give pleasure, I may again require the attention of the courteous reader; if not, here end the*

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

* [Falstaff's follower in *Merry Wives of Windsor*.]

TALES OF MY LANDLORD.

FOURTH SERIES.

CASTLE DANGEROUS.

CASTLE DANGEROUS.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care:

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant echoing glens reply.

ROBERT BURNS.

INTRODUCTION, 1832.

[The following introduction to Castle Dangerous was forwarded by Sir Walter Scott from Naples in February 1832, together with some corrections of the text, and notes on localities mentioned in the Novel.
The materials for the Introduction must have been collected before he left Scotland in September 1831; but in the hurry of preparing for his voyage, he had not been able to arrange them so as to accompany the first edition of this Romance.
A few notes, supplied by the Editor,* are placed within brackets.]

THE incidents on which the ensuing Novel mainly turns are derived from the ancient metrical Chronicle of The Bruce, *by Archdeacon Barbour, and from the* History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus, *by David Hume of Godscroft; and are sustained by the immemorial tradition of the western parts of Scotland. They are so much in consonance with the spirit and manners of the troubled age to which they are referred, that I can see no reason for doubting their being founded on fact; the names, indeed, of numberless localities in the vicinity of Douglas Castle, appear to attest, beyond suspicion, many even of the smallest circumstances embraced in the story of Godscroft.*

Among all the associates of Robert the Bruce, in his great enterprise of rescuing Scotland from the power of Edward, the first place is universally conceded to James, the eighth Lord Douglas, to this day venerated by his countrymen as the 'Good Sir James:'

The Gud Schyr James of Douglas,
That in his time sa worthy was,
That off his price and his bounté,
In far landis renownyt was he.

BARBOUR.

The Good Sir James, the dreadful blacke Douglas,
That in his dayes so wise and worthie was,
Wha here, and on the infidels of Spain,
Such honour, praise, and triumphs did obtain.

GORDON.†

From the time when the King of England refused to reinstate him on his return from France, where he had received the education of chivalry, in the extensive possessions of his family —which had been held forfeited by the exertions of his father, William the Hardy—the young knight of Douglas appears to have embraced the cause of Bruce with enthusiastic ardour, and to have adhered to the fortunes of his sovereign with unwearied fidelity and devotion. 'The Douglasse,' says Hollinshed, 'was right joyfully received of King Robert, in whose service he faithfully continued, both in peace and war, to his life's end. Though the surname and familie of the Douglasses was in some estimation of nobilitie before those daies, yet the rising thereof to honour chanced through this James Douglasse; for, by meanes of his advancement, others of that lineage tooke occasion, by their singular manhood and noble prowess, shewed at sundrie times in defence of the realme, to grow to such height in authoritie and estimation, that their mightie puissance in mainrent,‡ lands, and great possessions, at length was (through suspicion conceived by the kings that succeeded) the cause in part of their ruinous decay.'

In every narrative of the Scottish war of independence, a considerable space is devoted to those years of perilous adventure and suffering, which were spent by the illustrious friend of Bruce in harassing the English detachments successively occupying his paternal territory, and in repeated and successful attempts to wrest the formidable fortress of Douglas Castle itself from their possession. In the English, as well as Scotch Chronicles, and in Rymer's Fœdera, *occur*

* [J. G. Lockhart.]

† [Patrick Gordon, who published, in 1615, in heroic verse, the first book of the *History of Prince Robert, surnamed the Bruce.*]

‡ Vassalage.

*frequent notices of the different officers entrusted by Edward with the keeping of this renowned stronghold; especially Sir Robert de Clifford, ancestor of the heroic race of the Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland; his lieutenant, Sir Richard de Thurlewalle (written sometimes Thurswall) of Thirwall Castle, on the Tippal, in Northumberland; and Sir John de Walton, the romantic story of whose love-pledge, to hold the Castle of Douglas for a year and day, or surrender all hope of obtaining his mistress's favour, with the tragic consequences, softened in the Novel, is given at length in Godscroft, and has often been pointed out as one of the affecting passages in the chronicles of chivalry.**

The Author, before he had made much progress in this, probably the last of his Novels, undertook a journey to Douglasdale, for the purpose of examining the remains of the famous castle, the Kirk of Saint Bride of Douglas, the patron saint of that great family, and the various localities alluded to by Godscroft in his account of the early adventures of Good Sir James; but though he was fortunate enough to find a zealous and well-informed cicerone *in Mr. Thomas Haddow, and had every assistance from the kindness of Mr. Alexander Finlay, the resident chamberlain of his friend, Lord Douglas, the state of his health at the time was so feeble, that he found himself incapable of pursuing his researches, as in better days he would have delighted to do, and was obliged to be contented with such a cursory view of scenes, in themselves most interesting, as could be snatched in a single morning, when any bodily exertion was painful. Mr. Haddow was attentive enough to forward subsequently some notes on the points which the Author had seemed desirous of investigating; but these did not reach him until, being obliged to prepare matters for a foreign excursion in quest of health and strength, he had been compelled to bring his work, such as it is, to a conclusion.*

The remains of the old Castle of Douglas are inconsiderable. They consist, indeed, of but one ruined tower, standing at a short distance from the modern mansion, which itself is only a fragment of the design on which the Duke of Douglas meant to reconstruct the edifice, after its last accidental destruction by fire.† His Grace had kept in view the ancient prophecy, that as often as Douglas Castle might be destroyed, it should rise again in enlarged dimensions and improved splendour, and projected a pile of building, which, if it had been completed, would have much exceeded any nobleman's residence then existing in Scotland —as, indeed, what has been finished, amounting to about one-eighth part of the plan, is sufficiently extensive for the accommodation of a large establishment, and contains some apartments, the dimensions of which are magnificent. The situation is commanding; and though the Duke's successors have allowed the mansion to continue as he left it, great expense has been lavished on the environs, which now present a vast sweep of richly undulated woodland, stretching to the borders of the Cairntable mountains, repeatedly mentioned as the favourite retreat of the great ancestor of the family in the days of his hardship and persecution. There remains at the head of the adjoining bourg, *the choir of the ancient Church of Saint Bride, having beneath it the vault which was used till lately as the burial-place of this princely race, and only abandoned when their stone and leaden coffins had accumulated, in the course of five or six hundred years, in such a way that it could accommodate no more. Here a silver case, containing the dust of what was once the brave heart of Good Sir James, is still pointed out; and in the dilapidated choir above appears, though in a sorely ruinous state, the once magnificent tomb of the warrior himself. After detailing the well-known circumstances of Sir James's death in Spain, 20th August 1330, where he fell, assisting the King of Arragon in an expedition against the Moors, when on his way from Scotland to Jerusalem, to which he was conveying the heart of Bruce—the old poet Barbour tell us that—*

Quhen his men lang had mad murnyn,
Thai debowalyt him, and syne
Gert scher him swa, that mycht be tane
The flesch all haly frae the bane,
And the carioune thar in haly place
Erdyt, with rycht gret worschip, was.

The banys haue thai with them tane,
And syne ar to thair schippis gane;
Syne towart Scotland held thair way,
And thar ar cummyn in full gret hy.
And the banys honorabilly

In till the Kyrk of Douglas war
Erdyt, with dule and mekill car.
Schyr Archebald his sone gert syn
Off alabastre, bath fair and fyne
Ordane a tumbe sa richly
As it behowyt to swa worthy.

The monument is supposed to have been wantonly mutilated and defaced by a detachment of Cromwell's troops, who, as was their custom, converted the Kirk of Saint Bride of Douglas into a stable for their horses. Enough, however, remains to identify the resting-place of the great Sir James. The effigy, of dark stone, is cross-legged, marking his character as one who had died after performing the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and in actual conflict with the infidels of Spain; and the introduction of the HEART, *adopted as an addition to the old arms of Douglas, in consequence of the knight's fulfilment of Bruce's dying injunction, appears, when taken in connection with the posture of the figure, to set the question at rest. The monument, in its original state, must have been not inferior in any respect to the best of the same period in Westminster Abbey; and the curious reader is referred for further particulars of it to* The Sepulchral Antiquities of Great Britain, *by Edward Blore, F.S.A. London, 4to, 1826; where may also be found interesting details of some of the other tombs and effigies in the cemetery of the first House of Douglas.*

As considerable liberties have been taken with the historical incidents on which this novel is founded, it is due to the reader to place before him such extracts from Godscroft and Barbour as may enable him to correct any mis-impression. The passages introduced in the Appendix, from the ancient poem of The Bruce, *will moreover*

* [The reader will find both this story and that of Robert of Paris in Sir W. Scott's *Essay on Chivalry*, published (1818) in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.]

† Note A. Douglas Castle.

gratify those who have not in their possession a copy of the text of Barbour, as given in the valuable quarto edition of my learned friend Doctor Jamieson, as furnishing on the whole a favourable specimen of the style and manner of a venerable classic, who wrote when Scotland was still full of the fame and glory of her liberators from the yoke of Plantagenet, and especially of Sir James Douglas, 'of whom,' says Godscroft, 'we will not omit here (to shut up all) the judgment of those times concerning him, in a rude verse, indeed, yet such as beareth witness of his true magnanimity and invincible mind in either fortune:—

Good Sir James Douglas (who wise, and wight, and worthy was),
Was never over-glad in no winning, nor yet over-sad for no tineing;
Good fortune and evil chance he weighed both in one balance.

W. S.

TOWER AT THE OLD CASTLE OF DOUGLAS.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

EXTRACTS FROM 'THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSES OF DOUGLAS AND ANGUS. BY MASTER DAVID HUME OF GODSCROFT.' *Folio Edit.*

* * * *And here indeed the course of the King's misfortunes begins to make some halt and stay by thus much prosperous successe in his own person; but more in the person of Sir James, by the reconquests of his owne castles and countries. From hence he went into Douglasdale, where, by the means of his father's old servant, Thomas Dickson, he took in the Castle of Douglas, and not being able to keep it, he caused burn it, contenting himself with this, that his enemies had one strength fewer in that country than before. The manner of his taking of it is said to have beene thus:—Sir James, taking only with him two of his servants, went to Thomas Dickson, of whom he was received with tears, after he had revealed himself to him, for the good old man knew him not at first, being in mean and homely apparel. There he kept him secretly in a quiet chamber, and brought unto him such as had been trusty servants to his father, not all at once, but apart by one and one, for fear of discoverie. Their advice was, that on Palm Sunday, when the English would come forth to the church, and his partners were conveened, that then he should give the word, and cry the Douglas slogan, and presently set upon them that should happen to be there, who being despatched, the Castle might be taken easily. This being concluded, and they come, so soon as the English were entered into the church with palms in their hands (according to the costume of that day), little suspecting or fearing any such thing, Sir James, according to their appointment, cryed too soon (a Douglas, a Douglas!) which being heard in the church (this was Saint Bride's church of Douglas), Thomas Dickson, supposing he had beene hard at hand, drew out his sword, and ran upon them, having none to second him but another man, so that, oppressed by the number of his enemies, he was beaten downe and slaine. In the meantime, Sir James being come, the English that were in the chancel kept off the Scots, and having the advantage of the strait and narrow entrie, defended themselves manfully. But Sir James encouraging his men, not so much by words as by deeds and good example, and having slain the boldest resisters, prevailed at last, and, entering the place, slew some twenty-six of their number, and took the rest, about ten or twelve persons, intending by them to get the Castle upon composition, or to enter with them when the gates should be opened to let them in: but it needed not, for they of the Castle were so secure, that there was none left to keep it save the porter and the cooke, who, knowing nothing of what had hapned at the church, which stood a large quarter of a mile from thence, had left the gate wide open, the porter standing without, and the cooke dressing the dinner within. They entered without resistance, and meat being ready, and the cloth laid, they shut the gates, and tooke their refection at good leasure.*

Now that he had gotten the Castle into his hands, considering with himselfe (as he was a man no lesse advised than valiant) that it was hard for him to keep it, the English being as yet the stronger in that countrey, who, if they should besiege him, he knewe of no reliefe, he thought better to carry away such things as be most easily transported, gold, silver, and apparell, with ammunition and armour, whereof he had greatest use and need, and to destroy the rest of the provision, together with the Castle itselfe, then to diminish the number of his followers for a garrison there where it could do no good. And so he caused carrie the meale and malt, and other cornes and graine, into the cellar, and laid altogether in one heape: then he took the prisoners and slew them, to revenge the death of his trustie and valiant servant, Thomas Dickson, mingling the victuals with their bloud, and burying their carkasses in the heap of corne: after that he struck out the heads of the barrells and puncheons, and let the drink runn through all; and then he cast the carkasses of dead horses and other carrion amongst it, throwing the salt above all, so to make all together unuseful to the enemie; and this cellar is called yet the Douglas Lairder. Last of all, he set the house on fire, and burnt all the timber, and what else the fire could overcome, leaving nothing but the scorched walls behind him. And this seemes to be the first taking of the Castle of Douglas, for it is supposed that he took it twice. For this service, and others done to Lord William, his father, Sir James gave unto Thomas Dickson the lands of Hisleside, which hath beene given him before the Castle was taken, as an encouragement to whet him on, and not after, for he was slain in the church; which was both liberally and wisely done of him, thus to hearten and draw men to his service, by such a noble beginning. The Castle being burnt, Sir James retired, and, parting his men into divers companies, so as they might be most secret, he caused cure such as were wounded in the fight, and he himselfe kept as close as he could, waiting ever for an occasion to enterprise something against the enemie. So soone as he was gone, the Lord Clifford being advertised of what had happened, came himselfe in person to Douglas, and caused re-edifie and repair the Castle in a very short time, unto which he also added a Tower, which is yet called Harries Tower from him, and so returned into England, leaving one Thurswall to be Captain thereof.—Pp. 26–28.

* * * * * * * *

He (Sir James Douglas) getting him again into Douglasdale, did use this stratagem against Thurswall, Captain of the Castle, under the said Lord Clifford. He caused some of his folk drive away the cattle that fed near unto the Castle, and when the Captain of the garrison followed to rescue, gave orders to his men to leave them and to flee away. Thus he did often to make the Captain slight such frays, and to make him secure, that he might not suspect any further end to be on it; which when he had wrought sufficiently (as he thought), he laid some men in ambuscado, and sent others away to drive such beasts as they should find in the view of the Castle, as if they had been thieves and robbers, as they had done often before. The Captain hearing of it, and supposing there was no greater danger now than had been before, issued forth of the Castle, and followed after them with such haste, that his men (running who should be first) were disordered and out of their ranks. The drivers also fled as fast as they could, till they had drawn the Captain a little way beyond the place of ambuscado, which when they perceived, rising quickly out of their covert, they set fiercely upon him and his company, and so slew himself and chased his men back to the Castle, some of whom were overtaken and slain, others got into the Castle, and so were saved. Sir James, not being able to force the house, took what booty he could get without in the fields, and so departed. By this means, and such other exploits, he so affrighted the enemy, that it was counted a matter of such great jeopardy to keep this Castle, that it began to be called the adventurous (or hazardous) Castle of Douglas; Whereupon Sir John

Walton being in suit of an English lady, she wrote to him that when he had kept the adventurous Castle of Douglas seven years, then he might think himself worthy to be a suitor to her. Upon this occasion Walton took upon him the keeping of it, and succeeded to Thurswall; but he ran the same fortune with the rest that were before him.

For, Sir James having first dressed an ambuscado near unto the place, he made fourteen of his men take so many sacks, and fill them with grass, as though it had been corn, which they carried in the way toward Lanark, the chief market town in that county: so hoping to draw forth the Captain by that bait, and either to take him or the Castle, or both.

Neither was this expectation frustrate, for the Captain did bite, and came forth to have taken this victual (as he supposed). But ere he could reach these carriers, Sir James, with his company, had gotten between the Castle and him; and these disguised carriers, seeing the Captain following after them, did quickly cast off their upper garments, wherein they had masked themselves, and throwing off their sacks, mounted themselves on horseback, and met the Captain with a sharp encounter, he being so much the more amazed that it was unlooked for: wherefore, when he saw these carriers metamorphosed into warriors, and ready to assault him, fearing (that which was) that there was some train laid for them, he turned about to have retired into the Castle; but there also he met with his enemies; between which two companies he and his followers were slain, so that none escaped; the Captain afterwards being searched, they found (as it is reported) his mistress's letters about him. Then he went and took in the Castle, but it is uncertain (say our writers) whether by force or composition; but it seems that the Constable, and those that were within, have yielded it up without force; in regard that he used them so gently, which he would not have done if he had taken it at utterance. For he sent them all safe home to the Lord Clifford, and gave them also provision and money for their entertainment by the way. The Castle which he had burnt only before, now he razeth, and cast down the walls thereof to the ground. By these and the like proceedings, within a short while he freed Douglasdale, Attrict Forest, and Jedward Forest, of the English garrisons and subjection.*—Ibid. p. 29.

* [Douglas Dale, Ettrick Forest, and Jedwood or Jeddart Forest.]

No. II.

Extracts from THE BRUCE.—'Liber compositus per Magistrum Johannem Barber, Archidiaconum Abyrdonensem, de gestis, bellis, et virtutibus, Domini Roberti Brwyss, Regis Scocie illustrissimi, et de conquestu regni Scocie per eundem, et de Domino Jacobo de Douglas.'—Edited by John Jamieson, D.D., F.R.S.E., etc., etc., Edinburgh, 1820.

Now takis James his waige
Towart Dowglas, his heretage,
With twa yemen, for owtyn ma;
That wes a symple stuff to ta,
A land or a castell to wyn.
The quhethir he yarnyt to begyn
Till bring purposs till ending;
For gud help is in gud begynnyng,
For gud begynnyng, and hardy,
Gyff it be folowit wittily,
May ger oftsyss unlikly thing
Cum to full conabill ending.
Swa did it here: but he wes wyss
And saw he mycht, on nakyn wyss,
Werray his fa with evyn mycht;
Tharfor he thocht to wyrk with slycht.
And in Dowglas daile, his countré,
Upon an evynnyng entryt he.
And than a man wonnyt tharby,
That was off freyndis weill mychty,
And ryche of moble, and off cateill;
And had bene till his fadyr leyll;
And till him selff, in his yowthed,
He haid done mony a thankfull deid.
Thom Dicson wes his name perfay.
Till him he send; and gan him pray,
That he wald cum all anerly
For to spek with him priuely.
And he but daunger till him gais:
Bot fra he tauld him quhat he wais,
He gret for joy, and for pité;
And him rycht till his houss had he;
Quhar in a chambre priuely
He held him, and his cumpany,
That nane had off him persawing.
Off mete, and drynk, and othyr thing,
That mycht thaim eyss, thai had plenté.
Sa wrocht he thorow sutelté,
That all the lele men off that land
That with his fadyr war duelland,
This gud man gert cum, ane and ane,
And mak him manrent euir ilkane;
And he him selff fyrst homage maid.
Dowglas in part gret glaidschip haid,
That the gud men off his cuntré
Wald swagate till him bundyn be.
He speryt the conwyne off the land,
And quha the castell had in hand.
And thai him tauld all halily;
And syne amang them priuely
Thai ordanyt, that he still suld be
In hiddillis, and in priweté,
Till Palme Sonday, that wes ner hand,
The third day eftyr folowand.
For than the folk off that countré
Assemblyt at the kyrk waid be;
And thai, that in the castell wer,
Wald als be thar, thar palmys to ber,
As folk that had na dreid off ill;
For thai thoucht all wes at thair will.
Than suld he cum with his twa men.
Bot, for that men suld nocht him ken,
He suld ane mantill haiff auld and bar,
And a flaill, as he a thresscher war.
Undyr the mantill nocht for thi
He suld be armyt priuely.
And quhen the men off his countré,
That suld all boune befor him be,
His ensenye mycht her hym cry,
Then suld thai, full enforcely,
Rycht ymyddys the kyrk assaill
The Ingliss men with hard bataill,
Swa that nane mycht eschap them fra;
For thar throwch trowyt thai to ta
The castell, that besid was ner.
And quhen this, that I tell you her,
Wes diuisyt, and undertane,
Ilkane till his howss hame is gane;
And held this spek in priueté,
Till the day off thar assembly.

The folk upon the Sonounday
Held to Saynct Bridis kyrk thair way;
And tha that in the castell war
Ischyt owt, bath les and mar,
And went thair palmys for to ber;
Owtane a cuk and a porter.
James off Dowglas off thair cummyng,
And quhat thai war, had witting;
And sped him till the kyrk in hy.
Bot or he come, too hastily
Ane off his criyt, 'Dowglas! Dowglas!
Thomas Dicson, that nerrest was
Till thaim that war off the castell,
That war all innouth the chancell,
Quhen he 'Dowglas!' swa hey herd cry,
Drew owt his swerd; and fellely
Ruschyt amang thaim to and fra.
Bot ane or twa, for owtyn ma,
Than in hy war left lyand
Quhill Dowglas come rycht at hand.
And then enforcyt on thaim the cry.
Bot thai the chansell sturdely

Held, and thaim defendyt wele,
Till off thair men war slayne sumdell
Bot the Dowglace sa weill him bar,
That all the men that with him war,
Had comfort off his wele doyng;
And he him sparyt nakyn thing,
Bot provyt swa his force in fycht,
That throw his worschip and his mycht,
His men sa keynly helpyt than,
That thai the chansell on thaim wan.
Than dang thai on swa hardyly,
That in schort tyme men mycht se ly
The twa part dede, or then deand.
The lave war sesyt sone in hand,
Swa that off thretty levyt nane,
That thai ne war slayne ilkan, or tane.

James off Dowglas, quhen this wes done,
The presoneris has he tane alsone;
And, with thaim off his cumpany,
Towart the castell went in hy,
Or noyiss, or cry, suld ryss.
And for he wald thaim sone suppriss,
That levyt in the castell war,
That war but twa for owtyn mar,
Fyve men or sex befor send he,
That fand all opyn the entré;
And entryt, and the porter tuk
Rycht at the yate, and syne the cuk.
With that Dowglas come to the yat,
And entryt in for owtyn debate;
And fand the mete all ready grathit,
With burdys set, and clathis layit.
The yhaitis then he gert sper,
And sat, and eyt all at layser.
Syne all the gudis turssyt thai
That thaim thocht thai mycht haiff away;
And namly wapnys, and armyng
Siluer, and tresour, and clethyng.
Vyctallis, that mycht nocht tursyt be,
On this maner destroyit he.
All the victalis, owtane salt,
Als quheyt, and flour, and meill, and malt,
In the wyne sellar gert he bring;
And samyn on the flur all flyng.
And the presoneris that he had tane
Rycht thar in gert he heid ilkane;
Syne off the townnys the hedis outstrak:
A foule mellé thar gane he mak.
For meile, and malt, and bluid, and wyne,
Ren all to gidder in a meilyne,
That was unsemly for to se.
Tharfor the men of that countré,
For swa sele thar mellyt wer,
Callit it the 'Douglas Lardner.'
Syne tuk he salt, as Ic hard tell,
And ded horss, and sordid the well;
And brynt all, owtakyn stane;
And is forth, with his menye, gayne
Till his resett; for him thoucht weill,
Giff he had haldyn the castell,
It had bene assegyt raith;
And that him thoucht to mekill waith.
For he ne had hop of reskewyng.
And it is to peralous thing
In castell assegyt to be,
Quhar want is off thir thingis thre;
Victaill, or men with their armyng,
Or than gud hop off rescuyng.
And for he dred thir thingis suld faile,
He chesyt furthwart to trawaill,
Quhar he mycht at his larges be;
And swa dryve furth his destané.

On this wise wes the castell tan,
And slayne that war tharin ilkan.
The Dowglas syne all his menye
Gert in ser placis depertyt be;
For men suld wyt quhar thai war,
That yeid depertyt her and thar
Thaim that war woundyt gert he ly
In till hiddillis, all priuely;
And gert gud leechis till thaim bring
Quhill that thai war in till heling.

And him self, with a few menye,
Quhile ane, quhile twa, and quhile thre,
And umquhill all him allane,
In hiddillis throw the land is gane.
Sa dred he Inglis men his mycht,
That he durst nocht wele cum in sycht.
For thai war that tyme all weldand
As maist lordis, our all the land.

Bot tythandis, that scalis sone,
Off this deid that Dowglas has done,
Come to the Cliffurd his ere, in hy,
That for his tynsaill wes sary;
And menyt his men that thai had slayne,
And syne has to purpos tane,
To big the castell up agayne.
Thar for, as man of mekill mayne,
He assemblit gret cumpany,
And till Dowglas he went in hy.
And biggyt up the castell swyth;
And maid it rycht stalwart and styth
And put tharin victallis and men.
Ane of the Thyrwallys then
He left behind him Capitane,
And syne till Ingland went agayne.
Book IV. v. 255–460.

Bot yeit than James of Dowglas
In Dowglas Daile travailland was;
Or ellys weill ner hand tharby,
In hyddillys sumdeill priuely.
For he wald se his gouernyng,
That had the castell in keeping:
And gert mak mony juperty,
To se quhethyr he wald ische blythly.
And quhen he persauyt that he
Wald blythly ische with his menye,
He maid a gadring priuely
Off thaim that war on his party;
That war sa fele, that thai durst fycht
With Thyrwall, and all the mycht
Off thaim that in the castell war.
He schupe him in the nycht to far
To Sandylandis: and thar ner by
He him enbuschyt priuely,
And send a few a trane to ma;
That sone in the mornyng gan ga,
And tak catell, that wes the castell by,
And syne withdrew them hastely
Towart thaim that enbuschit war.
Than Thyrwall for owtyn mar,
Gert arme his men, forowtyn baid;
And ischyt with all the men he haid,
And folowyt fast eftir the cry.
He wes armyt at poynt clenly,
Owtane [that] his hede wes bar.
Than, with the men that with him war,
The catell folowit he gud speid,
Rycht as a man that had na dreid,
Till that he gat off thaim a sycht.
Than prekyt thai with all thar mycht,
Folowand thaim owt off aray;
And thai sped thaim fleand, quhill thai
Fer by thair buschement war past:
And Thyrwall ay chassyt fast.
And than thai that enbuschyt war
Ischyt till him, bath les and mar,
And rayssyt sudanly the cry.
And thai that saw sa sudanly
That folk cam egyrly prikand
Rycht betuix thaim and thair warand,
Thai war in to full gret effray.
And, for thai war out of aray,
Sum of thaim fled, and some abad.
And Dowglas, that thar with him had
A gret mengye, full egrely
Assaylyt, and scalyt thaim hastyly:
And in schort tyme ourraid thaim swa,
That weile nane eschapyt thaim fra.
Thyrwall, that wes thair capitane,
Wes thar in the bargane slane:
And off his men the mast party,
The lave fled full effraytly.
Book V. v. 7–62.

CASTLE DANGEROUS.

(November 1831.)

CHAPTER I.

Hosts have been known at that dread sound to yield,
And, Douglas dead, his name hath won the field.
John Home.

It was at the close of an early spring day, when nature, in a cold province of Scotland, was reviving from her winter's sleep, and the air at least, though not the vegetation, gave promise of an abatement of the rigour of the season, that two travellers, whose appearance at that early period sufficiently announced their wandering character, which, in general, secured a free passage even through a dangerous country, were seen coming from the south-westward, within a few miles of the Castle of Douglas, and seemed to be holding their course in the direction of the river of that name, whose dale afforded a species of approach to that memorable feudal fortress. The stream, small in comparison to the extent of its fame, served as a kind of drain to the country in its neighbourhood, and at the same time afforded the means of a rough road to the castle and village. The high lords to whom the castle had for ages belonged, might, had they chosen, have made this access a great deal smoother and more convenient; but there had been as yet little or no exercise for those geniuses, who have taught all the world that it is better to take the more circuitous road round the base of a hill, than the direct course of ascending it on the one side, and descending it directly on the other, without yielding a single step to render the passage more easy to the traveller; still less were those mysteries dreamed of, which MacAdam has of late days expounded.* But, indeed, to what purpose should the ancient Douglasses have employed his principles, even if they had known them in ever so much perfection? Wheel-carriages, except of the most clumsy description, and for the most simple operations of agriculture, were totally unknown. Even the most delicate female had no resource save a horse, or, in case of sore infirmity, a litter. The men used their own sturdy limbs, or hardy horses, to transport themselves from place to place; and travellers, females in particular, experienced no small inconvenience from the rugged nature of the country. A swollen torrent sometimes crossed their path, and compelled them to wait until the waters had abated their frenzy. The bank of a small river was occasionally torn away by the effects of a thunderstorm, a recent inundation, or the like convulsions of nature; and the wayfarer relied upon his knowledge of the district, or obtained the best local information in his power, how to direct his path so as to surmount such untoward obstacles.

The Douglas issues from an amphitheatre of mountains which bounds the valley to the south-west, from whose contributions, and the aid of sudden storms, it receives its scanty supplies. The general aspect of the country is that of the pastoral hills of the south of Scotland, forming, as is usual, bleak and wild farms, many of which had, at no great length of time from the date of the story, been covered with trees; as some of them still attest by bearing the name of *shaw*, that is, wild natural wood. The neighbourhood of the Douglas water itself was flat land, capable of bearing strong crops of oats and rye, supplying the inhabitants with what they required of these productions. At no great distance from the edge of the river, a few special spots excepted, the soil capable of agriculture was more and more mixed with the pastoral and woodland country, till both terminated in desolate and partly inaccessible moorlands.

Above all, it was war-time, and of necessity all circumstances of mere convenience were obliged to give way to a paramount sense of danger; the inhabitants, therefore, instead of trying to amend the paths which connected them with other districts, were thankful that the natural difficulties which surrounded them rendered it unnecessary to break up or to fortify the access from more open countries. Their wants, with a very few exceptions, were completely supplied, as we have already said, by the rude and scanty produce of their own mountains and *holms*,† the last of which served for the exercise of their limited agriculture, while the better part of the mountains and forest glens produced pasture for

* [John Loudon MacAdam, a great improver of public roads, was awarded by Parliament the sum of £10,000, and made surveyor of the Metropolitan roads—Died 1836.]

† *Holms*, or flat plains, by the sides of the brooks and rivers, termed in the south *ings*.

their herds and flocks. The recesses of the unexplored depths of these sylvan retreats being seldom disturbed, especially since the lords of the district had laid aside, during this time of strife, their constant occupation of hunting, the various kinds of game had increased of late very considerably; so that not only in crossing the rougher parts of the hilly and desolate country we are describing, different varieties of deer were occasionally seen, but even the wild cattle peculiar to Scotland sometimes showed themselves, and other animals, which indicated the irregular and disordered state of the period. The wild-cat was frequently surprised in the dark ravines or the swampy thickets; and the wolf, already a stranger to the more populous districts of the Lothians, here maintained his ground against the encroachments of man, and was still himself a terror to those by whom he was finally to be extirpated. In winter especially, and winter was hardly yet past, these savage animals were wont to be driven to extremity for lack of food, and used to frequent, in dangerous numbers, the battlefield, the deserted churchyard—nay, sometimes the abodes of living men, there to watch for children, their defenceless prey, with as much familiarity as the fox now-a-days will venture to prowl near the mistress's * poultry-yard.

From what we have said, our readers, if they have made—as who in these days has not?—the Scottish tour, will be able to form a tolerably just idea of the wilder and upper part of Douglas Dale, during the earlier period of the fourteenth century. The setting sun cast his gleams along a moorland country, which to the westward broke into larger swells, terminating in the mountains called the Larger and Lesser Cairntable. The first of these is, as it were, the father of the hills in the neighbourhood, the source of a hundred streams, and by far the largest of the ridge, still holding in his dark bosom, and in the ravines with which his sides are ploughed, considerable remnants of those ancient forests with which all the high grounds of that quarter were once covered, and particularly the hills, in which the rivers—both those which run to the east, and those which seek the west to discharge themselves into the Solway—hide, like so many hermits, their original and scanty sources.

The landscape was still illuminated by the reflection of the evening sun, sometimes thrown back from pool or stream; sometimes resting on grey rocks, huge cumberers of the soil, which labour and agriculture have since removed, and sometimes contenting itself with gilding the banks of the streams, tinged alternately grey, green, or ruddy, as the ground itself consisted of rock, or grassy turf, or bare earthen mound, or looked at a distance like a rampart of dark red porphyry. Occasionally, too, the eye rested on the steep brown extent of moorland, as the sunbeam glanced back from the little tarn or mountain pool, whose lustre, like that of the eye in the human countenance, gives a life and vivacity to every feature around.

The elder and stouter of the two travellers whom we have mentioned, was a person well, and even showily dressed, according to the finery of the times, and bore at his back, as wandering minstrels were wont, a case, containing a small harp, rote, or viol, or some such species of musical instrument for accompanying the voice. The leathern case announced so much, although it proclaimed not the exact nature of the instrument. The colour of the traveller's doublet was blue, and that of his hose violet, with slashes which showed a lining of the same colour with the jerkin. A mantle ought, according to ordinary custom, to have covered this dress; but the heat of the sun, though the season was so early, had induced the wearer to fold up his cloak in small compass, and form it into a bundle, attached to the shoulders like the military greatcoat of the infantry soldier of the present day. The neatness with which it was made up argued the precision of a practised traveller, who had been long accustomed to every resource which change of weather required. A great profusion of narrow ribands or points, constituting the loops with which our ancestors connected their doublet and hose, formed a kind of cordon, composed of knots of blue or violet, which surrounded the traveller's person, and thus assimilated in colour with the two garments which it was the office of these strings to combine. The bonnet usually worn with this showy dress was of that kind with which Henry the Eighth, and his son, Edward the Sixth, are usually represented. It was more fitted, from the gay stuff of which it was composed, to appear in a public place, than to encounter a storm of rain. It was parti-coloured, being made of different stripes of blue and violet; and the wearer arrogated a certain degree of gentility to himself, by wearing a plume of considerable dimensions of the same favourite colours. The features over which this feather drooped were in no degree remarkable for peculiarity of expression. Yet in so desolate a country as the west of Scotland, it would not have been easy to pass the man without more minute attention than he would have met with where there was more in the character of the scenery to arrest the gaze of the passengers.

A quick eye, a sociable look, seeming to say, 'Ay, look at me, I am a man worth noticing and not unworthy your attention,' carried with it, nevertheless, an interpretation which might be thought favourable or otherwise, according to the character of the person whom the traveller met. A knight or soldier would merely have thought that he had met a merry fellow, who could sing a wild song, or tell a wild tale, and help to empty a flagon, with all the accomplishments necessary for a boon companion at an hostelry, except perhaps an alacrity at defraying his share of the reckoning. A churchman, on the other hand, might have thought he of the blue and violet was of too loose habits, and accustomed too little to limit himself within the boundaries of beseeming mirth, to be fit society for one of his sacred calling. Yet the Man of Song had a certain steadiness of countenance, which seemed fitted to hold place in scenes of serious business as well as of gaiety. A wayfaring passenger of wealth (not at that time a numerous class) might have feared in him a

* The good dame, or wife of a respectable farmer, is almost universally thus designated in Scotland.

professional robber, or one whom opportunity was very likely to convert into such; a female might have been apprehensive of uncivil treatment; and a youth, or timid person, might have thought of murder, or such direful doings. Unless privately armed, however, the minstrel was ill-accoutred for any dangerous occupation. His only visible weapon was a small crooked sword, like what we now call a hanger; and the state of the times would have justified any man, however peaceful his intentions, in being so far armed against the perils of the road.

If a glance at this man had in any respect prejudiced him in the opinion of those whom he met on his journey, a look at his companion would, so far as his character could be guessed at—for he was closely muffled up—have passed for an apology and warrant for his associate. The young traveller was apparently in early youth, a soft and gentle boy, whose Sclavonic gown, the appropriate dress of the pilgrim, he wore more closely drawn about him than the coldness of the weather seemed to authorize or recommend. His features, imperfectly seen under the hood of his pilgrim's dress, were prepossessing in a high degree; and though he wore a walking sword, it seemed rather to be in compliance with general fashion than from any violent purpose he did so. There were traces of sadness upon his brow, and of tears upon his cheeks; and his weariness was such as even his rougher companion seemed to sympathize with, while he privately participated also in the sorrow which left its marks upon a countenance so lovely. They spoke together, and the elder of the two, while he assumed the deferential air proper to a man of inferior rank addressing a superior, showed, in tone and gesture, something that amounted to interest and affection.

'Bertram, my friend,' said the younger of the two, 'how far are we still from Douglas Castle? We have already come farther than the twenty miles which thou didst say was the distance from Cammock—or how didst thou call the last hostelry which we left by daybreak?'

'Cumnock, my dearest lady—I beg ten thousand excuses—my gracious young lord.'

'Call me Augustine,' replied his comrade, 'if you mean to speak as is fittest for the time.'

'Nay, as for that,' said Bertram, 'if your ladyship can condescend to lay aside your quality, my own good breeding is not so firmly sewed to me but that I can doff it, and resume it again without its losing a stitch; and since your ladyship, to whom I am sworn in obedience, is pleased to command that I should treat you as my own son, shame it were to me if I were not to show you the affection of a father, more especially as I may well swear my great oath, that I owe you the duty of such, though well I wot it has, in our case, been the lot of the parent to be maintained by the kindness and liberality of the child; for when was it that I hungered or thirsted, and the *black stock** of Berkley did not relieve my wants?'

'I would have it so,' answered the young pilgrim; 'I would have it so. What use of the mountains of beef, and the oceans of beer, which they say our domains produce, if there is a hungry heart among our vassalage, or especially if thou, Bertram, who hast served as the minstrel of our house for more than twenty years, shouldst experience such a feeling?'

'Certes, lady,' answered Bertram, 'it would be like the catastrophe which is told of the Baron of Fastenough, when his last mouse was starved to death in the very pantry; and if I escape this journey without such a calamity, I shall think myself out of reach of thirst or famine for the whole of my life.'

'Thou hast suffered already once or twice by these attacks, my poor friend,' said the lady.

'It is little,' answered Bertram, 'anything that I have suffered; and I were ungrateful to give the inconvenience of missing a breakfast, or making an untimely dinner, so serious a name. But then I hardly see how your ladyship can endure this gear much longer. You must yourself feel that the plodding along these high lands, of which the Scots give us such good measure in their miles, is no jesting matter; and as for Douglas Castle, why, it is still three good miles off.'

'The question then is,' quoth the lady, heaving a sigh, 'what we are to do when we have so far to travel, and when the castle gates must be locked long before we arrive there?'

'For that I will pledge my word,' answered Bertram. 'The gates of Douglas, under the keeping of Sir John de Walton, do not open so easily as those of the buttery hatch at our own castle, when it is well oiled; and if your ladyship take my advice, you will turn southward ho! and in two days at farthest, we shall be in a land where men's wants are provided for, as the inns proclaim it, with the least possible delay, and the secret of this little journey shall never be known to living mortal but ourselves, as sure as I am sworn minstrel, and man of faith.'

'I thank thee for thy advice, mine honest Bertram,' said the lady, 'but I cannot profit by it. Should thy knowledge of these parts possess thee with an acquaintance with any decent house, whether it belong to rich or poor, I would willingly take quarters there, if I could obtain them, from this time until to-morrow morning. The gates of Douglas Castle will then be open to guests of so peaceful an appearance as we carry with us, and—and—it will out—we might have time to make such applications to our toilet as might insure us a good reception, by drawing a comb through our locks, or such-like foppery.'

'Ah, madam!' said Bertram, 'were not Sir John de Walton in question, methinks I should venture to reply, that an unwashed brow, an unkempt head of hair, and a look far more saucy than your ladyship ever wears, or can wear, were the proper disguise to trick out that minstrel's boy, whom you wish to represent in the present pageant.'

'Do you suffer your youthful pupils to be indeed so slovenly and so saucy, Bertram?' answered the lady. 'I for one will not imitate them in that particular; and whether Sir John be now in the Castle of Douglas or not, I will treat the soldiers who hold so honourable a

* The table dormant, which stood in a baron's hall, was often so designated.

charge with a washed brow, and a head of hair somewhat ordered. As for going back without seeing a castle which has mingled even with my very dreams—at a word, Bertram, thou mayest go that way, but I will not.'

'And if I part with your ladyship on such terms,' responded the minstrel, 'now your frolic is so nearly accomplished, it shall be the Foul Fiend himself, and nothing more comely or less dangerous, that shall tear me from your side; and for lodging, there is not far from hence the house of one Tom Dickson of Hazelside, one of the most honest fellows of the Dale, and who, although a labouring man, ranked as high as a warrior, when I was in this country, as any noble gentleman that rode in the band of the Douglas.'

'He is then a soldier?' said the lady.

'When his country or his lord need his sword,' replied Bertram—'and, to say the truth, they are seldom at peace; but otherwise, he is no enemy, save to the wolf which plunders his herds.'

'But forget not, my trusty guide,' replied the lady, 'that the blood in our veins is English, and consequently, that we are in danger from all who call themselves foes to the ruddy Cross.'*

'Do not fear this man's face,' answered Bertram. 'You may trust to him as to the best knight or gentleman of the land. We may make good our lodging by a tune or a song; and it may remember you that I undertook (provided it pleased your ladyship) to temporise a little with the Scots, who, poor souls, love minstrelsy, and when they have but a silver penny, will willingly bestow it to encourage the Gay Science—I promised you, I say, that we should be as welcome to them as if we had been born amidst their own wild hills; and for the best that such a house as Dickson's affords, the gleeman's son, fair lady, shall not breathe a wish in vain. And now, will you speak your mind to your devoted friend and adopted father, or rather your sworn servant and guide, Bertram the minstrel, what it is your pleasure to do in this matter?'

'O, we will certainly accept of the Scot's hospitality,' said the lady, 'your minstrel word being plighted that he is a true man.—Tom Dickson, call you him?'

'Yes,' replied Bertram, 'such is his name; and by looking on these sheep, I am assured that we are now upon his land.'

'Indeed!' said the lady, with some surprise; 'and how is your wisdom aware of that?'

'I see the first letter of his name marked upon this flock,' answered the guide. 'Ah, learning is what carries a man through the world, as well as if he had the ring by virtue of which old minstrels tell that Adam understood the language of the beasts in paradise. Ah, madam, there is more wit taught in the shepherd's shieling than the lady thinks of, who sews her painted seam in her summer bower.'

'Be it so, good Bertram. And although not so deeply skilled in the knowledge of written language as you are, it is impossible for me to esteem its value more than I actually do; so hold we on the nearest road to this Tom Dickson's, whose very sheep tell of his whereabout. I trust we have not very far to go, although the knowledge that our journey is shortened by a few miles has so much recovered my fatigue, that methinks I could dance all the rest of the way.'

* The red cross of St. George of England.]

CHAPTER II.

Rosalind. Well, this is the forest of Arden.
Touchstone. Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I. When I was at home I was in a better place; but travellers must be content.
Rosalind. Ay, be so, good Touchstone.—Look you, who comes here? a young man, and an old, in solemn talk.
As You Like It, *Act* ii. *Scene* 4

As the travellers spoke together, they reached a turn of the path which presented a more extensive prospect than the broken face of the country had yet shown them. A valley, through which flowed a small tributary stream, exhibited the wild, but not unpleasant, features of 'a lone vale of green bracken,' here and there besprinkled with groups of alder-trees, of hazels, and of copse-oakwood, which had maintained their stations in the recesses of the valley, although they had vanished from the loftier and more exposed sides of the hills. The farm-house or mansion-house (for, from its size and appearance, it might have been the one or the other) was a large but low building, and the walls of the out-houses were sufficiently strong to resist any band of casual depredators. There was nothing, however, which could withstand a more powerful force; for, in a country laid waste by war, the farmer was then, as now, obliged to take his chance of the great evils attendant upon that state of things; and his condition, never a very eligible one, was rendered considerably worse by the insecurity attending it. About half-a-mile farther was seen a Gothic building of very small extent, having a half-dismantled chapel, which the minstrel pronounced to be the Abbey of Saint Bride. 'The place,' he said, 'I understand, is allowed to subsist, as two or three old monks and as many nuns, whom it contains, are permitted by the English to serve God there, and sometimes to give relief to Scottish travellers; and who have accordingly taken assurance with Sir John de Walton, and accepted as their superior a churchman on whom he thinks he can depend. But if these guests happen to reveal any secrets, they are, by some means or other, believed to fly towards the English governor; and therefore, unless your ladyship's commands be positive, I think we had best not trust ourselves to their hospitality.'

'Of a surety, no,' said the lady, 'if thou canst provide me with lodgings where we shall have more prudent hosts.'

At this moment two human forms were seen to approach the farm-house in a different direction from the travellers, and speaking so high, in a tone apparently of dispute, that the minstrel and his companion could distinguish their voices though the distance was considerable. Having screened his eyes with his hand for some minutes, Bertram at length exclaimed, 'By Our lady, it

is my old friend Tom Dickson, sure enough!—What can make him in such bad humour with the lad, who, I think, may be the little wild boy, his son Charles, who used to run about and plait rushes some twenty years ago? It is lucky, however, we have found our friends astir; for I warrant Tom hath a hearty piece of beef in the pot ere he goes to bed, and he must have changed his wont if an old friend hath not his share; and who knows, had we come later, at what hour they may now find it convenient to drop latch and draw bolt so near a hostile garrison; for if we call things by their right names, such is the proper term for an English garrison in the castle of a Scottish nobleman.'

'Foolish man,' answered the lady, 'thou judgest of Sir John de Walton as thou wouldst of some rude boor, to whom the opportunity of doing what he wills is a temptation and licence to exercise cruelty and oppression. Now, I could plight you my word, that, setting apart the quarrel of the kingdoms, which, of course, will be fought out in fair battles on both sides, you will find that English and Scottish, within this domain, and within the reach of Sir John de Walton's influence, live together as that same flock of sheep and goats do with the shepherd's dog; a foe from whom they fly upon certain occasions, but around whom they nevertheless eagerly gather for protection should a wolf happen to show himself.'

'It is not to your ladyship,' answered Bertram, 'that I should venture to state my opinion of such matters; but the young knight, when he is sheathed in armour, is a different being from him who feasts in halls among press of ladies; and he that feeds by another man's fireside, and when his landlord, of all men in the world, chances to be the Black Douglas, has reason to keep his eyes about him as he makes his meal:—but it were better I looked after our own evening refreshment, than that I stood here gaping and talking about other folks' matters.' So saying, he called out in a thundering tone of voice, 'Dickson!—what ho, Thomas Dickson!—will you not acknowledge an old friend who is much disposed to trust his supper and night's lodging to your hospitality?'

The Scotchman, attracted by the call, looked first along the banks of the river, then upwards to the bare side of the hill, and at length cast his eyes upon the two figures who were descending from it.

As if he felt the night colder while he advanced from the more sheltered part of the valley to meet them, the Douglas Dale farmer wrapped closer around him the grey plaid, which, from an early period, has been used by the shepherds of the south of Scotland, and the appearance of which gives a romantic air to the peasantry and middle classes; and which, although less brilliant and gaudy in its colours, is as picturesque in its arrangement as the more military tartan mantle of the Highlands. When they approached near to each other, the lady might observe that this friend of her guide was a stout, athletic man, somewhat past the middle of life, and already showing marks of the approach, but none of the infirmities, of age, upon a countenance which had been exposed to many a storm. Sharp eyes, too, and a quick observation, exhibited signs of vigilance, acquired by one who had lived long in a country where he had constant occasion for looking around him with caution. His features were still swollen with displeasure; and the handsome young man who attended him seemed to be discontented, like one who had undergone no gentle marks of his father's indignation, and who, from the sullen expression which mingled with an appearance of shame on his countenance, seemed at once affected by anger and remorse.

'Do you not remember me, old friend?' said Bertram, as they approached within a distance for communing; 'or have the twenty years which have marched over us since we met, carried along with them all remembrance of Bertram the English minstrel?'

'In troth,' answered the Scot, 'it is not for want of plenty of your countrymen to keep you in my remembrance, and I have hardly heard one of them so much as whistle

Hey, now the day dawns,

but it has recalled some note of your blithe rebeck; and yet such animals are we, that I had forgot the mien of my old friend, and scarcely knew him at a distance. But we have had trouble lately; there are a thousand of your countrymen that keep garrison in the Perilous Castle of Douglas yonder, as well as in other places through the vale, and that is but a woeful sight for a true Scotchman—even my own poor house has not escaped the dignity of a garrison of a man-at-arms, besides two or three archer knaves, and one or two slips of mischievous boys called pages, and so forth, who will not let a man say, "This is my own," by his own fireside. Do not, therefore, think hardly of me, old comrade, if I show you a welcome something colder than you might expect from a friend of other days; for, by Saint Bride of Douglas, I have scarcely anything left to which I can say welcome.'

'Small welcome will serve,' said Bertram. 'My son, make thy reverence to thy father's old friend. Augustine is learning my joyous trade, but he will need some practice ere he can endure its fatigues. If you could give him some little matter of food, and a quiet bed for the night, there's no fear but that we shall both do well enough; for I daresay when you travel with my friend Charles there,—if that tall youth chance to be my old acquaintance Charles,—you will find yourself accommodated when his wants are once well provided for.'

'Nay, the Foul Fiend take me if I do,' answered the Scottish husbandman. 'I know not what the lads of this day are made of—not of the same clay as their fathers, to be sure—not sprung from the heather, which fears neither wind nor rain, but from some delicate plant of a foreign country, which will not thrive unless it be nourished under glass, with a murrain to it. The good Lord of Douglas—I have been his henchman, and can vouch for it—did not in his pagehood desire such food and lodging as, in the present day, will hardly satisfy such a lad as your friend Charles.'

'Nay,' said Bertram, it is not that my

Augustine is over nice; but, for other reasons, I must request of you a bed to himself; he hath of late been unwell.'

'Ay, I understand,' said Dickson, 'your son hath had a touch of that illness which terminates so frequently in the black death you English folk die of? We hear much of the havoc it has made to the southward. Comes it hitherward?'

Bertram nodded.

'Well, my father's house,' continued the farmer, 'hath more rooms than one, and your son shall have one well-aired and comfortable; and for supper, ye shall have a part of what is prepared for your countrymen, though I would rather have their room than their company. Since I am bound to feed a score of them, they will not dispute the claim of such a skilful minstrel as thou art to a night's hospitality. I am ashamed to say that I must do their bidding even in my own house. Well-a-day, if my good lord were in possession of his own, I have heart and hand enough to turn the whole of them out of my house, like—like'——

'To speak plainly,' said Bertram, 'like a southern strolling gang from Redesdale, whom I have seen you fling out of your house like a litter of blind puppies, when not one of them looked behind to see who had done him the courtesy until he was half-way to Cairntable.'

'Ay,' answered the Scotchman, drawing himself up at least six inches taller than before; 'then I had a house of my own, and a cause and an arm to keep it. Now I am—what signifies it what I am?—the noblest lord in Scotland is little better.'

'Truly, friend,' said Bertram, 'now you view this matter in a rational light. I do not say that the wisest, the richest, or the strongest man in this world has any right to tyrannize over his neighbour, because he is the more weak, ignorant, and the poorer; but yet if he does enter into such a controversy, he must submit to the course of nature, and that will always give the advantage in the tide of battle to wealth, strength, and health.'

'With permission, however,' answered Dickson, 'the weaker party, if he use his faculties to the utmost, may, in the long run, obtain revenge upon the author of his sufferings, which would be at least compensation for his temporary submission; and he acts simply as a man, and most foolishly as a Scotchman, whether he sustain these wrongs with the insensibility of an idiot, or whether he endeavour to revenge them before Heaven's appointed time has arrived.—But if I talk thus, I shall scare you, as I have scared some of your countrymen, from accepting a meal of meat, and a night's lodging, in a house where you might be called with the morning to a bloody settlement of a national quarrel.'

'Never mind,' said Bertram, 'we have been known to each other of old; and I am no more afraid of meeting unkindness in your house, than you expect me to come here for the purpose of adding to the injuries of which you complain.'

'So be it,' said Dickson; 'and you, my old friend, are as welcome to my abode as when it never held any guest save of my own inviting.—And you, my young friend, Master Augustine, shall be looked after as well as if you came with a gay brow and a light cheek, such as best becomes the Gay Science.'

'But wherefore, may I ask,' said Bertram, 'so much displeased but now at my young friend Charles?'

The youth answered before his father had time to speak. 'My father, good sir, may put what show upon it he will, but shrewd and wise men wax weak in the brain in these troublous times. He saw two or three wolves seize upon three of our choicest wethers; and because I shouted to give the alarm to the English garrison, he was angry as if he could have murdered me—just for saving the sheep from the jaws that would have devoured them.'

'This is a strange account of thee, old friend,' said Bertram. 'Dost thou connive with the wolves in robbing thine own fold?'

'Why, let it pass if thou lovest me,' answered the countryman; 'Charles could tell thee something nearer the truth if he had a mind; but for the present let it pass.'

The minstrel, perceiving that the Scotchman was fretted and embarrassed with the subject, pressed it no further.

At this moment, in crossing the threshold of Thomas Dickson's house, they were greeted with sounds from two English soldiers within. 'Quiet, Anthony,' said one voice—'quiet, man!—for the sake of common sense, if not common manners;—Robin Hood himself never sat down to his board ere the roast was ready.'

'Ready!' quoth another rough voice; 'it is roasting to rags, and small had been the knave Dickson's share, even of these rags, had it not been the express orders of the worshipful Sir John de Walton, that the soldiers who lie at outposts should afford to the inmates such provisions as are not necessary for their own subsistence.'

'Hush, Anthony—hush, for shame!' replied his fellow-soldier; 'if ever I heard our host's step, I heard it this instant; so give over thy grumbling, since our captain, as we all know, hath prohibited, under strict penalties, all quarrels between his followers and the people of the country.'

'I am sure,' replied Anthony, 'that I have ministered occasion to none; but I would I were equally certain of the good meaning of this sullen-browed Thomas Dickson towards the English soldiers, for I seldom go to bed in this dungeon of a house, but I expect my throat will gape as wide as a thirsty oyster before I awaken. Here he comes, however,' added Anthony, sinking his sharp tones as he spoke; 'and I hope to be excommunicated if he has not brought with him that mad animal, his son Charles, and two other strangers, hungry enough, I'll be sworn, to eat up the whole supper, if they do us no other injury.'

'Shame of thyself, Anthony,' repeated his comrade; 'a good archer thou as ever wore Kendal green, and yet affect to be frightened for two tired travellers, and alarmed for the inroad their hunger may make on the night's meal. There are four or five of us here—we have our bows and our bills within reach, and scorn to be chased from our supper, or cheated out of our share of it, by a dozen Scotchmen, whether

stationary or strollers. How say'st thou?' he added, turning to Dickson — 'How say ye, quarter-master? it is no secret, that by the directions given to our post, we must inquire into the occupations of such guests as you may receive besides ourselves, your unwilling inmates; you are as ready for supper, I warrant, as supper is for you, and I will only delay you and my friend Anthony, who becomes dreadfully impatient, until you answer two or three questions which you wot of.'

'Bend-the-Bow,' answered Dickson, 'thou art a civil fellow; and although it is something hard to be constrained to give an account of one's friends, because they chance to quarter in one's own house for a night or two, yet I must submit to the times, and make no vain opposition. You may mark down in your breviary there, that upon the fourteenth day before Palm Sunday, Thomas Dickson brought to his house of Hazelside, in which you hold garrison by orders from the English governor, Sir John de Walton, two strangers, to whom the said Thomas Dickson had promised refreshment, and a bed for the evening, if it be lawful at this time and place.'

'But what are they, these strangers?' said Anthony, somewhat sharply.

'A fine world the while,' murmured Thomas Dickson, 'that an honest man should be forced to answer the questions of every paltry companion!'—But he mitigated his voice and proceeded. 'The eldest of my guests is Bertram, an ancient English minstrel, who is bound on his own errand to the Castle of Douglas, and will communicate what he has to say of news to Sir John de Walton himself. I have known him for twenty years, and never heard anything of him save that he was good man and true. The younger stranger is his son, a lad recovering from the English disorder, which has been raging far and wide in Westmoreland and Cumberland.'

'Tell me,' said Bend-the-Bow, 'this same Bertram, was he not about a year since in the service of some noble lady in our own country?'

'I have heard so,' answered Dickson.

'We shall, in that case, I think, incur little danger,' replied Bend-the-Bow, 'by allowing this old man and his son to proceed on their journey to the castle.'

'You are my elder and my better,' answered Anthony; 'but I may remind you that it is not so clearly our duty to give free passage, into a garrison of a thousand men of all ranks, to a youth who has been so lately attacked by a contagious disorder; and I question if our commander would not rather hear that the Black Douglas, with a hundred devils as black as himself, since such is his colour, had taken possession of the outpost of Hazelside with sword and battle-axe, than that one person suffering under this fell sickness had entered peaceably, and by the opened wicket of the castle.'

'There is something in what thou sayest, Anthony,' replied his comrade; 'and considering that our governor, since he has undertaken the troublesome job of keeping a castle which is esteemed so much more dangerous than any other within Scotland, has become one of the most cautious and jealous men in the world, we had better, I think, inform him of the circumstance, and take his commands how the stripling is to be dealt with.'

'Content am I,' said the archer; 'and, first, methinks, I would just, in order to show that we know what belongs to such a case, ask the stripling a few questions, as how long he has been ill, by what physicians he has been attended, when he was cured, and how his cure is certified, etc.'

'True, brother,' said Bend-the-Bow. 'Thou hearest, minstrel, we would ask thy son some questions—What has become of him?—he was in this apartment but now.'

'So please you,' answered Bertram, 'he did but pass through the apartment. Master Thomas Dickson, at my entreaty, as well as in respectful reverence to your honour's health, carried him through the room without tarriance, judging his own bed-chamber the fittest place for a young man recovering from a severe illness, and after a day of no small fatigue.'

'Well,' answered the elder archer, 'though it is uncommon for men who, like us, live by bow-string and quiver, to meddle with interrogations and examinations; yet, as the case stands, we must make some inquiries of your son, ere we permit him to set forth to the Castle of Douglas, where you say his errand leads him.'

'Rather my errand, noble sir,' said the minstrel, 'than that of the young man himself.'

'If such be the case,' answered Bend-the-Bow, 'we may sufficiently do our duty by sending yourself, with the first grey light of dawn, to the castle, and letting your son remain in bed, which I warrant is the fittest place for him, until we shall receive Sir John de Walton's commands whether he is to be brought onward or not.'

'And we may as well,' said Anthony, 'since we are to have this man's company at supper, make him acquainted with the rules of the out garrison stationed here for the time.' So saying, he pulled a scroll from his leathern pouch, and said, 'Minstrel, canst thou read?'

'It becomes my calling,' said the minstrel.

'It has nothing to do with mine, though,' answered the archer, 'and therefore do thou read these regulations aloud; for since I do not comprehend these characters by sight, I lose no chance of having them read over to me as often as I can, that I may fix their sense in my memory. So beware that thou readest the words letter for letter as they are set down; for thou dost so at thy peril, Sir Minstrel, if thou readest not like a true man.'

'On my minstrel word,' said Bertram, and began to read excessively slow; for he wished to gain a little time for consideration, which he foresaw would be necessary to prevent his being separated from his mistress, which was likely to occasion her much anxiety and distress. He therefore began thus:—'"Outpost at Hazelside, the steading of Goodman Thomas Dickson"—Ay, Thomas, and is thy house so called?'

'It is the ancient name of the steading,' said the Scot, 'being surrounded by a hazel-shaw, or thicket.'

'Hold your chattering tongue, minstrel,' said Anthony, 'and proceed, as you value that or your ears, which you seem disposed to make less use of.'

'"His garrison,"' proceeded the minstrel, reading, '"consists of a lance with its furniture." What, then, a lance, in other words, a belted knight, commands this party?'

'"Tis no concern of thine,' said the archer.

'But it is,' answered the minstrel; 'we have a right to be examined by the highest person in presence.'

'I will show thee, thou rascal,' said the archer, starting up, 'that I am lance enough for thee to reply to, and I will break thy head if thou say'st a word more.'

'Take care, brother Anthony,' said his comrade; 'we are to use travellers courteously—and, with your leave, those travellers best who come from our native land.'

'It is even so stated here,' said the minstrel, and he proceeded to read:—'"The watch at this outpost of Hazelside* shall stop and examine all travellers passing by the said station, suffering such to pass onward to the town of Douglas or to Douglas Castle, always interrogating them with civility, and detaining and turning them back if there arise matter of suspicion; but conducting themselves in all matters civilly and courteously to the people of the country, and to those who travel in it." You see, most excellent and valiant archer,' added the commentator Bertram, 'that courtesy and civility are, above all, recommended to your worship in your conduct towards the inhabitants, and those passengers who, like us, may chance to fall under your rules in such matters.'

'I am not to be told at this time of day,' said the archer, 'how to conduct myself in the discharge of my duties. Let me advise you, Sir Minstrel, to be frank and open in your answers to our inquiries, and you shall have no reason to complain.'

'I hope, at all events,' said the minstrel, 'to have your favour for my son, who is a delicate stripling, and not accustomed to play his part among the crew which inhabit this wild world.'

'Well,' continued the elder and more civil of the two archers, 'if thy son be a novice in this terrestrial navigation, I warrant that thou, my friend, from thy look and manner of speech, hast enough of skill to use thy compass. To comfort thee, although thou must thyself answer the questions of our governor or deputy-governor, in order that he may see there is no offence in thee, I think there may be permission granted for thy son's residing here in the convent hard by (where the nuns, by the way, are as old as the monks, and have nearly as long beards, so thou mayst be easy about thy son's morals), until thou hast done thy business at Douglas Castle, and art ready to resume thy journey.'

'If such permission,' said the minstrel, 'can be obtained, I should be better pleased to leave him at the abbey, and go myself, in the first place, to take the directions of your commanding officer.'

'Certainly,' answered the archer, 'that will be the safest and best way; and with a piece or two of money, thou may'st secure the protection of the abbot.'

'Thou say'st well,' answered the minstrel; 'I have known life, I have known every stile, gap, pathway, and pass of this wilderness of ours for some thirty years; and he that cannot steer his course fairly through it like an able seaman, after having served such an apprenticeship, can hardly ever be taught, were a century to be given him to learn it in.'

'Since thou art so expert a mariner,' answered the archer Anthony, 'thou hast, I warrant me, met in thy wanderings a potation called a morning's draught, which they who are conducted by others, where they themselves lack experience, are used to bestow upon those who undertake the task of guide upon such an occasion?'

'I understand you, sir,' quoth the minstrel; 'and although money, or *drink-gled*, as the Fleming calls it, is rather a scarce commodity in the purse of one of my calling, yet, according to my feeble ability, thou shalt have no cause to complain that thine eyes or those of thy comrades have been damaged by a Scotch mist, while we can find an English coin to pay for the good liquor which would wash them clear.'

'Content,' said the archer; 'we now understand each other; and if difficulties arise on the road, thou shalt not want the countenance of Anthony to sail triumphantly through them. But thou hadst better let thy son know soon of the early visit to the abbot to-morrow, for thou mayst guess that we cannot and dare not delay our departure for the convent a minute after the eastern sky is ruddy; and, with other infirmities, young men often are prone to laziness and a love of ease.'

'Thou shalt have no reason to think so,' answered the minstrel; 'not the lark himself, when waked by the first ray peeping over the black cloud, springs more lightly to the sky, than will my Augustine answer the same brilliant summons. And, now we understand each other, I would only further pray you to forbear light talk while my son is in your company—a boy of innocent life, and timid in conversation.'

'Nay, jolly minstrel,' said the elder archer, 'thou givest us here too gross an example of Satan reproving sin. If thou hast followed thy craft for twenty years, as thou pretendest, thy son, having kept thee company since childhood, must by this time be fit to open a school to teach even devils the practice of the seven deadly sins, of which none know the theory if those of the Gay Science are lacking.'

'Truly, comrade, thou speakest well,' answered Bertram, 'and I acknowledge that we minstrels are too much to blame in this matter. Nevertheless, in good sooth, the fault is not one of which I myself am particularly guilty; on the contrary, I think that he who would wish to have his own hair honoured when time has strewed it with silver, should so rein his mirth when in the presence of the young, as may show in what respect he holds innocence. I will, therefore, with your permission, speak a word to Augustine, that to-morrow we must be on foot early.'

* [Hazelside Place, the fief granted to Thomas Dickson by William the Hardy, seventh Lord Douglas, is still pointed out about two miles to the south-west of the Castle Dangerous. Dickson was sixty years of age at the time when Lord James first appeared in Douglasdale. His heirs kept possession of the fief for centuries; and some respectable gentlemen's families in Lanarkshire still trace themselves to this ancestor.—*From Notes by Mr. Haddow.*]

'Do so, my friend,' said the English soldier; 'and do the same the more speedily, that our poor supper is still awaiting until thou art ready to partake of it.'

'To which I promise thee,' said Bertram, 'I am disposed to entertain no delay.'

'Follow me, then,' said Dickson, 'and I will show thee where this young bird of thine has his nest.'

Their host accordingly tripped up the wooden stair, and tapped at a door, which he thus indicated was that of his younger guest.

'Your father,' continued he, as the door opened, 'would speak with you, Master Augustine.'

'Excuse me, my host,' answered Augustine; 'the truth is, that this room being directly above your eating chamber, and the flooring not in the best possible repair, I have been compelled to the unhandsome practice of eavesdropping, and not a word has escaped me that passed concerning my proposed residence at the abbey, our journey to-morrow, and the somewhat early hour at which I must shake off sloth, and, according to thy expression, fly down from the roost.'

'And how dost thou relish,' said Dickson, 'being left with the Abbot of Saint Bride's little flock here?'

'Why, well,' said the youth, 'if the Abbot is a man of respectability becoming his vocation, and not one of those swaggering churchmen, who stretch out the sword, and bear themselves like rank soldiers in these troublous times.'

'For that, young master,' said Dickson, 'if you let him put his hand deep enough into your purse, he will hardly quarrel with anything.'

'Then I will leave him to my father,' replied Augustine, 'who will not grudge him anything he asks in reason.'

'In that case,' replied the Scotchman, 'you may trust to our Abbot for good accommodation—and so both sides are pleased.'

'It is well, my son,' said Bertram, who now joined in the conversation; 'and that thou mayest be ready for thy early travelling, I shall presently get our host to send thee some food, after partaking of which thou shouldst go to bed, and sleep off the fatigue of to-day, since to-morrow will bring work for itself.'

'And as for thy engagement to these honest archers,' answered Augustine, 'I hope you will be able to do what will give pleasure to our guides, if they are disposed to be civil and true men.'

'God bless thee, my child!' answered Bertram; 'thou knowest already what would drag after thy beck all the English archers that were ever on this side of the Solway. There is no fear of a grey goose shaft, if you sing a *reveillez* like to that which chimed even now from that silken nest of dainty young goldfinches.'

'Hold me as in readiness, then,' said the seeming youth, 'when you depart to-morrow morning. I am within hearing, I suppose, of the bells of Saint Bride's chapel, and have no fear, through my sloth, of keeping you or your company waiting.'

'Good-night, and God bless thee, my child!' again said the minstrel; 'remember that your father sleeps not far distant, and on the slightest alarm will not fail to be with you. I need scarce bid thee recommend thyself, meantime, to the great Being who is the friend and father of us all.'

The pilgrim thanked his supposed father for his evening blessing, and the visitors withdrew without further speech at the time, leaving the young lady to those engrossing fears, which, the novelty of her situation and the native delicacy of her sex being considered, naturally thronged upon her.

The tramp of a horse's foot was not long after heard at the house of Hazelside, and the rider was welcomed by its garrison with marks of respect. Bertram understood so much as to discover from the conversation of the warders that this late arrival was Aymer de Valence, the knight who commanded the little party, and to the furniture of whose lance, as it was technically called, belonged the archers with whom we have already been acquainted, a man-at-arms or two, a certain proportion of pages or grooms, and, in short, the command and guidance of the garrison at Thomas Dickson's, while in rank he was deputy-governor of Douglas Castle.

To prevent all suspicion respecting himself and his companion, as well as the risk of the latter being disturbed, the minstrel thought it proper to present himself to the inspection of this knight, the great authority of the little place. He found him, with as little scruple as the archers heretofore, making a supper of the relics of the roast beef.

Before this young knight Bertram underwent an examination, while an old soldier took down in writing such items of information as the examinate thought proper to express in his replies, both with regard to the minutiæ of his present journey, his business at Castle Douglas, and his route when that business should be accomplished; a much more minute examination, in a word, than he had hitherto undergone by the archers, or perhaps than was quite agreeable to him, being encumbered with at least the knowledge of one secret, whatever more. Not that this new examinator had anything stern or severe in his looks or his questions. As to the first, he was mild, gentle, and 'meek as a maid,' and possessed exactly of the courteous manners ascribed by our father Chaucer to the pattern of chivalry whom he describes upon his pilgrimage to Canterbury. But with all his gentleness, De Valence showed a great degree of acuteness and accuracy in his queries; and well pleased was Bertram that the young knight did not insist upon seeing his supposed son, although even in that case his ready wit had resolved, like a seaman in a tempest, to sacrifice one part to preserve the rest. He was not, however, driven to this extremity, being treated by Sir Aymer with that degree of courtesy which in that age men of song were in general thought entitled to. The knight kindly and liberally consented to the lad's remaining in the convent, as a fit and quiet residence for a stripling and an invalid, until Sir John de Walton should express his pleasure on the subject; and Sir Aymer consented to this arrangement the more willingly, as it averted all possible danger of bringing disease into the English garrison.

By the young knight's order, all in Dickson's house were despatched earlier to rest than usual; the matin bell of the neighbouring chapel being the signal for their assembly by daybreak. They rendezvoused accordingly, and proceeded to Saint Bride's, where they heard mass, after which an interview took place between the Abbot Jerome and the minstrel, in which the former undertook, with the permission of De Valence, to receive Augustine into his abbey as a guest for a few days, less or more, and for which Bertram promised an acknowledgment in name of alms, which was amply satisfactory.

'So be it,' said Bertram, taking leave of his supposed son; 'rely on it I will not tarry a day longer at Douglas Castle than shall suffice for transacting my business there, which is to look after the old books you wot of, and I will speedily return for thee to the Abbey of Saint Bride, to resume in company our journey homeward.'

'O father,' replied the youth, with a smile, 'I fear, if you get among romances and chronicles, you will be so earnest in your researches, that you will forget poor Augustine and his concerns.'

'Never fear me, Augustine,' said the old man, making the motion of throwing a kiss towards the boy; 'thou art good and virtuous, and Heaven will not neglect thee, were thy father unnatural enough to do so. Believe me, all the old songs since Merlin's * day shall not make me forget thee.'

Thus they separated, the minstrel, with the English knight and his retinue, to move towards the castle, and the youth in dutiful attendance on the venerable abbot, who was delighted to find that his guest's thoughts turned rather upon spiritual things than on the morning repast, of the approach of which he could not help being himself sensible.

CHAPTER III.

This night, methinks, is but the daylight sick,
It looks a little paler; 'tis a day
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

To facilitate the progress of the party on its way to Douglas Castle, the Knight of Valence offered the minstrel the convenience of a horse, which the fatigues of yesterday made him gladly accept. Any one acquainted with equestrian exercise is aware that no means of refreshment carries away the sense of fatigue from over-walking, so easily, as the exchange to riding, which calls into play another set of muscles, and leaves those which have been over-exerted an opportunity of resting, through change of motion, more completely than they could in absolute repose. Sir Aymer de Valence was sheathed in armour, and mounted on his charger; two of the archers, a groom of mean rank, and a squire, who looked in his day for the honour of knighthood, completed the detachment, which seemed so disposed as to secure the minstrel from escape, and to protect him against violence. 'Not,' said the young knight, addressing himself to Bertram, 'that there is usually danger in travelling in this country any more than in the most quiet districts of England; but some disturbances, as you may have learned, have broken out here within this last year, and have caused the garrison of Castle Douglas to maintain a stricter watch. But let us move on, for the complexion of the day is congenial with the original derivation of the name of the country, and the description of the chiefs to whom it belonged—*Sholto Dhu Glass*—(see yon dark grey man), and dark grey will our route prove this morning, though, by good luck, it is not long.'

The morning was indeed what the original Gaelic words implied, a drizzly, dark, moist day; the mist had settled upon the hills, and unrolled itself upon brook, glade, and tarn, and the spring breeze was not powerful enough to raise the veil, though, from the wild sounds which were heard occasionally on the ridges, and through the glens, it might be supposed to wail at a sense of its own inability. The route of the travellers was directed by the course which the river had ploughed for itself down the valley, the banks of which bore in general that dark grey livery which Sir Aymer de Valence had intimated to be the prevalent tint of the country. Some ineffectual struggles of the sun shot a ray here and there to salute the peaks of the hills; yet these were unable to surmount the dulness of a March morning, and, at so early an hour, produced a variety of shades, rather than a gleam of brightness, upon the eastern horizon. The view was monotonous and depressing, and apparently the good knight Aymer sought some amusement in occasional talk with Bertram, who, as was usual with his craft, possessed a fund of knowledge, and a power of conversation, well suited to pass away a dull morning. The minstrel, well pleased to pick up such information as he might be able concerning the present state of the country, embraced every opportunity of sustaining the dialogue.

'I would speak with you, Sir Minstrel,' said the young knight. 'If thou dost not find the air of this morning too harsh for thine organs, heartily do I wish thou wouldst fairly tell me what can have induced thee, being, as thou seemest, a man of sense, to thrust thyself into a wild country like this, at such a time.—And you, my masters,' addressing the archers and the rest of the party, 'methinks it would be as fitting and seeming if you reined back your steeds for a horse's length or so, since I apprehend you can travel on your way without the pastime of minstrelsy.' The bowmen took the hint, and fell back, but, as was expressed by their grumbling observations, by no means pleased that there seemed little chance of their overhearing what conversation should pass between the young knight and the minstrel, which proceeded as follows:—

'I am, then, to understand, good minstrel,' said the knight, 'that you, who have in your time borne arms, and even followed Saint George's red-cross banner to the Holy Sepulchre, are so little tired of the danger attending our profession, that you feel yourself attracted unnecessarily to regions where the sword, for ever

* [The prophet, seer, and minstrel who figures in the King Arthur romances.]

loose in its scabbard, is ready to start on the slightest provocation?'

'It would be hard,' replied the minstrel bluntly, 'to answer such a question in the affirmative; and yet, when you consider how nearly allied is his profession who celebrates deeds of arms with that of the knight who performs them, your honour, I think, will hold it advisable that a minstrel desirous of doing his devoir, should, like a young knight, seek the truth of adventures where it is to be found, and rather visit countries where the knowledge is preserved of high and noble deeds, than those lazy and quiet realms, in which men live indolently, and die ignobly in peace, or by sentence of law. You yourself, sir, and those like you, who hold life cheap in respect of glory, guide your course through this world on the very same principle which brings your poor rhyming servant Bertram from a far province of merry England, to this dark country of rugged Scotland called Douglas Dale. You long to see adventures worthy of notice, and I (under favour for naming us two in the same breath) seek a scanty and precarious, but not a dishonourable living, by preparing for immortality, as well as I can, the particulars of such exploits, especially the names of those who were the heroes of these actions. Each, therefore, labours in his vocation; nor can the one be justly wondered at more than the other, seeing that if there be any difference in the degrees of danger to which both the hero and the poet are exposed, the courage, strength, arms, and address of the valiant knight, render it safer for him to venture into scenes of peril, than for the poor man of rhyme.'

'You say well,' answered the warrior; 'and although it is something of novelty to me to hear your craft represented as upon a level with my own mode of life, yet shame were it to say that the minstrel who toils so much to keep in memory the feats of gallant knights should not himself prefer fame to existence, and a single achievement of valour to a whole age without a name, or to affirm that he follows a mean and unworthy profession.'

'Your worship will then acknowledge,' said the minstrel, 'that it is a legitimate object in such as myself, who, simple as I am, have taken my regular degrees among the professors of the Gay Science at the capital town of Aigues-Mortes,* to struggle forward into this northern district, where I am well assured many things have happened which have been adapted to the harp by minstrels of great fame in ancient days, and have become the subject of lays which lie deposited in the library of Castle Douglas, where, unless copied over by some one who understands the old British characters and language, they must, with whatever they may contain, whether of entertainment or edification, be speedily lost to posterity. If these hidden treasures were preserved and recorded by the minstrel art o my poor self and others, it might be held well to compensate for the risk of a chance blow of a broadsword, or the sweep of a brown bill, received while I am engaged in collecting them; and I were unworthy of the name of a man, much more of an inventor or finder,† should I weigh the loss of life, a commodity always so uncertain, against the chance of that immortality which will survive in my lay after my broken voice and shivered harp shall no longer be able either to express tune or accompany tale.'

'Certainly,' said Sir Aymer, 'having a heart to feel such a motive, you have an undoubted right to express it; nor should I have been in any degree disposed to question it, had I found many minstrels prepared, like yourself, to prefer renown even to life itself, which most men think of greatly more consequence.'

'There are indeed, noble sir,' replied Bertram, 'minstrels, and, with your reverence, even belted knights themselves, who do not sufficiently value that renown which is acquired at the risk of life. To such ignoble men we must leave their own reward—let us abandon to them earth, and the things of earth, since they cannot aspire to that glory which is the *best* reward of others.'

The minstrel uttered these last words with such enthusiasm, that the knight drew his bridle, and stood fronting Bertram, with his countenance kindling at the same theme, on which, after a short silence, he expressed himself with a like vivacity.

'Well fare thy heart, gay companion! I am happy to see there is still so much enthusiasm surviving in the world. Thou hast fairly won the minstrel groat; and if I do not pay it in conformity to my sense of thy merit, it shall be the fault of dame Fortune, who has graced my labours in these Scottish wars with the niggard pay of Scottish money. A gold piece or two there must be remaining of the ransom of one French knight, whom chance threw into my hands, and that, my friend, shall surely be thine own; and hark thee, I, Aymer de Valence, who now speak to thee, am born of the noble House of Pembroke; and though now landless, shall, by the grace of Our Lady, have in time a fitting establishment, wherein I will find room for a minstrel like thee, if thy talents have not by that time found thee a better patron.'

'Thank thee, noble knight,' said the minstrel, 'as well for thy present intentions, as I hope I shall for thy future performance; but I may say, with truth, that I have not the sordid inclination of many of my brethren.'

'He who partakes the true thirst of noble fame,' said the young knight, 'can have little room in his heart for the love of gold. But thou hast not yet told me, friend minstrel, what are the motives, in particular, which have attracted thy wandering steps to this wild country?'

'Were I to do so,' replied Bertram, rather desirous to avoid the question, as in some respects too nearly bordering on the secret purpose of his journey, 'it might sound like a studied panegyric on thine own bold deeds, Sir Knight, and those of your companions in arms;

* [A town beyond Nîmes in the south of France.]

† The name of Maker or Makar stands for *Poet* (with the original sense of which word it exactly corresponds) in the old Scottish language. That of Trouveur or Troubadour—Finder, in short—has a similar meaning; and almost in every country the poetical tribes have been graced with the same epithets, inferring the property of those who employ invention or creation.

and such adulation, minstrel as I am, I hate like an empty cup at a companion's lips. But let me say in a few words, that Douglas Castle, and the deeds of valour which it has witnessed, have sounded wide through England; nor is there a gallant knight or trusty minstrel whose heart does not throb at the name of the stronghold which, in former days, the foot of an Englishman never entered, except in hospitality. There is a magic in the very names of Sir John de Walton and Sir Aymer de Valence, the gallant defenders of a place so often won back by its ancient lords, and with such circumstances of valour and cruelty, that it bears, in England, the name of the Dangerous Castle.'

'Yet I would fain hear,' answered the knight, 'your own minstrel account of those legends which have induced you, for the amusement of future times, to visit a country which, at this period, is so distracted and perilous.'

'If you can endure the length of a minstrel tale,' said Bertram—'I for one am always amused by the exercise of my vocation, and have no objection to tell my story, provided you do not prove an impatient listener.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said the young knight, 'a fair listener thou shalt have of me; and if my reward be not great, my attention at least shall be remarkable.'

'And he,' said the minstrel, 'must be a poor gleeman who does not hold himself better paid with that, than with gold or silver, were the pieces English rose-nobles. On this condition, then, I begin a long story, which may, in one or other of its details, find subject for better minstrels than myself, and be listened to by such warriors as you hundreds of years hence.'

CHAPTER IV.

While many a merry lay and many a song
Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long;
The rough road then returning in a round,
Mark'd their impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.
DOCTOR JOHNSON.

'It was about the year of redemption one thousand two hundred and eighty-five years,' began the minstrel, 'when King Alexander the Third of Scotland lost his daughter Margaret, whose only child of the same name, called the Maiden of Norway (as her father was king of that country), became the heiress of this kingdom of Scotland, as well as of her father's crown. An unhappy death was this for Alexander, who had no nearer heirs left of his own body than this grandchild. She indeed might claim his kingdom by birthright; but the difficulty of establishing such a claim of inheritance must have been anticipated by all who bestowed a thought upon the subject. The Scottish king, therefore, endeavoured to make up for his loss by replacing his late queen, who was an English princess, sister of our Edward the First, with Juletta, daughter of the Count de Dreux. The solemnities at the nuptial ceremony, which took place in the town of Jedburgh, were very great and remarkable, and particularly when, amidst the display of a pageant which was exhibited on the occasion, a ghastly spectre made its appearance, in the form of a skeleton, as the King of Terrors is said to be represented.—Your worship is free to laugh at this, if you think it a proper subject for mirth; but men are alive who viewed it with their own eyes, and the event showed too well of what misfortunes this apparition was the singular prognostication.'

'I have heard the story,' said the knight; 'but the monk who told it me, suggested that the figure, though unhappily chosen, was perhaps purposely introduced as a part of the pageant.'

'I know not that,' said the minstrel dryly; 'but there is no doubt that shortly after this apparition King Alexander died, to the great sorrow of his people. The Maid of Norway, his heiress, speedily followed her grandfather to the grave; and our English king, Sir Knight, raked up a claim of dependency and homage due, he said, by Scotland, which neither the lawyers, nobles, priests, nor the very minstrels of Scotland, had ever before heard of.'

'Now beshrew me,' interrupted Sir Aymer de Valence, 'this is beyond bargain. I agreed to hear your tale with patience, but I did not pledge myself that it should contain matter to the reproach of Edward the First, of blessed memory; nor will I permit his name to be mentioned in my hearing without the respect due to his high rank and noble qualities.'

'Nay,' said the minstrel, 'I am no Highland bagpiper or genealogist, to carry respect for my art so far as to quarrel with a man of worship who stops me at the beginning of a pibroch. I am an Englishman, and wish dearly well to my country; and above all, I must speak the truth. But I will avoid disputable topics. Your age, sir, though none of the ripest, authorizes me to suppose you may have seen the battle of Falkirk, and other onslaughts in which the competition of Bruce and Baliol has been fiercely agitated, and you will permit me to say, that if the Scottish have not had the right upon their side, they have at least defended the wrong with the efforts of brave men and true.'

'Of brave men, I grant you,' said the knight, 'for I have seen no cowards amongst them; but as for truth, they can best judge of it who know how often they have sworn faith to England, and how repeatedly they have broken their vow.'

'I shall not stir the question,' said the minstrel, 'leaving it to your worship to determine which has most falsehood—he who compels a weaker person to take an unjust oath, or he who, compelled by necessity, takes the imposed oath without the intention of keeping his word.'

'Nay, nay,' said De Valence, 'let us keep our opinions, for we are not likely to force each other from the faith we have adopted on this subject. But take my advice, and, whilst thou travellest under an English pennon, take heed that thou keepest off this conversation in the hall and kitchen, where perhaps the soldier may be less tolerant than the officer; and now, in a word, what is thy legend of this Dangerous Castle?'

'For that,' replied Bertram, 'methinks your worship is most likely to have a better edition than I, who have not been in this country for

many years; but it is not for me to bandy opinions with your knightship. I will even proceed with the tale as I have heard it. I need not, I presume, inform your worship that the Lords of Douglas, who founded this castle, are second to no lineage in Scotland in the antiquity of their descent. Nay, they have themselves boasted that their family is not to be seen or distinguished, like other great houses, until it is found at once in a certain degree of eminence. "You may see us in the tree," they say, "you cannot discover us in the twig; you may see us in the stream, you cannot trace us to the fountain." In a word, they deny that historians or genealogists can point out the first mean man named Douglas, who originally elevated the family; and true it is, that so far back as we have known this race, they have always been renowned for valour and enterprise, accompanied with the power which made that enterprise effectual.'

'Enough,' said the knight; 'I have heard of the pride and power of that great family, nor does it interest me in the least to deny or detract from their bold claims to consideration in this respect.'

'Without doubt you must also have heard, noble sir,' replied the minstrel, 'many things of James, the present heir of the House of Douglas?'

'More than enough,' answered the English knight; 'he is known to have been a stout supporter of that outlawed traitor, William Wallace; and again, upon the first raising of the banner by this Robert Bruce, who pretends to be King of Scotland, this young springald, James Douglas, must needs start into rebellion anew. He plunders his uncle, the Archbishop of Saint Andrews, of a considerable sum of money, to fill the Scottish usurper's not over-burdened treasury, debauches the servants of his relation, takes arms, and, though repeatedly chastised in the field, still keeps his vaunt, and threatens mischief to those who, in the name of his rightful sovereign, defend the Castle of Douglas Dale.'

'It is your pleasure to say so, Sir Knight,' replied Bertram; 'yet I am sure, were you a Scot, you would with patience hear me tell over what has been said of this young man by those who have known him, and whose account of his adventures shows how differently the same tale may be told. These men talk of the present heir of this ancient family as fully adequate to maintain and augment its reputation; ready, indeed, to undergo every peril in the cause of Robert the Bruce, because the Bruce is esteemed by him his lawful king; and sworn and devoted, with such small strength as he can muster, to revenge himself on those Southrons who have, for several years, as he thinks, unjustly, possessed themselves of his father's abode.'

'O,' replied Sir Aymer de Valence, 'we have heard much of his achievements in this respect, and of his threats against our governor and ourselves; yet we think it scarce likely that Sir John de Walton will move from Douglas Dale without the King's order, although this James Douglas, a mere chicken, take upon himself to crack his voice by crowing like a cock of the game.'

'Sir,' answered Bertram, 'our acquaintance is but brief, and yet I feel it has been so beneficial to me, that I trust there is no harm in hoping that James Douglas and you may never meet in bodily presence till the state of the two countries shall admit of peace being between you.'

'Thou art obliging, friend,' answered Sir Aymer, 'and, I doubt not, sincere; and truly thou seemest to have a wholesome sense of the respect due to this young knight, when men talk of him in his native valley of Douglas. For me, I am only poor Aymer of Valence, without an acre of land, or much hope of acquiring any, unless I cut something huge with my broadsword out of the middle of these hills. Only this, good minstrel, if thou livest to tell my story, may I pray thee to use thy scrupulous custom of searching out the verity, and whether I live or die, thou shalt not, I think, discover that thy late acquaintance of a spring morning hath added more to the laurels of James of Douglas, than any man's death must give to him by whose stronger arm, or more lucky chance, it is his lot to fall.'

'I nothing fear you, Sir Knight,' said the minstrel, 'for yours is that happy brain, which, bold in youth as beseems a young knight, is in more advanced life the happy source of prudent counsel, of which I would not, by an early death, wish thy country to be deprived.'

'Thou art so candid, then, as to wish Old England the benefit of good advice,' said Sir Aymer, 'though thou leanest to the side of Scotland in the controversy?'

'Assuredly, Sir Knight,' said the minstrel, 'since in wishing that Scotland and England each knew their own true interest, I am bound to wish them both alike well; and they should, I think, desire to live in friendship together. Occupying each their own portion of the same island, and living under the same laws, and being at peace with each other, they might, without fear, face the enmity of the whole world.'

'If thy faith be so liberal,' answered the knight, 'as becomes a good man, thou must certainly pray, Sir Minstrel, for the success of England in the war, by which alone these murderous hostilities of the northern nation can end in a solid peace. The rebellions of this obstinate country are but the struggles of the stag when he is mortally wounded; the animal grows weaker and weaker with every struggle, till his resistance is effectually tamed by the hand of death.'

'Not so, Sir Knight,' said the minstrel; 'if my creed is well taught me, we ought not so to pray. We may, without offence, intimate in our prayers the end we wish to obtain; but it is not for us, poor mortals, to point out to an all-seeing Providence the precise manner in which our petitions are to be accomplished, or to wish the downfall of a country to end its commotions, as the death-stab terminates the agonies of the wounded stag. Whether I appeal to my heart or to my understanding, the dictate would be to petition Heaven for what is just and equal in the case; and if I should fear for thee, Sir Knight, in an encounter with James of Douglas, it is only because he upholds, as I conceive, the better side of the debate; and powers more than earthly have presaged to him success.'

'Do you tell me so, Sir Minstrel,' said De Valence, in a threatening tone, 'knowing me and my office?'

'Your personal dignity and authority,' said Bertram, 'cannot change the right into wrong, or avert what Providence has decreed to take place. You know, I must presume, that the Douglas hath, by various devices, already contrived to make himself master of this Castle of Douglas three several times, and that Sir John de Walton, the present governor, holds it with a garrison trebled in force, and under the assurance that, if, without surprise, he should keep it from the Scottish power for a year and a day, he shall obtain the barony of Douglas, with its extensive appendages, in free property for his reward; while, on the other hand, if he shall suffer the fortress during this space to be taken, either by guile or by open force, as has happened successively to the holders of the Dangerous Castle, he will become liable to dishonour as a knight, and to attainder as a subject; and the chiefs who take share with him, and serve under him, will participate also in his guilt and his punishment?'

'All this I know well,' said Sir Aymer; 'and I only wonder that, having become public, the conditions have, nevertheless, been told with so much accuracy; but what has this to do with the issue of the combat, if the Douglas and I should chance to meet? I will not surely be disposed to fight with less animation because I wear my fortune upon my sword, or become coward because I fight for a portion of the Douglas's estate, as well as for fame and for fatherland? And, after all'——

'Hear me,' said the minstrel; 'an ancient gleeman has said that in a false quarrel there is no true valour, and the *los* or praise won therein is, when balanced against honest fame, as valueless as a wreath formed out of copper, compared to a chaplet of pure gold; but I bid you not take me for thy warrant in this important question. Thou well knowest how James of Thirlwall, the last English commander before Sir John de Walton, was surprised, and the castle sacked with circumstances of great inhumanity.'

'Truly,' said Sir Aymer, 'I think that Scotland and England both have heard of that onslaught, and of the disgusting proceedings of the Scottish chieftain, when he caused transport into the wild forest, gold, silver, ammunition, and armour, and all things that could be easily removed, and destroyed a large quantity of provisions in a manner equally savage and unheard-of.'

'Perhaps, Sir Knight,' said Bertram, 'you were yourself an eyewitness of that transaction, which has been spoken of far and wide, and is called the Douglas Larder?'

'I saw not the actual accomplishment of the deed,' said De Valence; 'that is, I witnessed it not a-doing, but I beheld enough of the sad relics to make the Douglas Larder never by me to be forgotten as a record of horror and abomination. I would speak it truly, by the hand of my father and by my honour as a knight! and I will leave it to thee to judge whether it was a deed calculated to secure the smiles of Heaven in favour of the actors. This is my edition of the story:—

'A large quantity of provisions had during two years or thereabouts been collected from different points, and the Castle of Douglas, newly repaired, and, as was thought, carefully guarded, was appointed as the place where the said provisions were to be put in store for the service of the King of England, or of the Lord Clifford, whichever should first enter the Western Marches with an English army, and stand in need of such a supply. This army was also to relieve our wants, I mean those of my uncle the Earl of Pembroke, who for some time before had lain with a considerable force in the town called Ayr, near the old Caledonian Forest, and where we had hot wars with the insurgent Scots. Well, sir, it happened, as in similar cases, that Thirlwall, though a bold and active soldier, was surprised in the Castle of Douglas, about Hallowmass, by this same worthy, young James Douglas. In no very good humour was he, as you may suppose; for his father, called William the Hardy, or William Longlegs, having refused, on any terms, to become Anglocised, was made a lawful prisoner, and died as such, closely confined in Berwick, or, as some say, in Newcastle. The news of his father's death had put young Douglas into no small rage, and tended, I think, to suggest what he did in his resentment. Embarrassed by the quantity of provisions which he found in the castle, which, the English being superior in the country, he had neither the means to remove, nor the leisure to stay and consume, the fiend, as I think, inspired him with a contrivance to render them unfit for human use. You shall judge yourself whether it was likely to be suggested by a good or an evil spirit.

'According to this device, the gold, silver, and other transportable commodities being carried to secret places of safety, Douglas caused the meat, the malt, and other corn or grain, to be brought down into the castle cellar, where he emptied the contents of the sacks into one loathsome heap, striking out the heads of the barrels and puncheons, so as to let the mingled drink run through the heap of meal, grain, and so forth. The bullocks provided for slaughter were in like manner knocked on the head, and their blood suffered to drain into the mass of edible substances; and lastly, the flesh of these oxen was buried in the same mass, in which were also included the dead bodies of those in the castle, who, receiving no quarter from the Douglas, paid dear enough for having kept no better watch. This base and unworthy abuse of provisions intended for the use of man, together with throwing into the well of the castle carcasses of men and horses, and other filth for polluting the same, has since that time been called the Douglas Larder.'

'I pretend not, good Sir Aymer,' said the minstrel, 'to vindicate what you justly reprove, nor can I conceive any mode of rendering provisions arranged after the form of the Douglas Larder, proper for the use of any Christian; yet this young gentleman might perhaps act under the sting of natural resentment, rendering his singular exploit more excusable than it may

seem at first. Think, if your own noble father had just died in a lingering captivity, his inheritance seized upon, and occupied as a garrison by a foreign enemy, would not these things stir you to a mode of resentment, which in cold blood, and judging of it as the action of an enemy, your honour might hold in natural and laudable abhorrence?—Would you pay respect to dead and senseless objects, which no one could blame your appropriating to your own use, or even scruple the refusal of quarter to prisoners, which is so often practised even in wars which are otherwise termed fair and humane?'

'You press me close, minstrel,' said Aymer de Valence. 'I at least have no great interest to excuse the Douglas in this matter, since its consequences were, that I myself, and the rest of my uncle's host, laboured with Clifford and his army to rebuild this same Dangerous Castle; and, feeling no stomach for the cheer that the Douglas had left us, we suffered hard commons, though I acknowledge we did not hesitate to adopt for our own use such sheep and oxen as the miserable Scots had still left around their farm-houses; and I jest not, Sir Minstrel, when I acknowledge, in sad earnest, that we martial men ought to make our petitions with peculiar penitence to Heaven for mercy, when we reflect on the various miseries which the nature of our profession compels us to inflict on each other.'

'It seems to me,' answered the minstrel, 'that those who feel the stings of their own conscience should be more lenient when they speak of the offences of others; nor do I greatly rely on a sort of prophecy which was delivered, as the men of this hill district say, to the young Douglas, by a man who in the course of nature should have been long since dead, promising him a course of success against the English for having sacrificed his own castle to prevent their making it a garrison.'

'We have time enough for the story,' said Sir Aymer, 'and methinks it would suit a knight and a minstrel better than the grave converse we have hitherto held, which would have beseemed—so God save me—the mouths of two travelling friars.'

'So be it,' said the minstrel; 'the rote or the viol easily changes its time and varies its note.'

CHAPTER V.

A tale of sorrow, for your eyes may weep;
A tale of horror, for your flesh may tingle;
A tale of wonder, for the eyebrows arch,
And the flesh curdles if you read it rightly.
OLD PLAY.

'YOUR honour must be informed, gentle Sir Aymer de Valence, that I have heard this story told at a great distance from the land in which it happened, by a sworn minstrel, the ancient friend and servant of the House of Douglas, one of the best, it is said, who ever belonged to that noble family. This minstrel, Hugo Hugonet by name, attended his young master when on this fierce exploit, as was his wont.

'The castle was in total tumult; in one corner the war-men were busy breaking up and destroying provisions; in another, they were slaying men, horses, and cattle, and these actions were accompanied with appropriate sounds. The cattle, particularly, had become sensible of their impending fate, and, with awkward resistance and piteous cries, testified that reluctance with which these poor creatures look instinctively on the shambles. The groans and screams of men undergoing, or about to undergo, the stroke of death, and the screeches of the poor horses which were in mortal agony, formed a fearful chorus. Hugonet was desirous to remove himself from such unpleasant sights and sounds; but his master, the Douglas, had been a man of some reading, and his old servant was anxious to secure a book of poetry, to which he had been attached of old. This contained the lays of an ancient Scottish bard, who, if an ordinary human creature while he was in this life, cannot now perhaps be exactly termed such.

'He was, in short, that Thomas, distinguished by the name of the Rhymer, and whose intimacy, it is said, became so great with the gifted people called the Faëry folk, that he could, like them, foretell the future deed before it came to pass, and united in his own person the quality of bard and of soothsayer. But of late years he had vanished almost entirely from this mortal scene; and although the time and manner of his death were never publicly known, yet the general belief was, that he was not severed from the land of the living, but removed to the land of Faëry, from whence he sometimes made excursions, and concerned himself only about matters which were to come hereafter. Hugonet was the more earnest to prevent the loss of the works of this ancient bard, as many of his poems and predictions were said to be preserved in the castle, and were supposed to contain much especially connected with the old House of Douglas, as well as other families of ancient descent, who had been subjects of this old man's prophecy; and accordingly he determined to save this volume from destruction in the general conflagration, to which the building was about to be consigned by the heir of its ancient proprietors. With this view he hurried up into the little old vaulted room, called "the Douglas's study," in which there might be some dozen old books written by the ancient chaplains, in what the minstrels call *the letter black*. He immediately discovered the celebrated lay, called Sir Tristrem,* which has been so often altered and abridged as to bear little resemblance to the original. Hugonet, who well knew the value in which this poem was held by the ancient lords of the castle, took the parchment volume from the shelves of the library, and laid it upon a small desk adjacent to the baron's chair. Having made such preparations for putting it in safety, he fell into a brief reverie, in which the decay of light, and the preparations for the Douglas Larder, but especially the last sight of objects which had been familiar to his eyes, now on the eve of destruction, engaged him at that moment.

* [The metrical Romance of Sir Tristrem, first published by Sir Walter Scott in 1804, who ascribed it to Thomas of Ercildoune, called 'the Rhymer.']

'The bard, therefore, was thinking within himself upon the uncommon mixture of the mystical scholar and warrior in his old master, when, as he bent his eyes upon the book of the ancient Rhymer, he was astonished to observe it slowly removed from the desk on which it lay by an invisible hand. The old man looked with horror at the spontaneous motion of the book, for the safety of which he was interested, and had the courage to approach a little nearer the table, in order to discover by what means it had been withdrawn.

'I have said the room was already becoming dark, so as to render it difficult to distinguish any person in the chair, though it now appeared, on closer examination, that a kind of shadowy outline of a human form was seated in it, but neither precise enough to convey its exact figure to the mind, nor so detailed as to intimate distinctly its mode of action. The Bard of Douglas, therefore, gazed upon the object of his fear, as if he had looked upon something not mortal; nevertheless, as he gazed more intently, he became more capable of discovering the object which offered itself to his eyes, and they grew by degrees more keen to penetrate what they witnessed. A tall thin form, attired in, or rather shaded with, a long flowing dusky robe, having a face and physiognomy so wild and overgrown with hair as to be hardly human, were the only marked outlines of the phantom; and, looking more attentively, Hugonet was still sensible of two other forms, the outlines, it seemed, of a hart and a hind, which appeared half to shelter themselves behind the person and under the robe of this supernatural figure.'

'A probable tale,' said the knight, 'for you, Sir Minstrel, a man of sense as you seem to be, to recite so gravely! From what wise authority have you had this tale, which, though it might pass well enough amid clanging beakers, must be held quite apocryphal in the sober hours of the morning?'

'By my minstrel word, Sir Knight,' answered Bertram, 'I am no propagator of the fable, if it be one; Hugonet, the violer, when he had retired into a cloister near the Lake of Pembelmere in Wales, communicated the story to me as I now tell it. Therefore, as it was upon the authority of an eyewitness, I apologise not for relating it to you, since I could hardly discover a more direct source of knowledge.'

'Be it so, Sir Minstrel,' said the knight; 'tell on thy tale, and may thy legend escape criticism from others as well as from me.'

'Hugonet, Sir Knight,' answered Bertram, 'was a holy man, and maintained a fair character during his whole life, notwithstanding his trade may be esteemed a light one. The vision spoke to him in an antique language, like that formerly used in the kingdom of Strath-Clyde, being a species of Scots or Gaelic, which few would have comprehended.

'"You are a learned man," said the apparition, "and not unacquainted with the dialects used in your country formerly, although they are now out of date, and you are obliged to translate them into the vulgar Saxon of Deira or Northumberland; but highly must an ancient British bard prize one in this 'remote term of time,' who sets upon the poetry of his native country a value which invites him to think of its preservation at a moment of such terror as influences the present evening."

'"It is, indeed," said Hugonet, "a night of terror, that calls even the dead from the grave, and makes them the ghastly and fearful companions of the living—Who or what art thou, in God's name, who breakest the bounds which divide them, and revisitest thus strangely the state thou hast so long bid adieu to?"

'"I am," replied the vision, "that celebrated Thomas the Rhymer, by some called Thomas of Ercildoun, or Thomas the True Speaker. Like other sages, I am permitted at times to revisit the scenes of my former life, nor am I incapable of removing the shadowy clouds and darkness which overhang futurity; and know, thou afflicted man, that what thou now seest in this woeful country, is not a general emblem of what shall therein befall hereafter, but in proportion as the Douglasses are now suffering the loss and destruction of their home for their loyalty to the rightful heir of the Scottish kingdom, so hath Heaven appointed for them a just reward; and as they have not spared to burn and destroy their own house and that of their fathers in the Bruce's cause, so is it the doom of Heaven, that as often as the walls of Douglas Castle shall be burnt to the ground, they shall be again rebuilt still more stately and more magnificent than before."

'A cry was now heard like that of a multitude in the court-yard, joining in a fierce shout of exultation; at the same time a broad and ruddy glow seemed to burst from the beams and rafters, and sparks flew from them as from the smith's stithy, while the element caught to its fuel, and the conflagration broke its way through every aperture.

'"See ye that?" said the vision, casting his eye towards the windows and disappearing—"Begone! The fated hour of removing this book is not yet come, nor are thine the destined hands. But it will be safe where I have placed it, and the time of its removal shall come." The voice was heard after the form had vanished, and the brain of Hugonet almost turned round at the wild scene which he beheld; his utmost exertion was scarcely sufficient to withdraw him from the terrible spot, and Douglas Castle that night sunk into ashes and smoke, to arise, in no great length of time, in a form stronger than ever.' The minstrel stopped, and his hearer, the English knight, remained silent for some minutes ere at length he replied.

'It is true, minstrel,' answered Sir Aymer, 'that your tale is so far undeniable, that this castle—three times burned down by the heir of the house and of the barony—has hitherto been as often reared again by Henry Lord Clifford, and other generals of the English, who endeavoured on every occasion to build it up more artificially and more strongly than it had formerly existed, since it occupies a position too important to the safety of our Scottish border to permit our yielding it up. This I myself have partly witnessed. But I cannot think that, because the castle has been so destroyed, it is therefore decreed so to be repaired in future, considering

that such cruelties, as surely cannot meet the approbation of Heaven, have attended the feats of the Douglasses. But I see thou art determined to keep thine own faith, nor can I blame thee, since the wonderful turns of fate which have attended this fortress are sufficient to warrant any one to watch for what seem the peculiar indications of the will of Heaven; but thou mayst believe, good minstrel, that the fault shall not be mine, if the young Douglas shall have opportunity to exercise his cookery upon a second edition of his family larder, or to profit by the predictions of Thomas the Rhymer.'

'I do not doubt due circumspection upon your own part and Sir John de Walton's,' said Bertram; 'but there is no crime in my saying that Heaven can accomplish its own purposes. I look upon Douglas Castle as in some degree a fated place, and I long to see what changes time may have made in it during the currency of twenty years. Above all, I desire to secure, if possible, the volume of this Thomas of Ercildoun, having in it such a fund of forgotten minstrelsy, and of prophecies respecting the future fates of the British kingdom, both northern and southern.'

The knight made no answer, but rode a little space forward, keeping the upper part of the ridge of the water, by which the road down the vale seemed to be rather sharply conducted. It at length attained the summit of an acclivity of considerable length. From this point, and behind a conspicuous rock, which appeared to have been pushed aside, as it were, like the scene of a theatre, to admit a view of the under part of the valley, the travellers beheld the extensive vale, parts of which have been already shown in detail, but which, as the river became narrower, was now entirely laid bare in its height and depth as far as it extended, and displayed in its precincts, at a little distance from the course of the stream, the towering and lordly castle to which it gave the name. The mist, which continued to encumber the valley with its fleecy clouds, showed imperfectly the rude fortifications which served to defend the small town of Douglas, which was strong enough to repel a desultory attack, but not to withstand what was called in those days a formal siege. The most striking feature was its church, an ancient Gothic pile raised on an eminence in the centre of the town, and even then extremely ruinous. To the left, and lying in the distance, might be seen other towers and battlements; and, divided from the town by a piece of artificial water, which extended almost around it, arose the Dangerous Castle of Douglas.

Sternly was it fortified, after the fashion of the Middle Ages, with donjon and battlements; displaying above others the tall tower, which bore the name of Lord Henry's or the Clifford's Tower.

'Yonder is the castle,' said Aymer de Valence, extending his arm with a smile of triumph upon his brow; 'thou mayst judge thyself, whether the defences added to it under the Clifford are likely to render its next capture a more easy deed than the last.'

The minstrel barely shook his head, and quoted from the Psalmist—'*Nisi Dominus custodiet.*' Nor did he prosecute the discourse, though De Valence answered eagerly, 'My own edition of the text is not very different from thine; but methinks thou art more spiritually minded than can always be predicated of a wandering minstrel.'

'God knows,' said Bertram, 'that if I, or such as I, are forgetful of the finger of Providence in accomplishing its purposes in this lower world, we have heavier blame than that of other people, since we are perpetually called upon, in the exercise of our fanciful profession, to admire the turns of fate which bring good out of evil, and which render those who think only of their own passions and purposes the executors of the will of Heaven.'

'I do submit to what you say, Sir Minstrel,' answered the knight, 'and it would be unlawful to express any doubt of the truths which you speak so solemnly, any more than of your own belief in them. Let me add, sir, that I think I have power enough in this garrison to bid you welcome, and Sir John de Walton, I hope, will not refuse access to hall, castle, or knight's bower to a person of your profession, and by whose conversation we shall, perhaps, profit somewhat. I cannot, however, lead you to expect such indulgence for your son, considering the present state of his health; but if I procure him the privilege to remain at the convent of Saint Bride, he will be there unmolested and in safety, until you have renewed your acquaintance with Douglas Dale and its history, and are disposed to set forward on your journey.'

'I embrace your honour's proposal the more willingly,' said the minstrel, 'that I can recompense the Father Abbot.'

'A main point with holy men or women,' replied De Valence, 'who, in time of warfare, subsist by affording the visitors of their shrine the means of maintenance in their cloisters for a passing season.'

The party now approached the sentinels on guard at the castle, who were closely and thickly stationed, and who respectfully admitted Sir Aymer de Valence, as next in command under Sir John de Walton. Fabian—for so was the young squire named who attended on De Valence—mentioned it as his master's pleasure that the minstrel should also be admitted.

An old archer, however, looked hard at the minstrel as he followed Sir Aymer. 'It is not for us,' said he, 'or any of our degree, to oppose the pleasure of Sir Aymer de Valence, nephew to the Earl of Pembroke, in such a matter; and for us, Master Fabian, welcome are you to make the gleeman your companion both at bed and board, as well as your visitant, a week or two at the Castle of Douglas; but your worship is well aware of the strict order of watch laid upon us, and if Solomon, King of Israel, were to come here as a travelling minstrel, by my faith I durst not give him entrance, unless I had positive authority from Sir John de Walton.'

'Do you doubt, sirrah,' said Sir Aymer de Valence, who returned on hearing an altercation betwixt Fabian and the archer—'do you doubt that I have good authority to entertain a guest, or do you presume to contest it?'

'Heaven forbid,' said the old man, 'that I

should presume to place my own desire in opposition to your worship, who has so lately and so honourably acquired your spurs; but in this matter I must think what will be the wish of Sir John de Walton, who is your governor, Sir Knight, as well as mine; and so far I hold it worth while to detain your guest until Sir John return from a ride to the outposts of the castle; and this, I conceive, being my duty, will be no matter of offence to your worship.'

'Methinks,' said the knight, 'it is saucy in thee to suppose that my commands can have anything in them improper, or contradictory to those of Sir John de Walton; thou mayst trust to me at least that thou shalt come to no harm. Keep this man in the guard-room; let him not want good cheer, and when Sir John de Walton returns, report him as a person admitted by my invitation, and if anything more be wanted to make out your excuse, I shall not be reluctant in stating it to the governor.'

The archer made a signal of obedience with the pike which he held in his hand, and resumed the grave and solemn manner of a sentinel upon his post. He first, however, ushered in the minstrel, and furnished him with food and liquor, speaking at the same time to Fabian, who remained behind. The smart young stripling had become very proud of late, in consequence of obtaining the name of Sir Aymer's squire, and advancing a step in chivalry, as Sir Aymer himself had, somewhat earlier than the usual period, been advanced from squire to knight.

'I tell thee, Fabian,' said the old archer (whose gravity, sagacity, and skill in his vocation, while they gained him the confidence of all in the castle, subjected him, as he himself said, occasionally to the ridicule of the young coxcombs; and at the same time, we may add, rendered him somewhat pragmatic and punctilious towards those who stood higher than himself in birth and rank); 'I tell thee, Fabian, thou wilt do thy master Sir Aymer good service, if thou wilt give him a hint to suffer an old archer, man-at-arms, or such like, to give him a fair and civil answer respecting that which he commands; for undoubtedly it is not in the first score of a man's years that he learns the various proper forms of military service; and Sir John de Walton, a most excellent commander, no doubt, is one earnestly bent on pursuing the strict line of his duty, and will be rigorously severe, as well, believe me, with thy master as with a lesser person. Nay, he also possesses that zeal for his duty which induces him to throw blame, if there be the slightest ground for it, upon Aymer de Valence himself, although his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, was Sir John de Walton's steady patron, and laid the beginning of his good fortune; for all which, by training up his nephew in the true discipline of the French wars, Sir John has taken the best way of showing himself grateful to the old Earl.'

'Be it as you will, old Gilbert Greenleaf,' answered Fabian; 'thou knowest I never quarrel with thy sermonizing, and therefore give me credit for submitting to many a lecture from Sir John de Walton and thyself; but thou drivest this a little too far, if thou canst not let a day pass without giving me a flogging. Credit me, Sir John de Walton will not thank thee, if thou term him one too old to remember that he himself had once some green sap in his veins. Ay, thus it is, the old man will not forget that he has once been young, nor the young that he must some day be old; and so the one changes his manners into the lingering formality of advanced age, and the other remains like a midsummer torrent swollen with rain, every drop of water in it noise, froth, and overflow. There is a maxim for thee, Gilbert!—Heardest thou ever better? hang it up amidst thy axioms of wisdom, and see if it will not pass among them like fifteen to the dozen. It will serve to bring thee off, man, when the wine-pot (thine only fault, good Gilbert) hath brought thee on occasion into something of a scrape.'

'Best keep it for thyself, good Sir Squire,' said the old man; 'methinks it is more like to stand thyself one day in good stead. Who ever heard of a knight, or of the wood of which a knight is made, and that is a squire, being punished corporally, like a poor old archer or horseboy? Your worst fault will be mended by some of these witty sayings, and your best service will scarce be rewarded more thankfully than by giving thee the name of Fabian the Fabler, or some such witty title.'

Having unloosed his repartee to this extent, old Greenleaf resumed a certain acidity of countenance, which may be said to characterize those whose preferment hath become frozen under the influence of the slowness of its progress, and who display a general spleen against such as have obtained the advancement for which all are struggling, earlier, and, as they suppose, with less merit than their own. From time to time the eye of the old sentinel stole from the top of his pike, and with an air of triumph rested upon the young man Fabian, as if to see how deeply the wound had galled him, while at the same time he held himself on the alert to perform whatever mechanical duty his post might require. Both Fabian and his master were at the happy period of life when such discontent as that of the grave archer affected them lightly, and, at the very worst, was considered as the jest of an old man and a good soldier; the more especially, as he was always willing to do the duty of his companions, and was much trusted by Sir John de Walton, who, though very much younger, had been bred up like Greenleaf in the wars of Edward the First, and was tenacious in upholding strict discipline, which, since the death of that great monarch, had been considerably neglected by the young and warm-blooded valour of England.

Meantime it occurred to Sir Aymer de Valence, that though, in displaying the usual degree of hospitality shown to such a man as Bertram, he had merely done what was becoming his own rank, as one possessed of the highest honours of chivalry—the self-styled minstrel might not in reality be a man of that worth which he assumed. There was certainly something in his conversation, at least more grave, if not more austere, than was common to those of his calling; and when he recollected many points of Sir John de

Walton's minuteness, a doubt arose in his mind, that the governor might not approve of his having introduced into the castle a person of Bertram's character, who was capable of making observations from which the garrison might afterwards feel much danger and inconvenience. Secretly, therefore, he regretted that he had not fairly intimated to the wandering minstrel that his reception, or that of any stranger, within the Dangerous Castle, was not at present permitted by the circumstances of the times. In this case, the express line of his duty would have been his vindication, and instead, perhaps, of discountenance and blame, he would have had praise and honour from his superior.

With these thoughts passing through his mind, some tacit apprehension arose of a rebuke on the part of his commanding officer; for this officer, notwithstanding his strictness, Sir Aymer loved as well as feared. He went, therefore, towards the guard-room of the castle, under the pretence of seeing that the rites of hospitality had been duly observed towards his late travelling companion. The minstrel arose respectfully, and, from the manner in which he paid his compliments, seemed, if he had not expected this call of inquiry, at least to be in no degree surprised at it. Sir Aymer, on the other hand, assumed an air something more distant than he had yet used towards Bertram, and, in reverting to his former invitation, he now so far qualified it as to say that the minstrel knew that he was only second in command, and that effectual permission to enter the castle ought to be sanctioned by Sir John de Walton.

There is a civil way of seeming to believe any apology which people are disposed to receive in payment, without alleging suspicion of its currency. The minstrel therefore tendered his thanks for the civility which had so far been shown to him. 'It was a mere wish of passing curiosity,' he said, 'which, if not granted, could be attended with no consequences either inconvenient or disagreeable to him. Thomas of Ercildoun was, according to the Welsh triads, *one of the three bards of Britain* who never stained a spear with blood, or was guilty either of taking or retaking castles and fortresses, and thus far not a person likely, after death, to be suspected of such warlike feats. But I can easily conceive why Sir John de Walton should have allowed the usual rites of hospitality to fall into disuse, and why a man of public character like myself ought not to desire food or lodging where it is accounted so dangerous; and it can surprise no one why the governor did not even invest his worthy young lieutenant with the power of dispensing with so strict and unusual a rule.'

These words, very coolly spoken, had something of the effect of affronting the young knight, as insinuating that he was not held sufficiently trustworthy by Sir John de Walton, with whom he had lived on terms of affection and familiarity, though the governor had attained his thirtieth year and upwards, and his lieutenant did not yet write himself one-and-twenty, the full age of chivalry having been in his case particularly dispensed with, owing to a feat of early manhood. Ere he had fully composed the angry thoughts which were chafing in his mind, the sound of a hunting bugle was heard at the gate, and from the sort of general stir which it spread through the garrison, it was plain that the governor had returned from his ride. Every sentinel, seemingly animated by his presence, shouldered his pike more uprightly, gave the word of the post more sharply, and seemed more fully awake and conscious of his duty. Sir John de Walton, having alighted from his horse, asked Greenleaf what had passed during his absence; the old archer thought it his duty to say that a minstrel, who seemed like a Scotchman, or wandering borderer, had been admitted into the castle, while his son, a lad sick of the pestilence so much talked of, had been left for a time at the Abbey of Saint Bride. This he said on Fabian's information. The archer added, that the father was a man of tale and song, who could keep the whole garrison amused, without giving them leave to attend to their own business.

'We want no such devices to pass the time,' answered the governor; 'and we would have been better satisfied if our lieutenant had been pleased to find us other guests, and fitter for a direct and frank communication, than one who, by his profession, is a detractor of God and a deceiver of man.'

'Yet,' said the old soldier, who could hardly listen even to his commander without indulging the humour of contradiction, 'I have heard your honour intimate that the trade of a minstrel, when it is justly acted up to, is as worthy as even the degree of knighthood itself.'

'Such it may have been in former days,' answered the knight; 'but in modern minstrelsy, the duty of rendering the art an incentive to virtue is forgotten, and it is well if the poetry which fired our fathers to noble deeds does not now push on their children to such as are base and unworthy. But I will speak upon this to my friend Aymer, than whom I do not know a more excellent, or a more high-spirited young man.'

While discoursing with the archer in this manner, Sir John de Walton, of a tall and handsome figure, advanced and stood within the ample arch of the guard-room chimney, and was listened to in reverential silence by trusty Gilbert, who filled up with nods and signs, as an attentive auditor, the pauses in the conversation. The conduct of another hearer of what passed was not equally respectful, but from his position he escaped observation.

This third person was no other than the squire Fabian, who was concealed from observation by his position behind the hob, or projecting portion of the old-fashioned fireplace, and hid himself yet more carefully when he heard the conversation between the governor and the archer turn to the prejudice, as he thought, of his master, The squire's employment at this time was the servile task of cleaning Sir Aymer's arms, which was conveniently performed by heating upon the projection already specified, the pieces of steel armour for the usual thin coating of varnish. He could not, therefore, if he should be discovered, be considered as guilty of anything insolent or disrespectful. He was better

screened from view, as a thick smoke arose from a quantity of oak panelling, carved in many cases with the crest and achievements of the Douglas family, which, being the fuel nearest at hand, lay smouldering in the chimney, and gathering to a blaze.

The governor, unconscious of this addition to his audience, pursued his conversation with Gilbert Greenleaf: 'I need not tell you,' he said, 'that I am interested in the speedy termination of this siege or blockade, with which Douglas continues to threaten us; my own honour and affections are engaged in keeping this Dangerous Castle safe in England's behalf, but I am troubled at the admission of this stranger; and young De Valence would have acted more strictly in the line of his duty, if he had refused to this wanderer any communication with this garrison without my permission.'

'Pity it is,' replied old Greenleaf, shaking his head, 'that this good-natured and gallant young knight is somewhat drawn aside by the rash advices of his squire, the boy Fabian, who has bravery, but as little steadiness in him as a bottle of fermented small beer.'

'Now hang thee,' thought Fabian to himself, 'for an old relic of the wars, stuffed full of conceit and warlike terms, like the soldier who, to keep himself from the cold, has lapped himself so close in a tattered ensign for a shelter, that his very outside may show nothing but rags and blazonry.'

'I would not think twice of the matter, were the party less dear to me,' said Sir John de Walton. 'But I would fain be of use to this young man, even although I should purchase his improvement in military knowledge at the expense of giving him a little pain. Experience should, as it were, be burnt in upon the mind of a young man, and not merely impressed by marking the lines of his chart out for him with chalk; I will remember the hint you, Greenleaf, have given, and take an opportunity of severing these two young men; and though I most dearly love the one, and am far from wishing ill to the other, yet at present, as you well hint, the blind is leading the blind, and the young knight has for his assistant and counsellor too young a squire, and that must be amended.'

'Marry! out upon thee, old palmer-worm!' said the page within himself; 'have I found thee in the very fact of maligning myself and my master, as it is thy nature to do towards all the hopeful young buds of chivalry? If it were not to dirty the arms of an *élève* of chivalry, by measuring them with one of thy rank, I might honour thee with a knightly invitation to the field, while the scandal which thou hast spoken is still foul upon thy tongue; as it is, thou shalt not carry one kind of language publicly in the castle, and another before the governor, upon the footing of having served with him under the banner of Longshanks.* I will carry to my master this tale of thine evil intentions; and when we have concerted together, it shall appear whether the youthful spirits of the garrison or the grey-beards are most likely to be the hope and protection of this same Castle of Douglas.'

It is enough to say that Fabian pursued his purpose, in carrying to his master, and in no very good humour, the report of what had passed between Sir John de Walton and the old soldier. He succeeded in representing the whole as a formal offence intended to Sir Aymer de Valence; while all that the governor did to remove the suspicions entertained by the young knight, could not in any respect bring him to take a kindly view of the feelings of his commander towards him. He retained the impression which he had formed from Fabian's recital of what he had heard, and did not think he was doing Sir John de Walton any injustice in supposing him desirous to engross the greatest share of the fame acquired in the defence of the castle, and thrusting back his companions, who might reasonably pretend to a fair portion of it.

The mother of mischief, says a Scottish proverb, is no bigger than a midge's wing.† In this matter of quarrel, neither the young man nor the older knight had afforded each other any just cause of offence. De Walton was a strict observer of military discipline, in which he had been educated from his extreme youth, and by which he was almost as completely ruled as by his natural disposition; and his present situation added force to his original education.

Common report had even exaggerated the military skill, the love of adventure, and the great variety of enterprise, ascribed to James, the young Lord of Douglas. He had, in the eyes of this Southron garrison, the faculties of a fiend, rather than those of a mere mortal; for if the English soldiers cursed the tedium of the perpetual watch and ward upon the Dangerous Castle, which admitted of no relaxation from the severity of extreme duty, they agreed that a tall form was sure to appear to them, with a battle-axe in his hand, and, entering into conversation in the most insinuating manner, never failed, with an ingenuity and eloquence equal to that of a fallen spirit, to recommend to the discontented sentinel some mode in which, by giving his assistance to betray the English, he might set himself at liberty. The variety of these devices, and the frequency of their recurrence, kept Sir John de Walton's anxiety so perpetually upon the stretch, that he at no time thought himself exactly out of the Black Douglas's reach, any more than the good Christian supposes himself out of reach of the wiles of the devil; while every new temptation, instead of confirming his hope, seems to announce that the immediate retreat of the Evil One will be followed by some new attack yet more cunningly devised. Under this general state of anxiety and apprehension, the temper of the governor changed somewhat for the worse, and they who loved him best regretted most that he became addicted to complain of the want of diligence on the part of those who, neither invested with responsibility like his, nor animated by the hope of such splendid rewards, did not entertain the same degree of watchful and incessant suspicion as himself. The soldiers muttered that the vigilance of their governor was marked with severity; the officers and men of rank, of whom

* [The nickname of King Edward I. of England.]

† *i.e.* Gnat's wing.

there were several, as the castle was a renowned school of arms, and there was a certain merit attained even by serving within its walls, complained, at the same time, that Sir John de Walton no longer made parties for hunting, for hawking, or for any purpose which might soften the rigours of warfare, and suffered nothing to go forward but the precise discipline of the castle. On the other hand, it may be usually granted that the castle is well kept where the governor is a disciplinarian; and where feuds and personal quarrels are found in the garrison, the young men are usually more in fault than those whose greater experience has convinced them of the necessity of using the strictest precautions.

A generous mind—and such was Sir John de Walton's—is often in this way changed and corrupted by the habit of over vigilance, and pushed beyond its natural limits of candour. Neither was Sir Aymer de Valence free from a similar change; suspicion, though from a different cause, seemed also to threaten to bias his open and noble disposition, in those qualities which had hitherto been proper to him. It was in vain that Sir John de Walton studiously sought opportunities to give his younger friend indulgences, which at times were as far extended as the duty of the garrison permitted. The blow was struck; the alarm had been given to a proud and fiery temper on both sides; and while De Valence entertained an opinion that he was unjustly suspected by a friend, who was in several respects bound to him, De Walton, on the other hand, was led to conceive that a young man, of whom he took a charge as affectionate as if he had been a son of his own, and who owed to his lessons what he knew of warfare, and what success he had obtained in life, had taken offence at trifles, and considered himself ill treated on very inadequate grounds. The seeds of disagreement, thus sown between them, failed not, like the tares sown by the Enemy among the wheat, to pass from one class of the garrison to another; the soldiers, though without any better reason than merely to pass the time, took different sides between their governor and his young lieutenant; and so the ball of contention, being once thrown up between them, never lacked some arm or other to keep it in motion.

CHAPTER VI.

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny, and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
* * * * * *
Each spoke words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's dear brother,
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

CHRISTABELLE OF COLERIDGE.

In prosecution of the intention which, when his blood was cool, seemed to him wisest, Sir John de Walton resolved that he would go to the verge of indulgence with his lieutenant and his young officers, furnish them with every species of amusement which the place rendered possible, and make them ashamed of their discontent, by overloading them with courtesy. The first time, therefore, that he saw Aymer de Valence after his return to the castle, he addressed him in high spirits, whether real or assumed.

'What thinkest thou, my young friend,' said De Walton, 'if we try some of the woodland sports proper, they say, to this country? There are still in our neighbourhood some herds of the Caledonian breed of wild cattle, which are nowhere to be found except among the moorlands—the black and rugged frontier of what was anciently called the Kingdom of Strath-Clyde. There are some hunters, too, who have been accustomed to the sport, and who vouch that these animals are by far the most bold and fierce subjects of chase in the island of Britain.'

'You will do as you please,' replied Sir Aymer coldly; 'but it is not I, Sir John, who would recommend, for the sake of a hunting-match, that you should involve the whole garrison in danger; you know best the responsibilities incurred by your office here, and no doubt must have heedfully attended to them before making a proposal of such a nature.'

'I do indeed know my own duty,' replied De Walton, offended in turn, 'and might be allowed to think of yours also, without assuming more than my own share of responsibility; but it seems to me as if the commander of this Dangerous Castle, among other inabilities, were, as old people in this country say, subjected to a spell—and one which renders it impossible for him to guide his conduct so as to afford pleasure to those whom he is most desirous to oblige. Not a great many weeks since, whose eyes would have sparkled like those of Sir Aymer de Valence at the proposal of a general hunting-match after a new object of game? and now what is his bearing when such sport is proposed, merely, I think, to disappoint my purpose of obliging him?—a cold acquiescence drops half-frozen from his lips, and he proposes to go to rouse the wild cattle with an air of gravity as if he were undertaking a pilgrimage to the tomb of a martyr.'

'Not so, Sir John,' answered the young knight. 'In our present situation we stand conjoined in more charges than one, and although the greater and controlling trust is no doubt laid upon you as the elder and abler knight, yet still I feel that I myself have my own share of a serious responsibility. I trust, therefore, you will indulgently hear my opinion, and bear with it, even though it should appear to have relation to that part of our common charge which is more especially entrusted to your keeping. The dignity of knighthood, which I have the honour to share with you, the *accolade* laid on my shoulder by the royal Plantagenet, entitles me, methinks, to so much grace.'

'I cry you mercy,' said the elder cavalier; 'I forgot how important a person I had before me, dubbed by King Edward himself, who was moved

no doubt by special reasons to confer such an early honour; and I certainly feel that I overstep my duty when I propose anything that savours like idle sport to a person of such grave pretensions.'

'Sir John de Walton,' retorted De Valence, 'we have had something too much of this—let it stop here. All that I mean to say is, that in this wardship of Douglas Castle, it will not be by my consent, if any amusement, which distinctly infers a relaxation of discipline, be unnecessarily engaged in, and especially such as compels us to summon to our assistance a number of the Scots, whose evil disposition towards us we well know; nor will I, though my years have rendered me liable to such suspicion, suffer anything of this kind to be imputed to me; and if unfortunately—though I am sure I know not why—we are in future to lay aside those bonds of familiar friendship which formerly linked us to each other, yet I see no reason why we should not bear ourselves in our necessary communications like knights and gentlemen, and put the best construction on each other's motives, since there can be no reason for imputing the worst to anything that comes from either of us.'

'You may be right, Sir Aymer de Valence,' said the governor, bending stiffly; 'and since you say we are no longer bound to each other as friends, you may be certain, nevertheless, that I will never permit a hostile feeling, of which you are the object, to occupy my bosom. You have been long, and I hope not uselessly, my pupil in the duties of chivalry. You are the near relation of the Earl of Pembroke, my kind and constant patron; and if these circumstances are well weighed, they form a connection which it would be difficult, at least for me, to break through. If you feel yourself, as you seem to intimate, less strictly tied by former obligations, you must take your own choice in fixing our relations towards each other.'

'I can only say,' replied De Valence, 'that my conduct will naturally be regulated by your own; and you, Sir John, cannot hope more devoutly than I do that our military duties may be fairly discharged, without interfering with our friendly intercourse.'

The knights here parted, after a conference which once or twice had very nearly terminated in a full and cordial explanation; but still there was wanting one kind heartfelt word from either to break, as it were, the ice which was fast freezing upon their intercourse, and neither chose to be the first in making the necessary advances with sufficient cordiality, though each would have gladly done so, had the other appeared desirous of meeting it with the same ardour; but their pride was too high, and prevented either from saying what might at once have put them upon an open and manly footing. They parted, therefore, without again returning to the subject of the proposed diversion; until it was afterwards resumed in a formal note, praying Sir Aymer de Valence to accompany the commandant of Douglas Castle upon a solemn hunting-match, which had for its object the wild cattle of the neighbouring dale.

The time of meeting was appointed at six in the morning, beyond the gate of the outer barricade; and the chase was declared to be ended in the afternoon, when the *recheat* should be blown beneath the great oak, known by the name of Sholto's Club, which stood a remarkable object, where Douglas Dale was bounded by several scattered trees, the outskirts of the forest and hill country. The usual warning was sent out to the common people, or vassals of the district, which they, notwithstanding their feeling of antipathy, received in general with delight, upon the great Epicurean principle of *carpe diem*, that is to say, in whatever circumstances it happens to present itself, be sure you lose no recreation which life affords. A hunting-match has still its attractions, even though an English knight take his pleasure in the woods of the Douglas.

It was no doubt afflicting to these faithful vassals to acknowledge another lord than the redoubted Douglas, and to wait by wood and river at the command of English officers, and in the company of their archers, whom they accounted their natural enemies. Still it was the only species of amusement which had been permitted them for a long time, and they were not disposed to omit the rare opportunity of joining in it. The chase of the wolf, the wild boar, or even the timid stag, required sylvan arms; the wild cattle still more demanded this equipment of war-bows and shafts, boar-spears and sharp swords, and other tools of the chase similar to those used in actual war. Considering this, the Scottish inhabitants were seldom allowed to join in the chase, except under regulations as to number and arms, and especially in preserving a balance of force on the side of the English soldiers, which was very offensive to them. The greater part of the garrison was upon such occasions kept on foot, and several detachments, formed according to the governor's direction, were stationed in different positions in case any quarrel should suddenly break out.

CHAPTER VII.

The drivers through the wood went,
For to raise the deer;
Bowmen bickered upon the bent,
With their broad arrows clear.

The wylde through the woods went,
On every side shear;
Greyhounds through the groves glent,
For to kill their deer.

BALLAD OF CHEVY-CHASE, *Old Edit.*

THE appointed morning came in cold and raw, after the manner of the Scottish March weather. Dogs yelped, yawned, and shivered, and the huntsmen, though hardy and cheerful in expectation of the day's sport, twitched their mauds, or Lowland plaids, close to their throats, and looked with some dismay at the mists which floated about the horizon, now threatening to sink down on the peaks and ridges of prominent mountains, and now to shift their position under the influence of some of the uncertain gales, which rose and fell alternately, as they swept along the valley.

Nevertheless, the appearance of the whole formed, as is usual in almost all departments of the chase, a gay and a jovial spectacle. A brief truce seemed to have taken place between the nations, and the Scottish people appeared for the time rather as exhibiting the sports of their mountains in a friendly manner to the accomplished knights and bonnie archers of Old England, than as performing a feudal service, neither easy nor dignified in itself, at the instigation of usurping neighbours. The figures of the cavaliers, now half seen, now exhibited fully, and at the height of strenuous exertion, according to the character of the dangerous and broken ground, particularly attracted the attention of the pedestrians, who, leading the dogs or beating the thickets, dislodged such objects of chase as they found in the dingles, and kept their eyes fixed upon their companions, rendered more remarkable from being mounted, and the speed at which they urged their horses; the disregard of all accidents being as perfect as Melton Mowbray itself, or any other noted field of hunters of the present day, can exhibit.

The principles on which modern and ancient hunting were conducted are, however, as different as possible. A fox, or even a hare, is, in our own day, considered as a sufficient apology for a day's exercise to forty or fifty dogs, and nearly as many men and horses; but the ancient chase, even though not terminating, as it often did, in battle, carried with it objects more important, and an interest immeasurably more stirring. If indeed one species of exercise can be pointed out as more universally exhilarating and engrossing than others, it is certainly that of the chase. The poor over-laboured drudge, who has served out his day of life, and wearied all his energies in the service of his fellow-mortals—he who has been for many years the slave of agriculture, or (still worse) of manufactures—engaged in raising a single peck of corn from year to year, or in the monotonous labours of the desk—can hardly remain dead to the general happiness when the chase sweeps past him with hound and horn, and for a moment feels all the exultation of the proudest cavalier who partakes the amusement. Let any one who has witnessed the sight recall to his imagination the vigour and lively interest which he has seen inspired into a village, including the oldest and feeblest of its inhabitants. In the words of Wordsworth, it is, on such occasions,

> Up, Timothy, up with your staff and away,
> Not a soul will remain in the village to-day;
> The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
> And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.

But compare these inspiring sounds to the burst of a whole feudal population enjoying the sport, whose lives, instead of being spent in the monotonous toil of modern avocations, have been agitated by the hazards of war, and of the chase, its near resemblance, and you must necessarily suppose that the excitation is extended, like a fire which catches to dry heath. To use the common expression, borrowed from another amusement, all is fish that comes in the net on such occasions. An ancient hunting-match (the nature of the carnage excepted) was almost equal to a modern battle, when the strife took place on the surface of a varied and unequal country. A whole district poured forth its inhabitants, who formed a ring of great extent, called technically a tinchel, and, advancing and narrowing their circle by degrees, drove before them the alarmed animals of every kind; all and each of which, as they burst from the thicket or the moorland, were objects of the bow, the javelin, or whatever missile weapons the hunters possessed; while others were run down and worried by large greyhounds, or more frequently brought to bay, when the more important persons present claimed for themselves the pleasure of putting them to death with their chivalrous hands, incurring individually such danger as is inferred from a mortal contest even with the timid buck, when he is brought to the death-struggle, and has no choice but yielding his life or putting himself upon the defensive, by the aid of his splendid antlers, and with all the courage of despair.

The quantity of game found in Douglas Dale on this occasion was very considerable, for, as already noticed, it was a long time since a hunting upon a great scale had been attempted under the Douglasses themselves, whose misfortunes had commenced several years before, with those of their country. The English garrison, too, had not sooner judged themselves strong or numerous enough to exercise these valued feudal privileges. In the meantime the game increased considerably. The deer, the wild cattle, and the wild boars lay near the foot of the mountains, and made frequent irruptions into the lower part of the valley, which in Douglas Dale bears no small resemblance to an oasis, surrounded by tangled woods and broken moors, occasionally rocky, and showing large tracts of that bleak dominion to which wild creatures gladly escape when pressed by the neighbourhood of man.

As the hunters traversed the spots which separated the field from the wood, there was always a stimulating uncertainty what sort of game was to be found, and the marksman, with his bow ready bent or his javelin poised, and his good and well-bitted horse thrown upon its haunches, ready for a sudden start, observed watchfully what should rush from the covert, so that, were it deer, boar, wolf, wild cattle, or any other species of game, he might be in readiness.

The wolf, which, on account of its ravages, was the most obnoxious of the beasts of prey, did not, however, supply the degree of diversion which his name promised; he usually fled far—in some instances many miles—before he took courage to turn to bay, and though formidable at such moments, destroying both dogs and men by his terrible bite, yet at other times was rather despised for his cowardice. The boar, on the other hand, was a much more irascible and courageous animal.

The wild cattle, the most formidable of all the tenants of the ancient Caledonian forest, were, however, to the English cavaliers, by far the most interesting objects of pursuit.* Altogether, the ringing of bugles, the clattering of horses' hoofs, the lowing and bellowing of the

* Note B. Scottish Wild Cattle.

enraged mountain cattle, the sobs of deer mangled by throttling dogs, the wild shouts of exultation of the men,—made a chorus which extended far through the scene in which it arose, and seemed to threaten the inhabitants of the valley even in its inmost recesses.

During the course of the hunting, when a stag or a boar was expected, one of the wild cattle often came rushing forward, bearing down the young trees, crashing the branches in its progress, and in general dispersing whatever opposition was presented to it by the hunters. Sir John de Walton was the only one of the chivalry of the party who individually succeeded in mastering one of those powerful animals. Like a Spanish tauridor, he bore down and killed with his lance a ferocious bull; two well-grown calves and three kine were also slain, being unable to carry off the quantity of arrows, javelins, and other missiles directed against them by the archers and drivers; but many others, in spite of every endeavour to intercept them, escaped to their gloomy haunts in the remote skirts of the mountain called Cairntable, with their hides well feathered with those marks of human enmity.

A large portion of the morning was spent in this way, until a particular blast from the master of the hunt announced that he had not forgot the discreet custom of the repast, which, on such occasions, was provided for upon a scale proportioned to the multitude who had been convened to attend the sport.

The blast peculiar to the time assembled the whole party in an open space in a wood, where their numbers had room and accommodation to sit down upon the green turf, the slain game affording a plentiful supply for roasting or broiling, an employment in which the lower class were all immediately engaged; while puncheons and pipes, placed in readiness, and scientifically opened, supplied Gascoigne wine, and mighty ale, at the pleasure of those who chose to appeal to them.

The knights, whose rank did not admit of interference, were seated by themselves, and ministered to by their squires and pages, to whom such menial services were not accounted disgraceful, but, on the contrary, a proper step of their education. The number of those distinguished persons seated upon the present occasion at the table of dais, as it was called (in virtue of a canopy of green boughs with which it was overshadowed), comprehended Sir John de Walton, Sir Aymer de Valence, and some reverend brethren dedicated to the service of Saint Bride, who, though Scottish ecclesiastics, were treated with becoming respect by the English soldiers. One or two Scottish retainers, or vavasours, maintaining, perhaps in prudence, a suitable deference to the English knights, sat at the bottom of the table, and as many English archers, peculiarly respected by their superiors, were invited, according to the modern phrase, to the honours of the sitting.

Sir John de Walton sat at the head of the table; his eye, though it seemed to have no certain object, yet never for a moment remained stationary, but glanced from one countenance to another of the ring formed by his guests, for such they all were, no doubt, though he himself could hardly have told upon what principle he had issued the invitations; and even apparently was at a loss to think what, in one or two cases, had procured him the honour of their presence.

One person in particular caught De Walton's eye, as having the air of a redoubted man-at-arms, although it seemed as if fortune had not of late smiled upon his enterprises. He was a tall raw-boned man, of an extremely rugged countenance, and his skin, which showed itself through many a loophole in his dress, exhibited a complexion which must have endured all the varieties of an outlawed life; and akin to one who had, according to the customary phrase, 'ta'en the bent with Robin Bruce,' in other words, occupied the moors with him as an insurgent. Some such idea certainly crossed De Walton's mind. Yet the apparent coolness, and absence of alarm, with which the stranger sat at the board of an English officer, at the same time being wholly in his power, had much in it which was irreconcilable with any such suggestion. De Walton, and several of those about him, had in the course of the day observed that this tattered cavalier, the most remarkable parts of whose garb and equipments consisted of an old coat-of-mail and a rusted yet massive partisan about eight feet long, was possessed of superior skill in the art of hunting to any individual of their numerous party. The governor having looked at this suspicious figure until he had rendered the stranger aware of the special interest which he attracted, at length filled a goblet of choice wine, and requested him, as one of the best pupils of Sir Tristrem * who had attended upon the day's chase, to pledge him in a vintage superior to that supplied to the general company.

'I suppose, however, sir,' said De Walton, 'you will have no objections to put off my challenge of a brimmer, until you can answer my pledge in Gascoigne wine, which grew in the king's own demesne, was pressed for his own lip, and is therefore fittest to be emptied to his Majesty's health and prosperity.'

'One half of the island of Britain,' said the woodsman, with great composure, 'will be of your honour's opinion; but as I belong to the other half, even the choicest liquor in Gascony cannot render that health acceptable to me.'

A murmur of disapprobation ran through the warriors present; the priests hung their heads, looked deadly grave, and muttered their paternosters.

'You see, stranger,' said De Walton sternly, 'that your speech discomposes the company.'

'It may be so,' replied the man, in the same blunt tone; 'and it may happen that there is no harm in the speech notwithstanding.'

'Do you consider that it is made in my presence?' answered De Walton.

'Yes, Sir Governor.'

'And have you thought what must be the necessary inference?' continued De Walton.

'I may form a round guess,' answered the stranger, 'what I might have to fear, if your safe conduct and word of honour, when inviting

* [A celebrated hunter in the mediæval romances.]

me to this hunting, were less trustworthy than I know full well it really is. But I am your guest—your meat is even now passing my throat—your cup, filled with right good wine, I have just now quaffed off—and I would not fear the rankest Paynim infidel, if we stood in such relation together, much less an English knight. I tell you, besides, Sir Knight, you undervalue the wine we have quaffed. The high flavour and contents of your cup, grow where it will, give me spirit to tell you one or two circumstances, which cold cautious sobriety would, in a moment like this, have left unsaid. You wish, I doubt not, to know who I am? My Christian name is Michael—my surname is that of Turnbull, a redoubted clan, to whose honours, even in the field of hunting or of battle, I have added something. My abode is beneath the mountain of Ruberslaw, by the fair streams of Teviot. You are surprised that I know how to hunt the wild cattle,—I, who have made them my sport from infancy in the lonely forests of Jed and Southdean,* and have killed more of them than you or any Englishman in your host ever saw, even if you include the doughty deeds of this day.'

The bold Borderer made this declaration with the same provoking degree of coolness which predominated in his whole demeanour, and was indeed his principal attribute. His effrontery did not fail to produce its effect upon Sir John de Walton, who instantly called out, 'To arms! to arms!—Secure the spy and traitor! Ho! pages and yeomen—William, Anthony, Bend-the-bow, and Greenleaf—seize the traitor, and bind him with your bow-strings and dog-leashes—bind him, I say, until the blood start from beneath his nails!'

'Here is a goodly summons!' said Turnbull, with a sort of horse-laugh. 'Were I as sure of being answered by twenty men I could name, there would be small doubt of the upshot of this day.'

The archers thickened around the hunter, yet laid no hold on him, none of them being willing to be the first who broke the peace proper to the occasion.

'Tell me,' said De Walton, 'thou traitor, for what waitest thou here?'

'Simply and solely,' said the Jed Forester, 'that I may deliver up to the Douglas the castle of his ancestors, and that I may insure thee, Sir Englishman, the payment of thy deserts, by cutting that very throat which thou makest such a bawling use of.'

At the same time, perceiving that the yeomen were crowding behind him to carry their lord's commands into execution so soon as they should be reiterated, the huntsman turned himself short round upon those who appeared about to surprise him, and having, by the suddenness of the action, induced them to step back a pace, he proceeded—'Yes, John de Walton, my purpose was ere now to have put thee to death, as one whom I find in possession of that castle and territory which belong to my master, a knight much more worthy than thyself; but I know not why I have paused—thou hast given me food when I have hungered for twenty-four hours, I have not therefore had the heart to pay thee at advantage as thou hast deserved. Begone from this place and country, and take the fair warning of a foe; thou hast constituted thyself the mortal enemy of this people, and there are those among them who have seldom been injured or defied with impunity. Take no care in searching after me, it will be in vain—until I meet thee at a time which will come at my pleasure, not thine. Push not your inquisition into cruelty, to discover by what means I have deceived you, for it is impossible for you to learn; and with this friendly advice, look at me and take your leave, for although we shall one day meet, it may be long ere I see you again.'

De Walton remained silent, hoping that his prisoner (for he saw no chance of his escaping) might, in his communicative humour, drop some more information, and was not desirous to precipitate a fray with which the scene was likely to conclude, unconscious, at the same time, of the advantage which he thereby gave the daring hunter.

As Turnbull concluded his sentence, he made a sudden spring backwards, which carried him out of the circle formed around him, and, before they were aware of his intentions, at once disappeared among the underwood.

'Seize him—seize him!' repeated De Walton; 'let us have him at least at our discretion, unless the earth has actually swallowed him.'

This indeed appeared not unlikely, for near the place where Turnbull had made the spring, there yawned a steep ravine, into which he plunged, and descended by the assistance of branches, bushes, and copsewood, until he reached the bottom, where he found some road to the outskirts of the forest, through which he made his escape, leaving the most expert woodsmen among the pursuers totally at fault, and unable to trace his footsteps.

CHAPTER VIII.

This interlude carried some confusion into the proceedings of the hunt, thus suddenly surprised by the apparition of Michael Turnbull, an armed and avowed follower of the House of Douglas, a sight so little to be expected in the territory where his master was held a rebel and a bandit, and where he himself must have been well known to most of the peasantry present. The circumstance made an obvious impression on the English chivalry. Sir John de Walton looked grave and thoughtful, ordered the hunters to be assembled on the spot, and directed his soldiers to commence a strict search among the persons who had attended the chase, so as to discover whether Turnbull had any companions among them; but it was too late to make that inquiry in the strict fashion which De Walton directed.

The Scottish attendants on the chase, when they beheld that the hunting, under pretence of which they were called together, was inter-

* [Both in the neighbourhood of Jedburgh, on the Borders.]

rupted for the purpose of laying hands upon their persons, and subjecting them to examination, took care to suit their answers to the questions put to them; in a word, they kept their own secret, if they had any. Many of them, conscious of being the weaker party, became afraid of foul play, slipped away from the places to which they had been appointed, and left the hunting-match, like men who conceived they had been invited with no friendly intent. Sir John de Walton became aware of the decreasing numbers of the Scottish—their gradual disappearance awakening in the English knight that degree of suspicion which had of late become his peculiar characteristic.

'Take, I pray thee,' said he to Sir Aymer de Valence, 'as many men-at-arms as thou canst get together in five minutes' space, and at least a hundred of the mounted archers, and ride as fast as thou canst, without permitting them to straggle from thy standard, to reinforce the garrison of Douglas; for I have my own thoughts what may have been attempted on the castle, when we observe with our own eyes such a nest of traitors here assembled.'

'With reverence, Sir John,' replied Aymer, 'you shoot in this matter rather beyond the mark. That the Scottish peasants have had bad thoughts against us, I will be the last to deny; but, long debarred from any sylvan sport, you cannot wonder at their crowding to any diversion by wood or river, and still less at their being easily alarmed as to the certainty of the safe footing on which they stand with us. The least rough usage is likely to strike them with fear, and with the desire of escape, and so'——

'And so,' said Sir John de Walton, who had listened with a degree of impatience scarce consistent with the grave and formal politeness which one knight was accustomed to bestow upon another, 'and so I would rather see Sir Aymer de Valence busy his horse's heels to execute my orders, than give his tongue the trouble of impugning them.'

At this sharp reprimand, all present looked at each other with indications of marked displeasure. Sir Aymer was highly offended, but saw it was no time to indulge in reprisal. He bowed until the feather which was in his barret-cap mingled with his horse's mane, and without reply—for he did not even choose to trust his voice in reply at the moment—headed a considerable body of cavalry by the straightest road back to the Castle of Douglas.

When he came to one of those eminences from which he could observe the massive and complicated towers and walls of the old fortress, with the glitter of the broad lake which surrounded it on three sides, he felt much pleasure at the sight of the great banner of England, which streamed from the highest part of the building. 'I knew it,' he internally said; 'I was certain that Sir John de Walton had become a very woman in the indulgence of his fears and suspicions. Alas! that a situation of responsibility should so much have altered a disposition which I have known so noble and so knightly! By this good day, I scarce know in what manner I should demean me when thus publicly rebuked before the garrison. Certainly he deserves that I should, at some time or other, let him understand that, however he may triumph in the exercise of his short-lived command, yet, when man is to meet with man, it will puzzle Sir John de Walton to show himself the superior of Aymer de Valence, or perhaps to establish himself as his equal. But if, on the contrary, his fears, however fantastic, are sincere at the moment he expresses them, it becomes me to obey punctually commands which, however absurd, are imposed in consequence of the governor's belief that they are rendered necessary by the times, and not inventions designed to vex and domineer over his officers in the indulgence of his official powers. I would I knew which is the true statement of the case, and whether the once famed De Walton is become afraid of his enemies more than fits a knight, or makes imaginary doubts the pretext of tyrannizing over his friend. I cannot say it would make much difference to me, but I would rather have it that the man I once loved had turned a petty tyrant than a weak-spirited coward; and I would be content that he should study to vex me, rather than be afraid of his own shadow.'

With these ideas passing in his mind, the young knight crossed the causeway which traversed the piece of water that fed the moat, and, passing under the strongly-fortified gateway, gave strict orders for letting down the portcullis, and elevating the drawbridge, even at the appearance of De Walton's own standard before it.

A slow and guarded movement from the hunting ground to the Castle of Douglas gave the governor ample time to recover his temper, and to forget that his young friend had shown less alacrity than usual in obeying his commands. He was even disposed to treat as a jest the length of time and extreme degree of ceremony with which every point of martial discipline was observed on his own re-admission to the castle, though the raw air of a wet spring evening whistled around his own unsheltered person, and those of his followers, as they waited before the castle gate for the exchange of passwords, the delivery of keys, and all the slow minutiæ attendant upon the movements of a garrison in a well-guarded fortress.

'Come,' said he to an old knight, who was peevishly blaming the lieutenant-governor, 'it was my own fault; I spoke but now to Aymer de Valence with more authoritative emphasis than his newly-dubbed dignity was pleased with, and this precise style of obedience is a piece of not unnatural and very pardonable revenge. Well, we will owe him a return, Sir Philip—shall we not? This is not a night to keep a man at the gate.'

This dialogue, overheard by some of the squires and pages, was bandied about from one to another, until it entirely lost the tone of good-humour in which it was spoken, and the offence was one for which Sir John de Walton and old Sir Philip were to meditate revenge, and was said to have been represented by the governor as a piece of mortal and intentional offence on the part of his subordinate officer.

Thus an increasing feud went on from day to day between two warriors, who, with no just cause of quarrel, had at heart every reason to esteem and love each other. It became visible

in the fortress even to those of the lower rank, who hoped to gain some consequence by intermingling in the species of emulation produced by the jealousy of the commanding officers—an emulation which may take place, indeed, in the present day, but can hardly have the same sense of wounded pride and jealous dignity attached to it, which existed in times when the personal honour of knighthood rendered those who possessed it jealous of every punctilio.

So many little debates took place between the two knights, that Sir Aymer de Valence thought himself under the necessity of writing to his uncle and namesake, the Earl of Pembroke, stating that his officer, Sir John de Walton, had unfortunately of late taken some degree of prejudice against him, and that, after having borne with many provoking instances of his displeasure, he was now compelled to request that his place of service should be changed from the Castle of Douglas, to wherever honour could be acquired, and time might be given to put an end to his present cause of complaint against his commanding officer. Through the whole letter, young Sir Aymer was particularly cautious how he expressed his sense of Sir John de Walton's jealousy or severe usage; but such sentiments are not easily concealed, and in spite of him an air of displeasure glanced out from several passages, and indicated his discontent with his uncle's old friend and companion in arms, and with the sphere of military duty which his uncle had himself assigned him.

An accidental movement among the English troops brought Sir Aymer an answer to his letter sooner than he could have hoped for at that time of day, in the ordinary course of correspondence, which was then extremely slow and interrupted.

Pembroke, a rigid old warrior, entertained the most partial opinion of Sir John de Walton, who was a work, as it were, of his own hands, and was indignant to find that his nephew, whom he considered as a mere boy, elated by having had the dignity of knighthood conferred upon him at an age unusually early, did not absolutely coincide with him in this opinion. He replied to him, accordingly, in a tone of high displeasure, and expressed himself as a person of rank would write to a young and dependent kinsman upon the duties of his profession; and, as he gathered his nephew's cause of complaint from his own letter, he conceived that he did him no injustice in making it slighter than it really was. He reminded the young man that the study of chivalry consisted in the faithful and patient discharge of military service, whether of high or low degree, according to the circumstances in which war placed the champion. That, above all, the post of danger, which Douglas Castle had been termed by common consent, was also the post of honour; and that a young man should be cautious how he incurred the supposition of being desirous of quitting his present honourable command, because he was tired of the discipline of a military director so renowned as Sir John de Walton. Much also there was, as was natural in a letter of that time, concerning the duty of young men, whether in council or in arms, to be guided implicitly by their elders; and it was observed, with justice, that the commanding officer, who had put himself into the situation of being responsible with his honour, if not his life, for the event of the siege or blockade, might justly, and in a degree more than common, claim the implicit direction of the whole defence. Lastly, Pembroke reminded his nephew that he was, in a great measure, dependent upon the report of Sir John de Walton for the character which he was to sustain in after life; and reminded him that a few actions of headlong and inconsiderate valour would not so firmly found his military reputation, as months and years spent in regular, humble, and steady obedience to the commands which the governor of Douglas Castle might think necessary in so dangerous a conjuncture.

This missive arrived within so short a time after the despatch of the letter to which it was a reply, that Sir Aymer was almost tempted to suppose that his uncle had some mode of corresponding with De Walton, unknown to the young knight himself, and to the rest of the garrison. And, as the earl alluded to some particular displeasure which had been exhibited by De Valence on a late trivial occasion, his uncle's knowledge of this, and other minutiæ, seemed to confirm his idea that his own conduct was watched in a manner which he did not feel honourable to himself, or dignified on the part of his relative; in a word, he conceived himself exposed to that sort of surveillance of which, in all ages, the young have accused the old. It hardly needs to say that the admonition of the Earl of Pembroke greatly chafed the fiery spirit of his nephew; insomuch that, if the earl had wished to write a letter purposely to increase the prejudices which he desired to put an end to, he could not have made use of terms better calculated for that effect.

The truth was, that the old archer, Gilbert Greenleaf, had, without the knowledge of the young knight, gone to Pembroke's camp, in Ayrshire, and was recommended by Sir John de Walton to the earl, as a person who could give such minute information respecting Aymer de Valence as he might desire to receive. The old archer was, as we have seen, a formalist, and, when pressed on some points of Sir Aymer de Valence's discipline, he did not hesitate to throw out hints, which, connected with those in the knight's letter to his uncle, made the severe old earl adopt too implicitly the idea that his nephew was indulging a spirit of insubordination, and a sense of impatience under authority, most dangerous to the character of a young soldier. A little explanation might have produced a complete agreement in the sentiments of both; but for this fate allowed neither time nor opportunity; and the old earl was unfortunately induced to become a party, instead of a negotiator, in the quarrel,

> And by decision more embroil'd the fray.

Sir John de Walton soon perceived that the receipt of Pembroke's letter did not in any respect alter the cold ceremonious conduct of his lieutenant towards him, which limited their intercourse to what their situation rendered indispensable, and exhibited no advances to any more frank or intimate connection. Thus, as

may sometimes be the case between officers in their relative situations even at the present day, they remained in that cold, stiff degree of official communication, in which their intercourse was limited to as few expressions as the respective duties of their situation absolutely demanded. Such a state of misunderstanding is, in fact, worse than a downright quarrel;—the latter may be explained or apologized for, or become the subject of mediation; but in such a case as the former, an *éclaircissement* is as unlikely to take place as a general engagement between two armies which have taken up strong defensive positions on both sides. Duty, however, obliged the two principal persons in the garrison of Douglas Castle to be often together, when they were so far from seeking an opportunity of making up matters, that they usually revived ancient subjects of debate.

It was upon such an occasion that De Walton, in a very formal manner, asked De Valence in what capacity, and for how long time, it was his pleasure that the minstrel called Bertram should remain at the castle.

'A week,' said the governor, 'is certainly long enough, in this time and place, to express the hospitality due to a minstrel.'

'Certainly,' replied the young man; 'I have not interest enough in the subject to form a single wish upon it.'

'In that case,' resumed De Walton, 'I shall request of this person to cut short his visit at the Castle of Douglas.'

'I know no particular interest,' replied Aymer de Valence, 'which I can possibly have in this man's motions. He is here under pretence of making some researches after the writings of Thomas of Ercildoun, called the Rhymer, which he says are infinitely curious, and of which there is a volume in the old Baron's study, saved somehow from the flames at the last conflagration. This told, you know as much of his errand as I do; and if you hold the presence of a wandering old man, and the neighbourhood of a boy, dangerous to the castle under your charge, you will no doubt do well to dismiss them—it will cost but a word of your mouth.'

'Pardon me,' said De Walton; 'the minstrel came here as one of your retinue, and I could not, in fitting courtesy, send him away without your leave.'

'I am sorry, then,' answered Sir Aymer, 'in my turn, that you did not mention your purpose sooner. I never entertained a dependent, vassal, or servant, whose residence in the castle I would wish to have prolonged a moment beyond your honourable pleasure.'

'I am sorry,' said Sir John de Walton, 'that we two have of late grown so extremely courteous that it is difficult for us to understand each other. This minstrel and his son come from we know not where, and are bound we know not whither. There is a report among some of your escort that this fellow Bertram upon the way had the audacity to impugn, even to your face, the King of England's right to the crown of Scotland, and that he debated the point with you, while your other attendants were desired by you to keep behind and out of hearing.'

'Hah!' said Sir Aymer, 'do you mean to found on that circumstance any charge against my loyalty? I pray you to observe that such an averment would touch mine honour, which I am ready and willing to defend to the last gasp.'

'No doubt of it, Sir Knight,' answered the governor; 'but it is the strolling minstrel, and not the high-born English knight, against whom the charge is brought. Well! the minstrel comes to this castle, and he intimates a wish that his son should be allowed to take up his quarters at the little old convent of Saint Bride, where two or three Scottish nuns and friars are still permitted to reside, most of them rather out of respect to their order, than for any good-will which they are supposed to bear the English or their sovereign. It may also be noticed, that this leave was purchased by a larger sum of money, if my information be correct, than is usually to be found in the purses of travelling minstrels, a class of wanderers alike remarkable for their poverty and for their genius. What do you think of all this?'

'I?'—replied De Valence; 'I am happy that my situation, as a soldier under command, altogether dispenses with my thinking of it at all. My post, as lieutenant of your castle, is such, that if I can manage matters so as to call my honour and my soul my own, I must think that quite enough of free-will is left at my command; and I promise you shall not have again to reprove, or send a bad report of me to my uncle, on that account.'

'This is beyond sufferance!' said Sir John de Walton half aside, and then proceeded aloud—'Do not, for Heaven's sake, do yourself and me the injustice of supposing that I am endeavouring to gain an advantage over you by these questions. Recollect, young knight, that when you evade giving your commanding officer your advice when required, you fail as much in point of duty, as if you declined affording him the assistance of your sword and lance.'

'Such being the case,' answered De Valence, 'let me know plainly on what matter it is that you require my opinion. I will deliver it plainly, and stand by the result, even if I should have the misfortune (a crime unpardonable in so young a man, and so inferior an officer) to differ from that of Sir John de Walton.'

'I would ask you, then, Sir Knight of Valence,' answered the governor, 'what is your opinion with respect to this minstrel Bertram, and whether the suspicions respecting him and his son are not such as to call upon me, in performance of my duty, to put them to a close examination, with the question ordinary and extraordinary, as is usual in such cases, and to expel them not only from the castle, but from the whole territory of Douglas Dale, under pain of scourging if they be again found wandering in these parts?'

'You ask me my opinion,' said De Valence, 'and you shall have it, Sir Knight of Walton, as freely and fairly as if matters stood betwixt us on a footing as friendly as they ever did. I agree with you, that most of those who in these days profess the science of minstrelsy are altogether unqualified to support the higher pretensions of that noble order. Minstrels by right are men who have dedicated themselves to

the noble occupation of celebrating knightly deeds and generous principles; it is in their verse that the valiant knight is handed down to fame, and the poet has a right, nay, is bound, to emulate the virtues which he praises. The looseness of the times has diminished the consequence and impaired the morality of this class of wanderers; their satire and their praise are now too often distributed on no other principle than love of gain; yet let us hope that there are still among them some who know, and also willingly perform, their duty. My own opinion is, that this Bertram holds himself as one who has not shared in the degradation of his brethren, nor bent the knee to the mammon of the times; it must remain with you, sir, to judge whether such a person, honourably and morally disposed, can cause any danger to the Castle of Douglas. But believing, from the sentiments he has manifested to me, that he is incapable of playing the part of a traitor, I must strongly remonstrate against his being punished as one, or subjected to the torture within the walls of an English garrison. I should blush for my country, if it required of us to inflict such wanton misery upon wanderers, whose sole fault is poverty; and your own knightly sentiments will suggest more than would become me to state to Sir John de Walton, unless in so far as is necessary to apologize for retaining my own opinion.'

Sir John de Walton's dark brow was stricken with red when he heard an opinion delivered in opposition to his own, which plainly went to stigmatize his advice as ungenerous, unfeeling, and unknightly. He made an effort to preserve his temper, while he thus replied with a degree of calmness: 'You have given your opinion, Sir Aymer de Valence; and that you have given it openly and boldly, without regard to my own, I thank you. It is not quite so clear that I am obliged to defer my own sentiments to yours, in case the rules on which I hold my office—the commands of the king—and the observations which I may personally have made, shall recommend to me a different line of conduct from that which you think it right to suggest.'

De Walton bowed, in conclusion, with great gravity; and the young knight, returning the reverence with exactly the same degree of stiff formality, asked whether there were any particular orders respecting his duty in the castle; and, having received an answer in the negative, took his departure.

Sir John de Walton, after an expression of impatience as if disappointed at finding that the advance which he had made towards an explanation with his young friend had proved unexpectedly abortive, composed his brow as if to deep thought, and walked several times to and fro in the apartment, considering what course he was to take in these circumstances. 'It is hard to censure him severely,' he said, 'when I recollect that, on first entering upon life, my own thoughts and feelings would have been the same with those of this giddy and hot-headed but generous boy. Now, prudence teaches me to suspect mankind in a thousand instances where perhaps there is not sufficient ground. If I am disposed to venture my own honour and fortune, rather than an idle travelling minstrel should suffer a little pain, which at all events I might make up to him by money, still, have I a right to run the risk of a conspiracy against the king, and thus advance the treasonable surrender of the Castle of Douglas, for which I know so many schemes are formed; for which, too, none can be imagined so desperate but agents will be found bold enough to undertake the execution? A man who holds my situation, although the slave of conscience, ought to learn to set aside those false scruples which assume the appearance of flowing from our own moral feeling, whereas they are in fact instilled by the suggestion of affected delicacy. I will not, I swear by Heaven, be infected by the follies of a boy such as Aymer; I will not, that I may defer to his caprices, lose all that love, honour, and ambition can propose, for the reward of twelve months' service, of a nature the most watchful and unpleasant. I will go straight to my point, and use the ordinary precautions in Scotland which I should employ in Normandy or Gascoigny.—What ho! page! who waits there?'

One of his attendants replied to his summons —'Seek me out Gilbert Greenleaf the archer, and tell him I would speak with him touching the two bows and the sheaf of arrows concerning which I gave him a commission to Ayr.'

A few minutes intervened after the order was given, when the archer entered, holding in his hand two bow-staves, not yet fashioned, and a number of arrows secured together with a thong. He bore the mysterious looks of one whose apparent business is not of very great consequence, but is meant as a passport for other affairs which are in themselves of a secret nature. Accordingly, as the knight was silent, and afforded no other opening for Greenleaf, that judicious negotiator proceeded to enter upon such as was open to him.

'Here are the bow-staves, noble sir, which you desired me to obtain while I was at Ayr with the Earl of Pembroke's army. They are not so good as I could have wished, yet are perhaps of better quality than could have been procured by any other than a fair judge of the weapon. The Earl of Pembroke's whole camp are frantic mad in order to procure real Spanish staves from the Groyne, and other parts in Spain; but though two vessels laden with such came into the port of Ayr, said to be for the King's army, yet I believe never one-half of them have come into English hands. These two grew in Sherwood, which, having been seasoned since the time of Robin Hood, are not likely to fail either in strength or in aim, in so strong a hand, and with so just an eye, as those of the men who wait on your worship.'

'And who has got the rest, since two ships' cargoes of new bow-staves are arrived at Ayr, and thou with difficulty hast only procured me two old ones?' said the governor.

'Faith, I pretend not skill enough to know,' answered Greenleaf, shrugging his shoulders. 'Talk there is of plots in that country as well as here. It is said that their Bruce, and the rest of his kinsmen, intend a new May-game, and that the outlawed king proposes to land near to Turnberry,* early in summer, with a number of

* [The stronghold of the Earls of Carrick, in Ayrshire.]

stout kernes from Ireland; and no doubt the men of his mock Earldom of Carrick are getting them ready with bow and spear for so hopeful an undertaking. I reckon that it will not cost us the expense of more than a few score of sheaves of arrows to put all that matter to rights.'

'Do you talk then of conspiracies in this part of the country, Greenleaf?' said De Walton. 'I know you are a sagacious fellow, well bred for many a day to the use of the bent stick and string, and will not allow such a practice to go on under thy nose, without taking notice of it.'

'I am old enough, Heaven knows,' said Greenleaf, 'and have had good experience of these Scottish wars, and know well whether these native Scots are a people to be trusted to by knight or yeoman. Say they are a false generation, and say a good archer told you so, who, with a fair aim, seldom missed a handsbreadth of the white. Ah! sir, your honour knows how to deal with them—ride them strongly, and rein them hard, —you are not like those simple novices who imagine that all is to be done by gentleness, and wish to parade themselves as courteous and generous to those faithless mountaineers, who never, in the course of their lives, knew any tincture either of courteousness or generosity.'

'Thou alludest to some one,' said the governor, 'and I charge thee, Gilbert, to be plain and sincere with me. Thou knowest, methinks, that in trusting me thou wilt come to no harm?'

'It is true, it is true, sir,' said the old remnant of the wars, carrying his hand to his brow, 'but it were imprudent to communicate all the remarks which float through an old man's brain in the idle moments of such a garrison as this. One stumbles unawares on fantasies, as well as realities, and thus one gets, not altogether undeservedly, the character of a tale-bearer and mischief-maker among his comrades, and methinks I would not willingly fall under that accusation.'

'Speak frankly to me,' answered De Walton, 'and have no fear of being misconstrued, whosoever the conversation may concern.'

'Nay, in plain truth,' answered Gilbert, 'I fear not the greatness of this young knight, being, as I am, the oldest soldier in the garrison, and having drawn a bow-string long and many a day ere he was weaned from his nurse's breast.'

'It is, then,' said De Walton, 'my lieutenant and friend, Aymer de Valence, at whom your suspicions point?'

'At nothing,' replied the archer, 'touching the honour of the young knight himself, who is as brave as the sword he wears, and, his youth considered, stands high in the roll of English chivalry; but he is young, as your worship knows, and I own that in the choice of his company he disturbs and alarms me.'

'Why, you know, Greenleaf,' answered the governor, 'that in the leisure of a garrison a knight cannot always confine his sports and pleasures among those of his own rank, who are not numerous, and may not be so gamesome or fond of frolic as he would desire them to be.'

'I know that well,' answered the archer, 'nor would I say a word concerning your honour's lieutenant for joining any honest fellows, however inferior their rank, in the wrestling ring, or at a bout of quarterstaff. But if Sir Aymer de Valence has a fondness for martial tales of former days, methinks he had better learn them from the ancient soldiers who have followed Edward the First, whom God assoilzie, and who have known before his time the Barons' wars and other onslaughts, in which the knights and archers of merry England transmitted so many gallant actions to be recorded by fame; this truly, I say, were more beseeming the Earl of Pembroke's nephew, than to see him closet himself day after day with a strolling minstrel, who gains his livelihood by reciting nonsense and lies to such young men as are fond enough to believe him, of whom hardly any one knows whether he be English or Scottish in his opinions, and still less can any one pretend to say whether he is of English or Scottish birth, or with what purpose he lies lounging about this castle, and is left free to communicate everything which passes within it to those old mutterers of matins at Saint Bride's, who say with their tongues God save King Edward, but pray in their hearts God save King Robert the Bruce. Such a communication he can easily carry on by means of his son, who lies at Saint Bride's cell, as your worship knows, under pretence of illness.'

'How do you say?' exclaimed the governor, 'under pretence?—is he not then really indisposed?'

'Nay, he may be sick to the death for aught I know,' said the archer; 'but if so, were it not then more natural that the father should attend his son's sick-bed, than that he should be ranging about this castle, where one eternally meets him in the old Baron's study, or in some corner where you least expect to find him?'

'If he has no lawful object,' replied the knight, 'it might be as you say; but he is said to be in quest of ancient poems or prophecies of Merlin, of the Rhymer, or some other old bard; and in truth it is natural for him to wish to enlarge his stock of knowledge and power of giving amusement, and where should he find the means save in a study filled with ancient books?'

'No doubt,' replied the archer, with a sort of dry civil sneer of incredulity; 'I have seldom known an insurrection in Scotland but that it was prophesied by some old forgotten rhyme, conjured out of dust and cobwebs, for the sake of giving courage to those North Country rebels, who durst not otherwise have abidden the whistling of the grey-goose shaft; but curled heads are hasty, and, with licence, even your own train, Sir Knight, retains too much of the fire of youth for such uncertain times as the present.

'Thou hast convinced me, Gilbert Greenleaf, and I will look into this man's business and occupation more closely than hitherto. This is no time to peril the safety of a royal castle for the sake of affecting generosity towards a man of whom we know so little, and to whom, till we receive a very full explanation, we may, without doing him injustice, attach grave suspicions. Is he now in the apartment called the Baron's study?'

'Your worship will be certain to find him there,' replied Greenleaf.

'Then follow me, with two or three of thy comrades, and keep out of sight, but within

hearing; it may be necessary to arrest this man.'

'My assistance,' said the old archer, 'shall be at hand when you call, but'——

'But what?' said the knight; 'I hope I am not to find doubts and disobedience on all hands?'

'Certainly not on mine,' replied Greenleaf; 'I would only remind your worship that what I have said was a sincere opinion expressed in answer to your worship's question; and that, as Sir Aymer de Valence has avowed himself the patron of this man, I would not willingly be left to the hazard of his revenge.'

'Pshaw!' answered De Walton, 'is Aymer de Valence governor of this castle, or am I? or to whom do you imagine you are responsible for answering such questions as I may put to you?'

'Nay,' replied the archer, secretly not displeased at seeing De Walton show some little jealousy of his own authority, 'believe me, Sir Knight, that I know my own station and your worship's, and that I am not now to be told to whom I owe obedience.'

'To the study, then, and let us find the man,' said the governor.

'A fine matter, indeed,' subjoined Greenleaf, following him, 'that your worship should have to go in person to look after the arrest of so mean an individual. But your honour is right; these minstrels are often jugglers, and possess the power of making their escape by means which borrel * folk like myself are disposed to attribute to necromancy.'

Without attending to these last words, Sir John de Walton set forth towards the study, walking at a quick pace, as if this conversation had augmented his desire to find himself in possession of the person of the suspected minstrel.

Traversing the ancient passages of the castle, the governor had no difficulty in reaching the study, which was strongly vaulted with stone, and furnished with a sort of iron cabinet, intended for the preservation of articles and papers of value, in case of fire. Here he found the minstrel, seated at a small table, sustaining before him a manuscript apparently of great antiquity, from which he seemed engaged in making extracts. The windows of the room were very small, and still showed some traces that they had originally been glazed with a painted history of Saint Bride—another mark of the devotion of the great family of Douglas to their tutelar saint.

The minstrel, who had seemed deeply wrapped in the contemplation of his task, on being disturbed by the unlooked-for entrance of Sir John de Walton, rose with every mark of respect and humility, and, remaining standing in the governor's presence, appeared to wait for his interrogations, as if he had anticipated that the visit concerned himself particularly.

'I am to suppose, Sir Minstrel,' said Sir John de Walton, 'that you have been successful in your search, and have found the roll of poetry or prophecies that you proposed to seek after amongst these broken shelves and tattered volumes?'

'More successful than I could have expected,' replied the minstrel, 'considering the effects of the conflagration. This, Sir Knight, is apparently the fatal volume for which I sought, and strange it is, considering the heavy chance of other books contained in this library, that I have been able to find a few though imperfect fragments of it.'

'Since, therefore, you have been permitted to indulge your curiosity,' said the governor, 'I trust, minstrel, you will have no objection to satisfy mine?'

The minstrel replied with the same humility, 'that if there was anything within the poor compass of his skill which could gratify Sir John de Walton in any degree, he would but reach his lute, and presently obey his commands.'

'You mistake, sir,' said Sir John, somewhat harshly. 'I am none of those who have hours to spend in listening to tales or music of former days; 'my life has hardly given me time enough for learning the duties of my profession, far less has it allowed me leisure for such twangling follies. I care not who knows it, but my ear is so incapable of judging of your art, which you doubtless think a noble one, that I can scarcely tell the modulation of one tune from another.'

'In that case,' replied the minstrel composedly, 'I can hardly promise myself the pleasure of affording your worship the amusement which I might otherwise have done.'

'Nor do I look for any at your hand,' said the governor, advancing a step nearer to him, and speaking in a sterner tone. 'I want information, sir, which I am assured you can give me, if you incline; and it is my duty to tell you, that if you show unwillingness to speak the truth, I know means by which it will become my painful duty to extort it in a more disagreeable manner than I would wish.'

'If your questions, Sir Knight,' answered Bertram, 'be such as I can or ought to answer, there shall be no occasion to put them more than once. If they are such as I cannot or ought not to reply to, believe me that no threats of violence will extort an answer from me.'

'You speak boldly,' said Sir John de Walton; 'but take my word for it, that your courage will be put to the test. I am as little fond of proceeding to such extremities as you can be of undergoing them, but such will be the natural consequence of your own obstinacy. I therefore ask you whether Bertram be your real name—whether you have any other profession than that of a travelling minstrel—and, lastly, whether you have any acquaintance or connection with any Englishman or Scottishman beyond the walls of this Castle of Douglas?'

'To these questions,' replied the minstrel, 'I have already answered the worshipful knight, Sir Aymer de Valence, and, having fully satisfied him, it is not, I conceive, necessary that I should undergo a second examination; nor is it consistent either with your worship's honour, or that of the lieutenant-governor, that such a re-examination should take place.'

'You are very considerate,' replied the governor, 'of my honour and of that of Sir Aymer de Valence. Take my word for it, they are both in perfect safety in our own keeping, and may dispense with your attention. I ask you, will you answer the inquiries which it is my duty to

* Unlearned.

make, or am I to enforce obedience by putting you under the penalties of the question? I have already, it is my duty to say, seen the answers you have returned to my lieutenant, and they do not satisfy me.'

He at the same time clapped his hands, and two or three archers showed themselves, stripped of their tunics, and only attired in their shirts and hose.

'I understand,' said the minstrel, 'that you intend to inflict upon me a punishment which is foreign to the genius of the English laws, in that no proof is adduced of my guilt. I have already told that I am by birth an Englishman, by profession a minstrel, and that I am totally unconnected with any person likely to nourish any design against this Castle of Douglas, Sir John de Walton, or his garrison. What answers you may extort from me by bodily agony, I cannot, to speak as a plain-dealing Christian, hold myself responsible for. I think that I can endure as much pain as any one; I am sure that I never yet felt a degree of agony, that I would not willingly prefer to breaking my plighted word, or becoming a false informer against innocent persons, but I own I do not know the extent to which the art of torture may be carried; and though I do not fear you, Sir John de Walton, yet I must acknowledge that I fear myself, since I know not to what extremity your cruelty may be capable of subjecting me, or how far I may be enabled to bear it. I therefore, in the first place, protest that I shall in no manner be liable for any words which I may utter in the course of any examination enforced from me by torture; and you must therefore, under such circumstances, proceed to the execution of an office, which, permit me to say, is hardly that which I expected to have found thus administered by an accomplished knight like yourself.'

'Hark you, sir,' replied the governor, 'you and I are at issue, and in doing my duty I ought instantly to proceed to the extremities I have threatened; but perhaps you yourself feel less reluctance to undergo the examination as proposed, than I shall do in commanding it; I will therefore consign you for the present to a place of confinement, suitable to one who is suspected of being a spy upon this fortress. Until you are pleased to remove such suspicions, your lodgings and nourishment are those of a prisoner. In the meantime, before subjecting you to the question, take notice, I will myself ride to the Abbey of Saint Bride, and satisfy myself whether the young person whom you would pass as your son is possessed of the same determination as that which you yourself seem to assert. It may so happen that his examination and yours may throw such light upon each other as will decidedly prove either your guilt or innocence, without its being confirmed by the use of the extraordinary question. If it be otherwise, tremble for your son's sake, if not for your own.—Have I shaken you, sir?—or do you fear, for your boy's young sinews and joints, the engines which, in your own case, you seem willing to defy?'

'Sir,' answered the minstrel, recovering from the momentary emotion he had shown, 'I leave it to yourself, as a man of honour and candour, whether you ought, in common fairness, to form a worse opinion of any man, because he is not unwilling to incur, in his own person, severities which he would not desire to be inflicted upon his child, a sickly youth, just recovering from a dangerous disease.'

'It is my duty,' answered De Walton, after a short pause, 'to leave no stone unturned by which this business may be traced to the source; and if thou desirest mercy for thy son, thou wilt thyself most easily attain it, by setting him the example of honesty and plain dealing.'

The minstrel threw himself back on the seat, as if fully resolved to bear every extremity that could be inflicted, rather than make any further answer than he had already offered. Sir John de Walton himself seemed in some degree uncertain what might now be his best course. He felt an invincible repugnance to proceed, without due consideration, in what most people would have deemed the direct line of his duty, by inflicting the torture both upon father and son; but deep as was his sense of devotion towards the king, and numerous as were the hopes and expectations he had formed upon the strict discharge of his present high trust, he could not resolve upon having recourse at once to this cruel method of cutting the knot. Bertram's appearance was venerable, and his power of words not unworthy of his aspect and bearing. The governor remembered that Aymer de Valence, whose judgment in general it was impossible to deny, had described him as one of those rare individuals, who vindicated the honour of a corrupted profession by their personal good behaviour; and he acknowledged to himself that there was gross cruelty and injustice in refusing to admit the prisoner to the credit of being a true and honest man, until, by way of proving his rectitude, he had strained every sinew, and crushed every joint in his body, as well as those of his son. 'I have no touchstone,' he said internally, 'which can distinguish truth from falsehood; the Bruce and his followers are on the alert,—he has certainly equipped the galleys which lay at Rachrin* during winter. This story, too, of Greenleaf, about arms being procured for a new insurrection, tallies strangely with the appearance of that savage-looking Forester at the hunt; and all tends to show that something is upon the anvil which it is my duty to provide against. I will, therefore, pass over no circumstance by which I can affect the mind through hope or fear; but, please God to give me light from any other source, I will not think it lawful to torment these unfortunate, and, it may yet be, honest men.' He accordingly took his departure from the library, whispering a word to Greenleaf respecting the prisoner.

He had reached the outward door of the study, and his satellites had already taken the minstrel into their grasp, when the voice of the old man was heard calling upon De Walton to return for a single moment.

'What hast thou to say, sir?' said the governor; 'be speedy, for I have already lost more time in listening to thee than I am answerable for, and so I advise thee for thine own sake'——

* [Now called Rathlin, an island off the north coast of Ireland.]

'I advise thee,' said the minstrel, 'for thine own sake, Sir John de Walton, to beware how thou dost insist on thy present purpose, by which thou thyself alone, of all men living, wilt most severely suffer. If thou harmest a hair of that young man's head—nay, if thou permittest him to undergo any privation which it is in thy power to prevent, thou wilt, in doing so, prepare for thine own suffering a degree of agony more acute than anything else in this mortal world could cause thee. I swear by the most blessed objects of our holy religion; I call to witness that Holy Sepulchre, of which I have been an unworthy visitor, that I speak nothing but the truth, and that thou wilt one day testify thy gratitude for the part I am now acting. It is my interest, as well as yours, to secure you in the safe possession of this castle, although assuredly I know some things respecting it, and respecting your worship, which I am not at liberty to tell without the consent of that youth. Bring me but a note under his hand, consenting to my taking you into our mystery, and believe me, you will soon see those clouds charmed away; since there was never a doleful uncertainty which more speedily changed to joy, or a thundercloud of adversity which more instantly gave way to sunshine, than would then the suspicions which appear now so formidable.'

He spoke with so much earnestness as to make some impression upon Sir John de Walton, who was once more wholly at a loss to know what line his duty called upon him to pursue.

'I would most gladly,' said the governor, 'follow out my purpose by the gentlest means in my power; and I shall bring no further distress upon this poor lad, than thine own obstinacy and his shall appear to deserve. In the meantime, think, Sir Minstrel, that my duty has limits, and if I slack it for a day, it will become thee to exert every effort in thy power to meet my condescension. I will give thee leave to address thy son by a line under thy hand, and I will await his answer before I proceed further in this matter, which seems to be very mysterious. Meantime, as thou hast a soul to be saved, I conjure thee to speak the truth, and tell me whether the secrets of which thou seemest to be a too faithful treasurer, have regard to the practices of Douglas, of Bruce, or of any of their names, against this Castle of Douglas?'

The prisoner thought a moment, and then replied—"I am aware, Sir Knight, of the severe charge under which this command is entrusted to your hands, and were it in my power to assist you, as a faithful minstrel and loyal subject, either with hand or tongue, I should feel myself called upon so to do; but so far am I from being the character your suspicions have apprehended, that I should have held it for certain that the Bruce and Douglas had assembled their followers, for the purpose of renouncing their rebellious attempts, and taking their departure for the Holy Land, butfor the apparition of the Forester, who, I hear, bearded you at the hunting, which impresses upon me the belief that, when so resolute a follower and henchman of the Douglas was sitting fearless among you, his master and comrades could be at no great distance—how far his intentions could be friendly to you, I must leave it to yourself to judge; only believe me thus far, that the rack, pulley, or pincers would not have compelled me to act the informer, or adviser, in a quarrel wherein I have little or no share, if I had not been desirous of fixing the belief upon you, that you are dealing with a true man, and one who has your welfare at heart.—Meanwhile, permit me to have writing materials, or let my own be restored, for I possess, in some degree, the higher arts of my calling; nor do I fear but that I can procure for you an explanation of these marvels, without much more loss of time.'

'God grant it prove so,' said the governor; 'though I see not well how I can hope for so favourable a termination, and I may sustain great harm by trusting too much on the present occasion. My duty, however, requires that, in the meantime, you be removed into strict confinement.'

He handed to the prisoner, as he spoke, the writing materials which had been seized upon by the archers on their first entrance, and then commanded those satellites to unhand the minstrel.

'I must then,' said Bertram, 'remain subjected to all the severities of a strict captivity; but I deprecate no hardship whatever in my own person, so I may secure you from acting with a degree of rashness, of which you will all your life repent without the means of atoning.'

'No more words, minstrel,' said the governor; 'but since I have made my choice, perhaps a very dangerous one for myself, let us carry this spell into execution, which thou sayest is to serve me, as mariners say that oil spread upon the raging billows will assuage their fury.'

CHAPTER IX.

* * * * * * *

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the Church's heir by right,
Whoever may be the lay.
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night,
Nor wine nor wassel could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

DON JUAN, *Canto* xvii.

THE minstrel made no vain boast of the skill which he possessed in the use of pen and ink. In fact, no priest of the time could have produced his little scroll more speedily, more neatly composed, or more fairly written, than were the lines addressed 'To the youth called Augustine, son of Bertram the Minstrel.'

'I have not folded this letter,' said he, 'nor tied it with silk, for it is not expressed so as to explain the mystery to you; nor, to speak frankly, do I think that it can convey to you any intelligence; but it may be satisfactory to show you what the letter does not contain, and that it is written from and to a person who both mean kindly towards you and your garrison.'

'That,' said the governor, 'is a deception which is easily practised; it tends, however, to show, though not with certainty, that you are disposed to act upon good faith; and until the contrary appear, I shall consider it a point of

duty to treat you with as much gentleness as the matter admits of. Meantime, I will myself ride to the Abbey of Saint Bride, and in person examine the young prisoner; and as you say he has the power, so I pray to Heaven he may have the will, to read this riddle, which seems to throw us all into confusion.' So saying, he ordered his horse, and, while it was getting ready, he perused with great composure the minstrel's letter. Its contents ran thus:—

'DEAR AUGUSTINE,

'Sir John de Walton, the governor of this castle, has conceived those suspicions which I pointed out as likely to be the consequence of our coming to this country without an avowed errand. I at least am seized, and threatened with examination under torture, to force me to tell the purpose of our journey; but they shall tear my flesh from my bones, ere they force me to break the oath which I have taken. And the purport of this letter is to apprise you of the danger in which you stand of being placed in similar circumstances, unless you are disposed to authorize me to make the discovery to this knight; but on this subject you have only to express your own wishes, being assured that they shall be in every respect attended to by your devoted

'BERTRAM.'

This letter did not throw the smallest light upon the mystery of the writer. The governor read it more than once, and turned it repeatedly in his hand, as if he had hoped by that mechanical process to draw something from the missive, which at a first view the words did not express; but as no result of this sort appeared, De Walton retired to the hall, where he informed Sir Aymer de Valence that he was going abroad as far as the Abbey of Saint Bride, and that he would be obliged by his taking upon him the duties of governor during his absence. Sir Aymer, of course, intimated his acquiescence in the charge; and the state of disunion in which they stood to each other permitted no further explanation.

Upon the arrival of Sir John de Walton at the dilapidated shrine, the abbot, with trembling haste, made it his business immediately to attend the commander of the English garrison, upon whom, for the present, their house depended for every indulgence they experienced, as well as for the subsistence and protection necessary to them in so perilous a period. Having interrogated this old man respecting the youth residing in the abbey, De Walton was informed that he had been indisposed since left there by his father, Bertram, a minstrel. It appeared to the abbot that his indisposition might be of that contagious kind which at that period ravaged the English Borders, and made some incursions into Scotland, where it afterwards worked a fearful progress. After some further conversation, Sir John de Walton put into the abbot's hand the letter to the young person under his roof, on delivering which to Augustine, the reverend father was charged with a message to the English governor, so bold, that he was afraid to be the bearer of it. It signified, that the youth could not, and would not, at that moment, receive the English knight; but that, if he came back on the morrow after mass, it was probable he might learn something of what was requested.

'This is not an answer,' said Sir John de Walton, 'to be sent by a boy like this to a person in my charge; and methinks, Father Abbot, you consult your own safety but slenderly in delivering such an insolent message.'

The abbot trembled under the folds of his large coarse habit; and De Walton, imagining that his discomposure was the consequence of guilty fear, called upon him to remember the duties which he owed to England, the benefits which he had received from himself, and the probable consequence of taking part in a pert boy's insolent defiance of the power of the governor of the province.

The abbot vindicated himself from these charges with the utmost anxiety. He pledged his sacred word that the inconsiderate character of the boy's message was owing to the waywardness arising from indisposition. He reminded the governor that, as a Christian and an Englishman, he had duties to observe towards the community of Saint Bride, which had never given the English government the least subject of complaint. As he spoke, the churchman seemed to gather courage from the immunities of his order. He said he could not permit a sick boy, who had taken refuge within the sanctuary of the Church, to be seized or subjected to any species of force, unless he was accused of a specific crime, capable of being immediately proved. The Douglasses, a headstrong race, had, in former days, uniformly respected the sanctuary of Saint Bride, and it was not to be supposed that the King of England, the dutiful and obedient child of the Church of Rome, would act with less veneration for her rights, than the followers of a usurper, homicide, and excommunicated person like Robert Bruce.

Walton was considerably shaken with this remonstrance. He knew that, in the circumstances of the times, the Pope had great power in every controversy in which it was his pleasure to interfere. He knew that even in the dispute respecting the supremacy of Scotland, his Holiness had set up a claim to the kingdom, which, in the temper of the times, might perhaps have been deemed superior both to that of Robert Bruce and that of Edward of England, and he conceived his monarch would give him little thanks for any fresh embroilment which might take place with the Church. Moreover, it was easy to place a watch, so as to prevent Augustine from escaping during the night; and on the following morning he would be still as effectually in the power of the English governor as if he were seized on by open force at the present moment. Sir John de Walton, however, so far exerted his authority over the abbot, that he engaged, in consideration of the sanctuary being respected for this space of time, that, when it expired, he would be aiding and assisting with his spiritual authority to surrender the youth, should he not allege a sufficient reason to the contrary. This arrangement, which appeared still to flatter the governor with the prospect of an easy termination of this troublesome dispute, induced him

to grant the delay which Augustine rather demanded than petitioned for.

'At your request, Father Abbot, whom I have hitherto found a true man, I will indulge this youth with the grace he asks, before taking him into custody, understanding that he shall not be permitted to leave this place; and thou art to be responsible to this effect, giving thee, as is reasonable, power to command our little garrison at Hazelside, to which I will send a reinforcement on my return to the castle, in case it should be necessary to use the strong hand, or circumstances impose upon me other measures.'

'Worthy Sir Knight,' replied the abbot, 'I have no idea that the frowardness of this youth will render any course necessary, saving that of persuasion; and I venture to say that you yourself will in the highest degree approve of the method in which I shall acquit myself of my present trust.'

The abbot went through the duties of hospitality, enumerating what simple cheer the cloister of the convent permitted him to offer to the English knight. Sir John de Walton declined the offer of refreshment, however—took a courteous leave of the churchman, and did not spare his horse until the noble animal had brought him again before the Castle of Douglas. Sir Aymer de Valence met him on the drawbridge, and reported the state of the garrison to be the same in which he had left it, excepting that intimation had been received that twelve or fifteen men were expected on their way to the town of Lanark; and, being on march from the neighbourhood of Ayr, would that night take up their quarters at the outpost of Hazelside.

'I am glad of it,' replied the governor; 'I was about to strengthen that detachment. This stripling, the son of Bertram the minstrel, or whoever he is, has engaged to deliver himself up for examination in the morning. As this party of soldiers are followers of your uncle, Lord Pembroke, may I request you will ride to meet them, and command them to remain at Hazelside until you make further inquiries about this youth, who has still to clear up the mystery which hangs about him, and reply to a letter which I delivered with my own hand to the Abbot of Saint Bride. I have shown too much forbearance in this matter, and I trust to your looking to the security of this young man, and conveying him hither, with all due care and attention, as being a prisoner of some importance.'

'Certainly, Sir John,' answered Sir Aymer; 'your orders shall be obeyed, since you have none of greater importance for one who hath the honour to be second only to yourself in this place.'

'I crave your mercy, Sir Aymer,' returned the governor, 'if the commission be in any degree beneath your dignity; but it is our misfortune to misunderstand each other, when we endeavour to be most intelligible.'

'But what am I to do,' said Sir Aymer—'no way disputing your command, but only asking for information—what am I to do, if the Abbot of Saint Bride offers opposition?'

'How!' answered Sir John de Walton; 'with the reinforcement from my Lord of Pembroke, you will command at least twenty war-men, with bow and spear, against five or six timid old monks, with only gown and hood.'

'True,' said Sir Aymer, 'but ban and excommunication are sometimes, in the present day, too hard for the mail-coat, and I would not willingly be thrown out of the pale of the Christian Church.'

'Well, then, thou very suspicious and scrupulous young man,' replied De Walton, 'know that if this youth does not deliver himself up to thee of his own accord, the Abbot has promised to put him into thy hands.'

There was no further answer to be made, and De Valence, though still thinking himself unnecessarily harassed with the charge of a petty commission, took the sort of half-arms which were always used when the knights stirred beyond the walls of the garrison, and proceeded to execute the commands of De Walton. A horseman or two, together with his squire Fabian, accompanied him.

The evening closed in with one of those Scottish mists which are commonly said to be equal to the showers of happier climates; the path became more and more dark, the hills more wreathed in vapours, and more difficult to traverse; and all the little petty inconveniences which rendered travelling through the district slow and uncertain, were augmented by the density of the fog which overhung everything.

Sir Aymer, therefore, occasionally mended his pace, and often incurred the fate of one who is over-late, delaying himself by his efforts to make greater expedition. The knight bethought himself that he would get into a straight road by passing through the almost deserted town of Douglas,—the inhabitants of which had been treated so severely by the English, in the course of those fierce troubles, that most of them who were capable of bearing arms had left it, and withdrawn themselves to different parts of the country. This almost deserted place was defended by a rude palisade, and a ruder drawbridge, which gave entrance into streets so narrow, as to admit with difficulty three horses abreast, and evincing with what strictness the ancient lords of the village adhered to their prejudice against fortifications, and their opinion in favour of keeping the field, so quaintly expressed in the well-known proverb of the family, —'It is better to hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep.' The streets, or rather the lanes, were dark, but for a shifting gleam of moonlight, which, as that planet began to rise, was now and then visible upon some steep and narrow gable. No sound of domestic industry, or domestic festivity, was heard, and no ray of candle or firelight glanced from the windows of the houses; the ancient ordinance called the curfew, which the Conqueror had introduced into England, was at this time in full force in such parts of Scotland as were thought doubtful, and likely to rebel; under which description it need not be said the ancient possessions of the Douglas were most especially regarded. The church, whose Gothic monuments were of a magnificent character, had been, as far as

possible, destroyed by fire; but the ruins, held together by the weight of the massive stones of which they were composed, still sufficiently evinced the greatness of the family at whose cost it had been raised, and whose bones, from immemorial time, had been entombed in its crypts.

Paying little attention to these relics of departed splendour, Sir Aymer de Valence advanced with his small detachment, and had passed the scattered fragments of the cemetery of the Douglasses, when, to his surprise, the noise of his horse's feet was seemingly replied to by sounds which rung like those of another knightly steed advancing heavily up the street, as if it were to meet him. Valence was unable to conjecture what might be the cause of these warlike sounds; the ring and the clang of armour were distinct, and the heavy tramp of a war-horse was not to be mistaken by the ear of a warrior. The difficulty of keeping soldiers from straying out of quarters by night would have sufficiently accounted for the appearance of a straggling foot-soldier; but it was more difficult to account for a mounted horseman, in full armour; and such was the apparition which a peculiarly bright glimpse of moonlight now showed at the bottom of the causewayed hill. Perhaps the unknown warrior obtained at the same time a glance of Aymer de Valence and his armed followers—at least each of them shouted 'Who goes there?'—the alarm of the times; and on the instant the deep answers of 'Saint George!' on the one side, and 'The Douglas!' on the other, awakened the still echoes of the small and ruinous street, and the silent arches of the dilapidated church. Astonished at a war-cry with which so many recollections were connected, the English knight spurred his horse at full gallop down the steep and broken descent leading out at the south or south-east gate of the town; and it was the work of an instant to call out, 'Ho! Saint George! upon the insolent villain all of you!—To the gate, Fabian, and cut him off from flight!—Saint George, I say, for England! Bows and bills!—bows and bills!' At the same time Aymer de Valence laid in rest his own long lance, which he snatched from the squire by whom it was carried. But the light was seen and gone in an instant, and though De Valence concluded that the hostile warrior had hardly room to avoid his career, yet he could take no aim for the encounter, unless by mere guess, and continued to plunge down the dark declivity, among shattered stones and other encumbrances, without groping out with his lance the object of his pursuit. He rode, in short, at a broken gallop, a descent of about fifty or sixty yards, without having any reason to suppose that he had met the figure which had appeared to him, although the narrowness of the street scarcely admitted his having passed him, unless both horse and horseman could have melted at the moment of encounter like an air-bubble. The riders of his suite, meanwhile, were struck with a feeling like supernatural terror, which a number of singular adventures had caused most of them to attach to the name of Douglas; and when he reached the gate by which the broken street was terminated, there was none close behind him but Fabian, in whose head no suggestions of a timorous nature could outlive the sound of his dear master's voice.

Here there was a post of English archers, who were turning out in considerable alarm, when De Valence and his page rode in amongst them. 'Villains!' shouted De Valence, 'why were you not upon your duty? Who was it passed through your post even now, with the traitorous cry of Douglas?'

'We know of no such,' said the captain of the watch.

'That is to say, you besotted villains,' answered the young knight, 'you have been drinking, and have slept?'

The men protested the contrary, but in a confused manner, which was far from overcoming De Valence's suspicions. He called loudly to bring cressets, torches, and candles; and a few remaining inhabitants began to make their unwilling appearance, with such various means of giving light as they chanced to possess. They heard the story of the young English knight with wonder; nor, although it was confirmed by all his retinue, did they give credit to the recital, more than that the Englishmen wished, somehow or other, to pick a quarrel with the people of the place, under the pretence of their having admitted a retainer of their ancient lord by night into the town. They protested, therefore, their innocence of the cause of tumult, and endeavoured to seem active in hastening from house to house, and corner to corner, with their torches, in order to discover the invisible cavalier. The English suspected them no less of treachery, than the Scottish imagined the whole matter a pretext for bringing an accusation, on the part of the young knight, against the citizens. The women, however, who now began to issue from the houses, had a key for the solution of the apparition, which at that time was believed of efficacy sufficient to solve any mystery. 'The devil,' they said, 'must have appeared visibly amongst them,' an explanation which had already occurred to the followers of the young knight; for that a living man and horse, both, as it seemed, of a gigantic size, could be conjured in the twinkling of an eye, and appear in a street secured at one end by the best of the archers, and at the other by the horsemen under Valence himself, was altogether, it seemed, a thing impossible. The inhabitants did not venture to put their thoughts on the subject into language, for fear of giving offence, and only indicated by a passing word to each other the secret degree of pleasure which they felt in the confusion and embarrassment of the English garrison. Still, however, they continued to affect a great deal of interest in the alarm which De Valence had received, and the anxiety which he expressed to discover the cause.

At length a female voice spoke above the Babel of confused sounds, saying, 'Where is the Southron knight? I am sure that I can tell him where he can find the only person who can help him out of his present difficulty.'

'And who is that, good woman?' said Aymer de Valence, who was growing every moment

more impatient at the loss of time, which was flying fast, in an investigation which had something vexatious in it, and even ridiculous. At the same time, the sight of an armed partisan of the Douglasses, in their own native town, seemed to bode too serious consequences, if it should be suffered to pass without being probed to the bottom.

'Come hither to me,' said the female voice, 'and I will name to you the only person who can explain all matters of this kind that chance in this country.' On this the knight snatched a torch from some of those who were present, and, holding it up, descried the person who spoke, a tall woman, who evidently endeavoured to render herself remarkable. When he approached her, she communicated her intelligence in a grave and sententious tone of voice.

'We had once wise men, that could have answered any parables which might have been put to them for explanation in this country side. Whether you yourselves, gentlemen, have not had some hand in weeding them out, good troth, it is not for the like of me to say; at any rate, good counsel is not so easy come by as it was in this Douglas country, nor, may be, is it a safe thing to pretend to the power of giving it.'

'Good woman,' said De Valence, 'if you will give me an explanation of this mystery, I will owe you a kirtle of the best raploch grey.'

'It is not I,' said the old woman, 'that pretend to possess the knowledge which may assist you; but I would fain know that the man whom I shall name to you shall be skaithless and harmless. Upon your knighthood and your honour, will you promise to me so much?'

'Assuredly,' said De Valence, 'such a person shall even have thanks and reward, if he is a faithful informer; ay, and pardon, moreover, although he may have listened to any dangerous practices, or been concerned in any plots.'

'O, not he,' replied the female; 'it is old Goodman Powheid, who has the charge of the muniments' (meaning probably monuments), 'that is, such part of them as you English have left standing; I mean the old sexton of the Kirk of Douglas, who can tell more stories of these old folk, whom your honour is not very fond of hearing named, than would last us from this day to Yule.'

'Does anybody,' said the knight, 'know whom it is that this old woman means?'

'I conjecture,' replied Fabian, 'that she speaks of an old dotard, who is, I think, the general referee concerning the history and antiquities of this old town, and of the savage family that lived here perhaps before the flood.'

'And who, I daresay,' said the knight, 'knows as much about the matter as she herself does. But where is this man? a sexton is he? He may be acquainted with places of concealment, which are often fabricated in Gothic buildings, and known to those whose business calls them to frequent them. Come, my good old dame, bring this man to me; or, what may be better, I will go to him, for we have already spent too much time.'

'Time!' replied the old woman,—'is time an object with your honour? I am sure I can hardly get so much for mine as will hold soul and body together. You are not far from the old man's house.'

She led the way accordingly, blundering over heaps of rubbish, and encountering all the embarrassments of a ruinous street, in lighting the way to Sir Aymer, who, giving his horse to one of his attendants, and desiring Fabian to be ready at a call, scrambled after as well as the slowness of his guide would permit.

Both were soon involved in the remains of the old church, much dilapidated as it had been by wanton damage done to it by the soldiery, and so much impeded by rubbish, that the knight marvelled how the old woman could find the way. She kept talking all the while as she stumbled onward. Sometimes she called out in a screeching tone, 'Powheid! Lazarus Powheid!'—and then muttered—'Ay, ay, the old man will be busy with some of his duties, as he calls them; I wonder he fashes wi' them in these times. But never mind, I warrant they will last for his day, and for mine; and the times, Lord help us! for all that I can see, are well enough for those that are to live in them.'

'Are you sure, good woman,' replied the knight, 'that there is any inhabitant in these ruins? For my part, I should rather suppose that you are taking me to the charnel-house of the dead.'

'Maybe you are right,' said the old woman, with a ghastly laugh; 'carles and carlines agree weel with funeral vaults and charnel-houses, and when an auld bedral dwells near the dead, he is living, ye ken, among his customers—Hallo! Powheid! Lazarus Powheid! there is a gentleman would speak with you;' and she added, with some sort of emphasis, 'an English noble gentleman — one of the honourable garrison.'

An old man's step was now heard advancing, so slowly that the glimmering light which he held in his hand was visible on the ruined walls of the vault some time before it showed the person who bore it.

The shadow of the old man was also projected upon the illuminated wall ere his person came in view; his dress was in considerable confusion, owing to his having been roused from his bed; and since artificial light was forbidden by the regulations of the garrison, the natives of Douglas Dale spent in sleep the time that they could not very well get rid of by any other means. The sexton was a tall thin man, emaciated by years and by privations; his body was bent habitually by his occupation of grave-digging, and his eye naturally inclined downward to the scene of his labours. His hand sustained the cruise or little lamp, which he held so as to throw light upon his visitant; at the same time it displayed to the young knight the features of the person with whom he was now confronted, which, though neither handsome nor pleasing, were strongly marked, sagacious, and venerable, indicating, at the same time, a certain air of dignity, which age, even mere poverty, may be found occasionally to bestow, as conferring that last melancholy species of independence proper to those whose situation can hardly by any imaginable means

be rendered much worse than years and fortune have already made it. The habit of a lay brother added somewhat of religious importance to his appearance.

'What would you with me, young man?' said the sexton. 'Your youthful features, and your gay dress, bespeak one who stands in need of my ministry neither for himself nor for others.'

'I am indeed,' replied the knight, 'a living man, and therefore need not either shovel or pick-axe for my own behoof. I am not, as you see, attired in mourning, and therefore need not your offices in behalf of any friend; I would only ask you a few questions.'

'What you would have done must needs be done, you being at present one of our rulers, and, as I think, a man of authority,' replied the sexton; 'follow me this way into my poor habitation. I have had a better in my day; and yet, Heaven knows, it is good enough for me, when many men of much greater consequence must perforce content themselves with worse.'

He opened a lowly door, which was fitted, though irregularly, to serve as the entrance of a vaulted apartment, where it appeared that the old man held, apart from the living world, his wretched and solitary dwelling.* The floor, composed of paving stones, laid together with some accuracy, and here and there inscribed with letters and hieroglyphics, as if they had once upon a time served to distinguish sepulchres, was indifferently well swept, and a fire at the upper end directed its smoke into a hole which served for a chimney. The spade and pick-axe (with other tools), which the chamberlain of mortality makes use of, lay scattered about the apartment, and, with a rude stool or two, and a table, where some inexperienced hand had unquestionably supplied the labours of the joiner, were nearly the only furniture, if we include the old man's bed of straw, lying in a corner, and discomposed, as if he had been just raised from it. At the lower end of the apartment, the wall was almost entirely covered by a large escutcheon, such as is usually hung over the graves of men of very high rank, having the appropriate quarters, to the number of sixteen, each properly blazoned and distinct, placed as ornaments around the principal armorial coat itself.

'Let us sit,' said the old man; 'the posture will better enable my failing ears to apprehend your meaning, and the asthma will deal with me more mercifully in permitting me to make you understand mine.'

A peal of short asthmatic coughs attested the violence of the disorder which he had last named, and the young knight followed his host's example, in sitting down on one of the rickety stools by the side of the fire. The old man brought from one corner of the apartment an apron, which he occasionally wore, full of broken boards in irregular pieces, some of which were covered with black cloth, or driven full of nails, black, as it might happen, or gilded.

'You will find this fresh fuel necessary,' said the old man, 'to keep some degree of heat within this waste apartment; nor are the vapours of mortality with which this vault is apt to be filled, if the fire is permitted to become extinct, indifferent to the lungs of the dainty and the healthy, like your worship, though to me they are become habitual. The wood will catch fire, although it is some time ere the damps of the grave are overcome by the drier air, and the warmth of the chimney.'

Accordingly, the relics of mortality with which the old man had heaped his fireplace, began by degrees to send forth a thick unctuous vapour, which at length leaped to light, and, blazing up the aperture, gave a degree of liveliness to the gloomy scene. The blazonry of the huge escutcheon met and returned the rays with as brilliant a reflection as that lugubrious object was capable of, and the whole apartment looked with a fantastic gaiety, strangely mingled with the gloomy ideas which its ornaments were calculated to impress upon the imagination.

'You are astonished,' said the old man, 'and perhaps, Sir Knight, you have never before seen these relics of the dead applied to the purpose of rendering the living in some degree more comfortable than their condition would otherwise admit of.'

'Comfortable!' returned the Knight of Valence, shrugging his shoulders; 'I should be sorry, old man, to know that I had a dog that was as indifferently quartered as thou art, whose grey hairs have certainly seen better days.'

'It may be,' answered the sexton, 'and it may be otherwise; but it was not, I presume, concerning my own history that your worship seemed disposed to ask me some questions; and I would venture to inquire, therefore, to whom they have relation?'

'I will speak plainly to you,' replied Sir Aymer, 'and you will at once acknowledge the necessity of giving a short and distinct reply. I have even now met in the streets of this village a person only shown to me by a single flash of light, who had the audacity to display the armorial insignia and utter the war-cry of the Douglasses; nay, if I could trust a transient glance, this daring cavalier had the features and the dark complexion proper to the Douglas. I am referred to thee as to one who possesses means of explaining this extraordinary circumstance, which, as an English knight, and one holding a charge under King Edward, I am particularly called upon to make inquiry into.'

'Let me make a distinction,' said the old man. 'The Douglasses of former generations are my near neighbours, and, according to my superstitious townsmen, my acquaintances and visitors; I can take it upon my conscience to be answerable for their good behaviour, and to become bound that none of the old barons, to whom the roots of that mighty tree may, it is said, be traced, will again disturb with their war-cry the towns or villages of their native country—not one will parade in moonshine the

* [This is a most graphic and accurate description of the present state of the ruin. Its being occupied by the sexton as a dwelling-place, and the whole scene of the old man's interview with De Valence, may be classed with our illustrious Author's most felicitous imaginings.—*Note by the* Rev. Mr. Stewart *of Douglas.*]

black armour which has long rusted upon their tombs.

> The knights are dust,
> And their good swords are rust;
> Their souls are with the saints, we trust.*

Look around, Sir Knight, you have above and around you the men of whom we speak. Beneath us, in a little aisle (which hath not been opened since these thin grey locks were thick and brown), there lies the first man whom I can name as memorable among those of this mighty line. It is he whom the Thane of Athol pointed out to the King of Scotland as Sholto Dhuglass, or the dark iron-coloured man, whose exertions had gained the battle for his native prince; and who, according to this legend, bequeathed his name to our dale and town, though others say that the race assumed the name of Douglas from the stream so called in unrecorded times before they had their fastness on its banks. Others, his descendants, called Eachain, or Hector the first, and Orodh, or Hugh, William, the first of that name, and Gilmour, the theme of many a minstrel song, commemorating achievements done under the oriflamme of Charles the Great, Emperor of France, have all consigned themselves to their last sleep, nor has their memory been sufficiently preserved from the waste of time. Something we know concerning their great deeds, their great power, and, alas! their great crimes. Something we also know of a Lord of Douglas who sat in a Parliament at Forfar, held by King Malcolm the First, and we are aware that from his attachment to hunting the wild hart, he built himself a tower called Blackhouse, in the forest of Ettrick, which perhaps still exists.'

'I crave your forgiveness, old man,' said the knight, 'but I have no time at present to bestow upon the recitation of the pedigree of the House of Douglas. A less matter would hold a well-breathed minstrel in subject for recitation for a calendar month, Sundays and holidays included.'

'What other information can you expect from me,' said the sexton, 'than that respecting those heroes, some of whom it has been my lot to consign to that eternal rest which will for ever divide the dead from the duties of this world? I have told you where the race sleep, down to the reign of the royal Malcolm. I can tell you also of another vault, in which lie Sir John of Douglas-Burn, with his son Lord Archibald, and a third William, known by an indenture with Lord Abernethy. Lastly, I can tell you of him to whom that escutcheon, with its appurtenances of splendour and dignity, justly belong. Do you envy that nobleman, whom, if death were in the sound, I would not hesitate to term my honourable patron? and have you any design of dishonouring his remains? It will be a poor victory! nor does it become a knight and nobleman to come in person to enjoy such a triumph over the dead, against whom, when he lived, there were few knights dared spur their horses. He fought in defence of his country, but he had not the good fortune of most of his ancestors, to die on the field of battle. Captivity, sickness, and regret for the misfortunes of his native land, brought his head to the grave in his prison-house, in the land of the stranger.'

The old man's voice here became interrupted by emotion, and the English knight found it difficult to continue his examination in the stern fashion which his duty required.

'Old man,' he said, 'I do not require from thee this detail, which must be useless to me, as well as painful to thyself. Thou dost but thy duty in rendering justice to thy ancient lord; but thou hast not yet explained to me why I have met in this town, this very night, and not half-an-hour since, a person in the arms, and bearing the complexion, of one of the Black Douglasses, who cried his war-cry as if in contempt of his conquerors.'

'Surely,' replied the sexton, 'it is not my business to explain such a fancy, otherwise than by supposing that the natural fears of the Southron will raise the spectre of a Douglas at any time, when he is within sight of their sepulchre. Methinks, in such a night as this, the fairest cavalier would wear the complexion of this swarthy race; nor can I hold it wonderful that the war-cry which was once in the throats of so many thousands in this country, should issue upon occasion from the mouth of a single champion.'

'You are bold, old man,' returned the English knight; 'do you consider that your life is in my power, and that it may, in certain cases, be my duty to inflict death with that degree of pain at which humanity shudders?'

The old man rose up slowly in the light of the blazing fire, displaying his emaciated features, which resembled those ascribed by artists to Saint Anthony of the desert; and, pointing to the feeble lamp, which he placed upon the coarse table, thus addressed his interrogator, with an appearance of perfect firmness, and something even resembling dignity:—

'Young knight of England, you see that utensil constructed for the purpose of dispensing light amidst these fatal vaults,—it is as frail as anything can well be, whose flame is supplied by living element, contained in a frame composed of iron. It is doubtless in your power entirely to end its service, by destroying the frame, or extinguishing the light. Threaten it with such annihilation, Sir Knight, and see whether your menace will impress any sense of fear either on the element or the iron. Know that you have no more power over the frail mortal whom you threaten with similar annihilation. You may tear from my body the skin in which it is now swathed, but although my nerves might glow with agony during the inhuman operation, it would produce no more impression on me than flaying on the stag which an arrow has pre-

* [The Author has somewhat altered part of a beautiful unpublished fragment of Coleridge:—

> Where is the grave of Sir Arthur Orellan,—
> Where may the grave of that good knight be?
> By the marge of a brook, on the slope of Helvellyn,
> Under the boughs of a young birch-tree.
> The oak that in Summer was pleasant to hear,
> That rustled in Autumn all withered and sear,
> That whistled and groan'd thro' the Winter alone,
> He hath gone, and a birch in his place is grown.
> The knight's bones are dust,
> His good sword is rust;
> His spirit is with the saints, we trust.'

EDIT.]

viously pierced through the heart. My age sets me beyond your cruelty: if you think otherwise, call your agents, and commence your operations; neither threats nor inflictions will enable you to extort from me anything that I am not ready to tell you of my own accord.'

'You trifle with me, old man,' said De Valence; 'you talk as if you possessed some secret respecting the motions of these Douglasses, who are to you as gods, yet you communicate no intelligence to me whatever.'

'You may soon know,' replied the old man, 'all that a poor sexton has to communicate; and it will not increase your knowledge respecting the living, though it may throw some light upon my proper domains, which are those of the dead. The spirits of the deceased Douglasses do not rest in their graves during the dishonour of their monuments and the downfall of their house. That, upon death, the greater part of any line are consigned to the regions of eternal bliss, or of never-ending misery, religion will not suffer us to believe, and amidst a race who had so great a share of worldly triumph and prosperity, we must suppose there have existed many who have been justly subjected to the doom of an intermediate space of punishment. You have destroyed the temples which were built by their posterity to propitiate Heaven for the welfare of their souls; you have silenced the prayers and stopped the choirs, by the mediation of which the piety of children had sought to appease the wrath of Heaven in behalf of their ancestors, subjected to expiatory fires. Can you wonder that the tormented spirits, thus deprived of the relief which had been proposed to them, should not, according to the common phrase, rest in their graves? Can you wonder they should show themselves like discontented loiterers near to the places which, but for the manner in which you have prosecuted your remorseless warfare, might have ere now afforded them rest? Or do you marvel that these fleshless warriors should interrupt your marches, and do what else their airy nature may permit to disturb your councils, and meet as far as they may the hostilities which you make it your boast to carry on, as well against those who are deceased, as against any who may yet survive your cruelty?'

'Old man,' replied Aymer de Valence, 'you cannot expect that I am to take for answer a story like this, being a fiction too gross to charm to sleep a schoolboy tormented with the toothache; nevertheless, I thank God that thy doom does not remain in my hands. My squire and two archers shall carry thee captive to the worshipful Sir John de Walton, governor of the castle and valley, that he may deal with thee as seems meet; nor is he a person to believe in your apparitions and ghosts from purgatory.—What ho! Fabian! Come hither, and bring with thee two archers of the guard.'

Fabian accordingly, who had waited at the entrance of the ruined building, now found his way, by the light of the old sexton's lamp, and the sound of his master's voice, into the singular apartment of the old man, the strange decorations of which struck the youth with great surprise, and some horror.

'Take the two archers with thee, Fabian,' said the Knight of Valence, 'and, with their assistance, convey this old man, on horseback, or in a litter, to the presence of the worshipful Sir John de Walton. Tell him what we have seen, which thou didst witness as well as I; and tell him that this old sexton, whom I send to be examined by his superior wisdom, seems to know more than he is willing to disclose respecting our ghostly cavalier, though he will give us no account of him, except intimating that he is a spirit of the old Douglasses from purgatory, to which Sir John de Walton will give what faith he pleases. You may say that, for my part, my belief is, either that the sexton is crazed by age, want, and enthusiasm, or that he is connected with some plot which the country people are hatching. You may also say that I shall not use much ceremony with the youth under the care of the Abbot of Saint Bride; there is something suspicious in all the occurrences that are now passing around us.'

Fabian promised obedience; and the knight, pulling him aside, gave him an additional caution, to behave with attention in this business, seeing he must recollect that neither the judgment of himself, nor that of his master, was apparently held in very much esteem by the governor; and that it would ill become them to make any mistake in a matter where the safety of the castle was perhaps concerned.

'Fear me not, worshipful sir,' replied the youth; 'I am returning to pure air in the first place, and a good fire in the second, both acceptable exchanges for this dungeon of suffocating vapours and execrable smells. You may trust to my making no delay; a very short time will carry me back to Castle Douglas, even moving with suitable attention to this old man's bones.'

'Use him humanely,' answered the knight. 'And thou, old man, if thou art insensible to threats of personal danger in this matter, remember that, if thou art found paltering with us, thy punishment will perhaps be more severe than any we can inflict upon thy person.'

'Can you administer the torture to the soul?' said the sexton.

'As to thee,' answered the knight, 'we have that power;—we will dissolve every monastery or religious establishment held for the souls of these Douglasses, and will only allow the religious people to hold their residence there upon condition of their praying for the soul of King Edward the First of glorious memory, the *malleus Scotorum;* and if the Douglasses are deprived of the ghostly benefit of the prayers and services of such shrines, they may term thy obstinacy the cause.'

'Such a species of vengeance,' answered the old man, in the same bold, unsubdued tone which he had hitherto used, 'were more worthy of the infernal fiends than of Christian men.'

The squire raised his hand. The knight interposed: 'Forbear him,' he said, 'Fabian; he is very old, and perhaps insane.—And you, sexton, remember that the vengeance threatened is lawfully directed towards a family which have been the obstinate supporters of the excommunicated rebel who murdered the Red Comyn at the High Church in Dumfries.'

So saying, Aymer strode out of the ruins, picking his way with much difficulty—took his horse, which he found at the entrance—repeated a caution to Fabian, to conduct himself with prudence—and, passing on to the south-western gate, gave the strongest injunctions concerning the necessity of keeping a vigilant watch, both by patrols and by sentinels, intimating, at the same time, that it must have been neglected during the preceding part of the evening. The men murmured an apology, the confusion of which seemed to express that there had existed some occasion for the reprimand.

Sir Aymer then proceeded on his journey to Hazelside, his train diminished by the absence of Fabian and his assistants. After a hasty, but not a short journey, the knight alighted at Thomas Dickson's, where he found the detachment from Ayr had arrived before him, and were snugly housed for the night. He sent one of the archers to announce his approach to the Abbot of Saint Bride and his young guest, intimating, at the same time, that the archer must keep sight of the latter until he himself arrived at the chapel, which would be instantly.

CHAPTER X.

When the nightengale singes, the wodes waxes grene,
Lef, and gras, and blosme, springeth in April I wene,
And love is to myne herte gone with one speare so kene.
Night and day my blood hyt drynkes, mine herte deth me tene.

MSS. Hail. Quoted by Warton.

Sir Aymer de Valence had no sooner followed his archer to the convent of Saint Bride, than he summoned the abbot to his presence, who came with the air of a man who loves his ease, and who is suddenly called from the couch where he has consigned himself to a comfortable repose, at the summons of one whom he does not think it safe to disobey, and to whom he would not disguise his sense of peevishness, if he durst.

'It is a late ride,' he said, 'which has brought your worthy honour hither from the castle. May I be informed of the cause, after the arrangement so recently gone into with the governor?'

'It is my hope,' replied the knight, 'that you, Father Abbot, are not already conscious of it; suspicions are afloat, and I myself have this night seen something to confirm them, that some of the obstinate rebels of this country are again setting afoot dangerous practices, to the peril of the garrison; and I come, father, to see whether, in requital of many favours received from the English monarch, you will not merit his bounty and protection, by contributing to the discovery of the designs of his enemies.'

'Assuredly so,' answered Father Jerome, in an agitated voice. 'Most unquestionably my information should stand at your command; that is, if I knew anything the communication of which could be of advantage to you.'

'Father Abbot,' replied the English knight, 'although it is rash to make myself responsible for a North-Country man in these times, yet I own I do consider you as one who has ever been faithfully subject to the King of England, and I willingly hope that you will still continue so.'

'And a fine encouragement I have!' said the abbot; 'to be called out of my bed at midnight, in this raw weather, to undergo the examination of a knight, who is the youngest, perhaps, of his own honourable rank, and who will not tell me the subject of the interrogatories, but detains me on this cold pavement, till, according to the opinion of Celsus,* the podagra which lurks in my feet may be driven into my stomach, and then good-night to abbacy and examinations from henceforward.'

'Good father,' said the young man, 'the spirit of the times must teach thee patience; recollect that I can feel no pleasure in this duty, and that if an insurrection should take place, the rebels, who are sufficiently displeased with thee for acknowledging the English monarch, would hang thee from thine own steeple to feed the crows; or that, if thou hast secured thy peace by some private compact with the insurgents, the English governor, who will sooner or later gain the advantage, will not fail to treat thee as a rebel to his sovereign.'

'It may appear to you, my noble son,' answered the abbot, obviously discomposed, 'that I am hung up, in this case, on the horns of the dilemma which you have stated; nevertheless, I protest to you, that if any one accuses me of conspiring with the rebels against the King of England, I am ready, provided you give me time to swallow a potion recommended by Celsus in my perilous case, to answer with the most perfect sincerity every question which you can put to me upon that subject,' So saying, he called upon a monk who had attended at his *levée*, and, giving him a large key, whispered something in his ear. The cup which the monk brought was of such capacity as proved Celsus's draught required to be administered in considerable quantity, and a strong smell which it spread through the apartment, accredited the knight's suspicion that the medicine chiefly consisted of what were then termed distilled waters, a preparation known in the monasteries for some time before that comfortable secret had reached the laity in general. The abbot, neither overawed by the strength nor by the quantity of the potion, took it off with what he himself would have called a feeling of solace and pleasance, and his voice became much more composed; he signified himself as comforted extraordinarily by the medicine, and willing to proceed to answer any questions which could be put to him by his gallant young friend.

'At present,' said the knight, 'you are aware, father, that strangers travelling through this country must be the first objects of our suspicions and inquiries. What is, for example, your own opinion of the youth termed Augustine, the son, or calling himself so, of a person called Bertram the minstrel, who has resided for some days in your convent?'

The abbot heard the question with eyes ex-

† [A celebrated Roman physician of the first century of the Christian era.]

pressive of surprise at the quarter from which it came.

'Assuredly,' said he, 'I think of him as a youth who, from anything I have seen, is of that excellent disposition, both with respect to loyalty and religion, which I should have expected, were I to judge from the estimable person who committed him to my care.'

With this the abbot bowed to the knight, as if he had conceived that this repartee gave him a silencing advantage in any question which could follow upon that subject; and he was probably, therefore, surprised when Sir Aymer replied as follows:

'It is very true, Father Abbot, that I myself did recommend this stripling to you as a youth of a harmless disposition, and with respect to whom it would be unnecessary to exercise the strict vigilance extended to others in similar circumstances; but the evidence which seemed to me to vouch for this young man's innocence has not appeared so satisfactory to my superior and commander; and it is by his orders that I now make further inquiries of you. You must think they are of consequence, since we again trouble you, and at so unwonted an hour.'

'I can only protest by my order, and by the veil of Saint Bride,' replied the abbot, the spirit of Celsus appearing to fail his pupil, 'that whatever evil may be in this matter, is totally unknown to me—nor could it be extorted from me by racks or implements of torture. Whatever signs of disloyalty may have been evinced by this young man, I have witnessed none of them, although I have been strictly attentive to his behaviour.'

'In what respect?' said the knight—'and what is the result of your observation?'

'My answer,' said the Abbot of Saint Bride, 'shall be sincere and downright. The youth condescended upon payment of a certain number of gold crowns, not by any means to repay the hospitality of the Church of Saint Bride, but merely'——

'Nay, father,' interrupted the knight, 'you may cut that short, since the governor and I well understand the terms upon which the monks of Saint Bride exercise their hospitality. In what manner, it is more necessary to ask, was it received by this boy?'

'With the utmost gentleness and moderation, noble sir,' answered the abbot; 'indeed, it appeared to me, at first, that he might be a troublesome guest, since the amount of his benevolence to the convent was such as to encourage, and, in some degree, to authorize, his demanding accommodation of a kind superior to what we had to bestow.'

'In which case,' said Sir Aymer, 'you would have had the discomfort of returning some part of the money you had received?'

'That,' replied the abbot, 'would have been a mode of settlement contrary to our vows. What is paid to the treasury of Saint Bridget cannot, agreeably to our rule, be on any account restored. But, noble knight, there was no occasion for this; a crust of white bread and a draught of milk were diet sufficient to nourish this poor youth for a day, and it was my own anxiety for his health that dictated the furnishing of his cell with a softer bed and coverlet than are quite consistent with the rules of our order.'

'Now, hearken to what I say, Sir Abbot, and answer me truly,' said the Knight of Valence—'What communication has this youth held with the inmates of your convent, or with those beyond your house? Search your memory concerning this, and let me have a distinct answer; for your guest's safety and your own depend upon it.'

'As I am a Christian man,' said the abbot, 'I have observed nothing which could give ground for your worship's suspicions. The boy Augustine, unlike those whom I have observed who have been educated in the world, showed a marked preference to the company of such sisters as the House of Saint Bride contains, rather than for that of the monks, my brethren, although there are among them pleasant and conversable men.'

'Scandal,' said the young knight, 'might find a reason for that preference.'

'Not in the case of the sisters of Saint Bridget,' said the abbot, 'most of whom have been either sorely misused by time, or their comeliness destroyed by some mishap previously to their being received into the seclusion of the house.'

This observation the good father made with some internal movement of mirth, which was apparently excited at the idea of the sisterhood of Saint Bridget becoming attractive to any one by dint of their personal beauty, in which, as it happened, they were all notably, and almost ludicrously, deficient. The English knight, to whom the sisterhood were well known, felt also inclined to smile at this conversation.

'I acquit,' he said, 'the pious sisterhood of charming, otherwise than by their kind wishes, and attention to the wants of the suffering stranger.'

'Sister Beatrice,' continued the father, resuming his gravity, 'is indeed blessed with a winning gift of making comfits and syllabubs; but, on minute inquiry, I do not find that the youth has tasted any of them. Neither is Sister Ursula so hard-favoured by nature, as from the effects of an accident; but your honour knows that when a woman is ugly, the men do not trouble themselves about the cause of her hard favour. I will go, with your leave, and see in what state the youth now is, and summon him before you.'

'I request you to do so, father, for the affair is instant; and I earnestly advise you to watch, in the closest manner, this Augustine's behaviour; you cannot be too particular. I will wait your return, and either carry the boy to the castle, or leave him here, as circumstances may seem to require.'

The abbot bowed, promised his utmost exertions, and hobbled out of the room to wait on the youth Augustine in his cell, anxious to favour, if possible, the wishes of De Valence, whom he looked upon as rendered by circumstances his military patron.

He remained long absent, and Sir Aymer began to be of opinion that the delay was suspicious, when the abbot returned, with perplexity and discomposure on his countenance.

'I crave your pardon for keeping your worship'

waiting,' said Jerome, with much anxiety; 'but I have myself been detained and vexed by unnecessary formalities and scruples on the part of this peevish boy. In the first place, hearing my foot approaching his bedroom, my youth, instead of undoing the door, which would have been but proper respect to my place, on the contrary draws a strong bolt on the inside; and this fastening, forsooth, has been placed on his chamber by Ursula's command, that his slumbers might be suitably respected. I intimated to him as I best could, that he must attend you without delay, and prepare to accompany you to the Castle of Douglas; but he would not answer a single word, save recommending to me patience, to which I was fain to have recourse, as well as your archer, whom I found standing sentinel before the door of the cell, and contenting himself with the assurance of the sisters that there was no other passage by which Augustine could make his escape. At length the door opens, and my young master presents himself, fully arrayed for his journey. The truth is, I think some fresh attack of his malady has affected the youth; he may perhaps be disturbed with some touch of hypochondria, or black choler, a species of dotage of the mind, which is sometimes found concomitant with and symptomatic of this disorder; but he is at present composed, and if your worship chooses to see him, he is at your command.'

'Call him hither,' said the knight. And a considerable space of time again elapsed, ere the eloquence of the abbot, half chiding and half soothing, prevailed on the lady, in her adopted character, to approach the parlour, in which at last she made her appearance, with a countenance on which the marks of tears might still be discovered, and a pettish sullenness, like that of a boy, or, with reverence, that of a girl, who is determined upon taking her own way in any matter, and equally resolved to give no reason for her doing so. Her hurried *levée* had not prevented her attending closely to all the mufflings and disguisings by which her pilgrim's dress was arranged, so as to alter her appearance, and effectually disguise her sex. But as civility prevented her wearing her large slouched hat, she necessarily exposed her countenance more than in the open air; and though the knight beheld a most lovely set of features, yet they were not such as were inconsistent with the character she had adopted, and which she had resolved upon maintaining to the last. She had, accordingly, mustered up a degree of courage which was not natural to her, and which she perhaps supported by hopes which her situation hardly admitted. So soon as she found herself in the same apartment with De Valence, she assumed a style of manners, bolder and more determined than she had hitherto displayed.

'Your worship,' she said, addressing him even before he spoke, 'is a knight of England, and possessed, doubtless, of the virtues which become that noble station. I am an unfortunate lad, obliged, by reasons which I am under the necessity of keeping secret, to travel in a dangerous country, where I am suspected, without any just cause, of becoming accessory to plots and conspiracies which are contrary to my own interest, and which my very soul abhors; and which I might safely abjure, by imprecating upon myself all the curses of our religion and renouncing all its promises, if I were accessory to such designs, in thought, word, or deed. Nevertheless, you, who will not believe my solemn protestations, are about to proceed against me as a guilty person, and in so doing I must warn you, Sir Knight, that you will commit a great and cruel injustice.'

'I shall endeavour to avoid that,' said the knight, 'by referring the duty to Sir John de Walton, the governor, who will decide what is to be done; in this case, my only duty will be to place you in his hands at Douglas Castle.'

'Must you do this?' said Augustine.

'Certainly,' replied the knight, 'or be answerable for neglecting my duty.'

'But if I become bound to answer your loss with a large sum of money, a large tract of land'——

'No treasure, no land,—supposing such at your disposal,' answered the knight, 'can atone for disgrace; and besides, boy, how should I trust to your warrant, were my avarice such as would induce me to listen to such proposals?'

'I must then prepare to attend you instantly to the Castle of Douglas and the presence of Sir John de Walton?' replied Augustine.

'Young man,' answered De Valence, 'there is no remedy, since, if you delay me longer, I must carry you thither by force.'

'What will be the consequence to my father?' said the youth.

'That,' replied the knight, 'will depend exactly on the nature of your confession and his; something you both have to say, as is evident from the terms of the letter Sir John de Walton conveyed to you; and I assure you, you were better to speak it out at once than to risk the consequences of more delay. I can admit of no more trifling; and believe me that your fate will be entirely ruled by your own frankness and candour.'

'I must prepare, then, to travel at your command,' said the youth. 'But this cruel disease still hangs around me, and Abbot Jerome, whose leechcraft is famous, will himself assure you that I cannot travel without danger of my life; and that, while I was residing in this convent, I declined every opportunity of exercise which was offered me by the kindness of the garrison at Hazelside, lest I might by mishap bring the contagion among your men.'

'The youth says right,' said the abbot; 'the archers and men-at-arms have more than once sent to invite this lad to join in some of their military games, or to amuse them, perhaps, with some of his minstrelsy; but he has uniformly declined doing so; and, according to my belief, it is the effects of this disorder which have prevented his accepting an indulgence so natural to his age, and in so dull a place as the convent of Saint Bride must needs seem to a youth bred up in the world.'

'Do you then hold, reverend father,' said Sir Aymer, 'that there is real danger in carrying this youth to the castle to-night, as I proposed?'

'I conceive such danger,' replied the abbot, 'to

exist, not only as it may occasion the relapse of the poor youth himself, but as particularly likely, no preparations having been made, to introduce the infection among your honourable garrison; for it is in these relapses, more than in the first violence of the malady, that it has been found most contagious.'

'Then,' said the knight, 'you must be content, my friend, to give a share of your room to an archer, by way of sentinel.'

'I cannot object,' said Augustine, 'provided my unfortunate vicinity does not endanger the health of the poor soldier.'

'He will be as ready to do his duty,' said the abbot, 'without the door of the apartment as within it; and if the youth should sleep soundly, which the presence of a guard in his chamber might prevent, he is the more likely to answer your purpose on the morrow.'

'Let it be so,' said Sir Aymer; 'so you are sure that you do not minister any facility of escape.'

'The apartment,' said the monk, 'hath no other entrance than that which is guarded by the archer; but, to content you, I shall secure the door in your presence.'

'So be it, then,' said the Knight of Valence; 'this done, I myself will lie down without doffing my mail-shirt, and snatch a sleep till the ruddy dawn calls me again to duty, when you, Augustine, will hold yourself ready to attend me to our Castle of Douglas.'

The bells of the convent summoned the inhabitants and inmates of Saint Bride to morning prayers at the first peep of day. When this duty was over, the knight demanded his prisoner. The abbot marshalled him to the door of Augustine's chamber. The sentinel who was stationed there, armed with a brown-bill, or species of partisan, reported that he had heard no motion in the apartment during the whole night. The abbot tapped at the door, but received no answer. He knocked again louder, but the silence was unbroken from within.

'What means this?' said the reverend ruler of the convent of Saint Bride; 'my young patient has certainly fallen into a syncope or swoon!'

'I wish, Father Abbot,' said the knight, 'that he may not have made his escape instead, an accident which both you and I may be required to answer, since, according to our strict duty, we ought to have kept sight of him, and detained him in close custody until daybreak.'

'I trust your worship,' said the abbot, 'only anticipates a misfortune which I cannot think possible.'

'We shall speedily see,' said the knight; and, raising his voice, he called aloud, so as to be heard within, 'Bring crowbars and levers, and burst me that door into splinters without an instant's delay.'

The loudness of his voice, and the stern tone in which he spoke, soon brought around him the brethren of the house, and two or three soldiers of his own party, who were already busy in caparisoning their horses. The displeasure of the young knight was manifested by his flushed features, and the abrupt manner in which he again repeated his commands for breaking open the door. This was speedily performed, though it required the application of considerable strength; and, as the shattered remains fell crashing into the apartment, De Valence sprung, and the abbot hobbled, into the cell of the prisoner, which, to the fulfilment of their worst suspicions, they found empty.

CHAPTER XI.

Where is he? Has the deep earth swallow'd him?
Or hath he melted like some airy phantom
That shuns the approach of morn and the young sun?
Or hath he wrapt him in Cimmerian darkness,
And pass'd beyond the circuit of the sight
With things of the night's shadows? ANONYMOUS.

THE disappearance of the youth, whose disguise and whose fate have, we hope, inclined our readers to take some interest in him, will require some explanation ere we proceed with the other personages of the story, and we shall set about giving it accordingly.

When Augustine was consigned to his cell for the second time on the preceding evening, both the monk and the young Knight of Valence had seen the key turned upon him, and had heard him secure the door in the inside with the bolt which had been put on at his request by Sister Ursula, in whose affections the youth of Augustine, his extreme handsomeness, and, above all, his indisposition of body, and his melancholy of mind, had gained him considerable interest.

So soon, accordingly, as Augustine re-entered his apartment, he was greeted in a whisper by the sister, who, during the interval of his absence, had contrived to slip into the cell, and, having tappiced herself behind the little bed, came out with great appearance of joy, to greet the return of the youth. The number of little attentions, the disposal of holly boughs, and such other evergreens as the season permitted, showed the anxiety of the holy sisters to decorate the chamber of their guest, and the greetings of Sister Ursula expressed the same friendly interest, at the same time intimating that she was already in some degree in possession of the stranger's mystery.

As Augustine and the holy sister were busied in exchange of confidence, the extraordinary difference between their countenances and their persons must have struck any one who might have been accidentally a witness of their interview. The dark pilgrim's robe of the disguised female was not a stronger contrast to the white woollen garment worn by the votaress of Saint Bride, than the visage of the nun, seamed with many a ghastly scar, and the light of one of her eyes extinguished for ever, causing it to roll a sightless luminary in her head, was to the beautiful countenance of Augustine, now bent with a confidential, and even affectionate look, upon the extraordinary features of her companion.

'You know,' said the supposed Augustine, 'the principal part of my story; can you, or will you, lend me your assistance? If not, my dearest sister, you must consent to witness my death, rather than my shame. Yes, Sister

Ursula, I will not be pointed at by the finger of scorn, as the thoughtless maiden who sacrificed so much for a young man, of whose attachment she was not so well assured as she ought to have been. I will not be dragged before De Walton, for the purpose of being compelled, by threats of torture, to declare myself the female in honour of whom he holds the Dangerous Castle. No doubt, he might be glad to give his hand in wedlock to a damsel whose dowry is so ample; but who can tell whether he will regard me with that respect which every woman would wish to command, or pardon that boldness of which I have been guilty, even though its consequences have been in his own favour?'

'Nay, my darling daughter,' answered the nun, 'comfort yourself; for in all I can aid you, be assured I will. My means are somewhat more than my present situation may express, and, be assured, they shall be tried to the uttermost. Methinks I still hear that lay which you sung to the other sisters and myself, although I alone, touched by feelings kindred to yours, had the address to comprehend that it told your own tale.'

'I am yet surprised,' said Augustine, speaking beneath her breath, 'how I had the boldness to sing in your ears the lay, which, in fact, was the history of my disgrace.'

'Alas! that you will say so,' returned the nun; 'there was not a word but what resembled those tales of love and of high-spirited daring which the best minstrels love to celebrate, and the noblest knights and maidens weep at once and smile to hear. The Lady Augusta of Berkely, a great heiress, according to the world, both in land and moveable goods, becomes the King's ward by the death of her parents; and thus is on the point of being given away in marriage to a minion of the King of England, whom in these Scottish valleys we scruple not to call a peremptory tyrant.'

'I must not say so, my sister,' said the pilgrim; 'and yet, true it is that the cousin of the obscure parasite Gaviston, on whom the King wished to confer my poor hand, was neither by birth, merit, nor circumstance worthy of such an alliance. Meantime, I heard of the fame of Sir John de Walton; and I heard of it not with the less interest that his feats of chivalry were said to adorn a knight, who, rich in everything else, was poor in worldly goods, and in the smiles of fortune. I saw this Sir John de Walton, and I acknowledge that a thought, which had already intruded itself on my imagination, became, after this interview, by frequent recurrence, more familiar, and more welcome to me. Methought that the daughter of a powerful English family, if she could give away with her hand such wealth as the world spoke of, would more justly and honourably bestow it in remedying the errors of fortune in regard to a gallant knight like De Walton, than in patching the revenues of a beggarly Frenchman, whose only merit was in being the kinsman of a man who was very generally detested by the whole kingdom of England, excepting the infatuated monarch himself.'

'Nobly designed, my daughter,' said the nun; 'what more worthy of a noble heart, possessing riches, beauty, birth, and rank, than to confer them all upon indigent and chivalrous merit?'

'Such, dearest sister, was my intention,' replied Augustine; 'but I have, perhaps, scarce sufficiently explained the manner in which I meant to proceed. By the advice of a minstrel of our house, the same who is now prisoner at Douglas, I caused exhibit a large feast upon Christmas eve, and sent invitations abroad to the young knights of noble name who were known to spend their leisure in quest of arms and adventures. When the tables were drawn, and the feast concluded, Bertram, as had been before devised, was called upon to take his harp. He sung, receiving from all who were present the attention due to a minstrel of so much fame. The theme which he chose was the frequent capture of this Douglas Castle, or, as the poet termed it, Castle Dangerous. "Where are the champions of the renowned Edward the First," said the minstrel, "when the realm of England cannot furnish a man brave enough, or sufficiently expert in the wars, to defend a miserable hamlet of the North against the Scottish rebels, who have vowed to retake it over our soldiers' heads ere the year rolls to an end? Where are the noble ladies, whose smiles used to give countenance to the Knights of Saint George's Cross? Alas! the spirit of love and of chivalry is alike dead amongst us—our knights are limited to petty enterprises—and our noblest heiresses are given as prizes to strangers, as if their own country had no one to deserve them."—Here stopped the harp; and I shame to say that I myself, as if moved to enthusiasm by the song of the minstrel, arose, and, taking from my neck the chain of gold which supported a crucifix of special sanctity, I made my vow, always under the King's permission, that I would give my hand, and the inheritance of my fathers, to the good knight, being of noble birth and lineage, who should keep the Castle of Douglas in the King of England's name, for a year and a day. I sat down, my dearest sister, deafened with the jubilee in which my guests expressed their applause of my supposed patriotism. Yet some degree of pause took place amidst the young knights, who might reasonably have been supposed ready to embrace this offer, although at the risk of being encumbered with Augusta of Berkely.'

'Shame on the man,' said Sister Ursula, 'who should think so! Put your beauty alone, my dearest, into consideration, and a true knight ought to have embraced the dangers of twenty Castles of Douglas, rather than let such an invaluable opportunity of gaining your favour be lost.'

'It may be that some in reality thought so,' said the pilgrim; 'but it was supposed that the King's favour might be lost by those who seemed too anxious to thwart his royal purpose upon his ward's hand. At any rate, greatly to my joy, the only person who availed himself of the offer I had made was Sir John de Walton; and as his acceptance of it was guarded by a clause, saving and reserving the King's approbation, I hope he has not suffered any diminution of Edward's favour.'

'Assure yourself, noble and high-spirited young

lady,' replied the nun, 'that there is no fear of thy generous devotion hurting thy lover with the King of England. Something we hear concerning worldly passages, even in this remote nook of Saint Bride's cloister; and the report goes among the English soldiers that their King was indeed offended at your putting your will in opposition to his own; yet, on the other hand, this preferred lover, Sir John de Walton, was a man of such extensive fame, and your offer was so much in the character of better but not forgotten times, that even a king could not at the beginning of a long and stubborn war deprive an errant cavalier of his bride, if she should be duly won by his sword and lance.'

'Ah, dearest Sister Ursula!' sighed the disguised pilgrim; 'but, on the other hand, how much time must pass by in the siege, by defeating which that suit must needs be advanced? While I sat in my lonely castle, tidings after tidings came to astound me with the numerous, or rather the constant dangers with which my lover was surrounded, until at length, in a moment I think of madness, I resolved to set out in this masculine disguise; and, having myself with my own eyes seen in what situation I had placed my knight, I determined to take such measures in respect to shortening the term of his trial, or otherwise, as a sight of Douglas Castle, and—why should I deny it?—of Sir John de Walton, might suggest. Perhaps you, my dearest sister, may not so well understand my being tempted into flinching from the resolution which I had laid down for my own honour, and that of my lover; but consider, that my resolution was the consequence of a moment of excitation, and that the course which I adopted was the conclusion of a long, wasting, sickening state of uncertainty, the effect of which was to weaken the nerves which were once highly strung with love of my country, as I thought; but in reality, alas! with fond and anxious feelings of a more selfish description.'

'Alas!' said Sister Ursula, evincing the strongest symptoms of interest and compassion, 'am I the person, dearest child, whom you suspect of insensibility to the distresses which are the fruit of true love? Do you suppose that the air which is breathed within these walls has the property upon the female heart, of such marvellous fountains as they say change into stone the substances which are immersed into their waters? Hear my tale, and judge if it can be thus with one who possesses my causes of grief. And do not fear for loss of time; we must let our neighbours at Hazelside be settled for the evening, ere I furnish you with the means of escape; and you must have a trusty guide, for whose fidelity I will be responsible, to direct your path through these woods, and protect you in case of any danger, too likely to occur in these troublesome times. It will thus be nigh an hour ere you depart; and sure I am that in no manner can you spend the time better than in listening to distresses too similar to your own, and flowing from the source of disappointed affection which you must needs sympathise with.'

The distresses of the Lady Augusta did not prevent her being in some degree affected, almost ludicrously, with the singular contrast between the hideous countenance of this victim of the tender passion, and the cause to which she imputed her sorrows; but it was not a moment for giving way to a sense of the ridiculous, which would have been in the highest degree offensive to the sister of Saint Bride, whose good will she had so many reasons to conciliate. She readily, therefore, succeeded in preparing herself to listen to the votary with an appearance of sympathy, which might reward that which she had herself experienced at the hands of Sister Ursula; while the unfortunate recluse, with an agitation which made her ugliness still more conspicuous, narrated nearly in a whisper the following circumstances:—

'My misfortunes commenced long before I was called Sister Ursula, or secluded as a votaress within these walls. My father was a noble Norman, who, like many of his countrymen, sought and found fortune at the court of the King of Scotland. He was endowed with the sheriffdom of this county, and Maurice de Hattely, or Hautlieu, was numbered among the wealthy and powerful barons of Scotland. Wherefore should I deny it, that the daughter of this baron, then called Margaret de Hautlieu, was also distinguished among the great and fair of the land? It can be no censurable vanity which provokes me to speak the truth, and unless I tell it myself, you could hardly suspect what a resemblance I once bore even to the lovely Lady Augusta of Berkely. About this time broke out those unfortunate feuds of Bruce and Baliol, which have been so long the curse of this country. My father, determined in his choice of party by the arguments of his wealthy kinsmen at the court of Edward, embraced with passion the faction of the English interest, and became one of the keenest partizans, at first of John Baliol, and afterwards of the English monarch. None among the Anglocized-Scottish, as his party was called, were so zealous as he for the Red Cross, and no one was more detested by his countrymen who followed the national standard of Saint Andrew and the patriot Wallace. Among those soldiers of the soil, Malcolm Fleming of Biggar was one of the most distinguished by his noble birth, his high acquirements, and his fame in chivalry. I saw him; and the ghastly spectre who now addresses you must not be ashamed to say that she loved, and was beloved by, one of the handsomest youths in Scotland. Our attachment was discovered to my father almost ere we had owned it to each other, and he was furious both against my lover and myself; he placed me under the charge of a religious woman of this rule, and I was immured within the House of Saint Bride, where my father shamed not to announce he would cause me to take the veil by force, unless I agreed to wed a youth bred at the English court, his nephew; and, as Heaven had granted him no son, the heir, as he had resolved, of the House of Hautlieu. I was not long in making my election. I protested that death should be my choice, rather than any other husband excepting Malcolm Fleming. Neither was my lover less faithful; he found means to communicate to me a particular night on which he proposed to

attempt to storm the nunnery of Saint Bride, and carry me from hence to freedom and the greenwood, of which Wallace was generally called the king. In an evil hour, an hour I think of infatuation and witchery—I suffered the Abbess to wheedle the secret out of me, which I might have been sensible would appear more horribly flagitious to her than to any other woman that breathed; but I had not taken the vows, and I thought Wallace and Fleming had the same charms for everybody as for me, and the artful woman gave me reason to believe that her loyalty to Bruce was without a flaw of suspicion, and she took part in a plot of which my freedom was the object. The Abbess engaged to have the English guards removed to a distance, and in appearance the troops were withdrawn. Accordingly, in the middle of the night appointed, the window of my cell, which was two storeys from the ground, was opened without noise; and never were my eyes more gladdened than, as ready disguised and arrayed for flight, even in a horseman's dress, like yourself, fairest Lady Augusta, I saw Malcolm Fleming spring into the apartment. He rushed towards me; but at the same time my father with ten of his strongest men filled the room, and cried their war-cry of Baliol. Blows were instantly dealt on every side. A form like a giant, however, appeared in the midst of the tumult, and distinguished himself, even to my half-giddy eye, by the ease with which he bore down and dispersed those who fought against our freedom. My father alone offered an opposition which threatened to prove fatal to him; for Wallace, it was said, could foil any two martial champions that ever drew sword. Brushing from him the armed men, as a lady would drive away with her fan a swarm of troublesome flies, he secured me in one arm, used his other for our mutual protection, and I found myself in the act of being borne in safety down the ladder by which my deliverers had ascended from without,—but an evil fate awaited this attempt.

'My father, whom the Champion of Scotland had spared for my sake, or rather for Fleming's, gained by his victor's compassion and lenity a fearful advantage, and made a remorseless use of it. Having only his left hand to oppose to the maniac attempts of my father, even the strength of Wallace could not prevent the assailant, with all the energy of desperation, from throwing down the ladder, on which his daughter was perched like a dove in the grasp of an eagle. The champion saw our danger, and, exerting his inimitable strength and agility, cleared himself and me from the ladder, and leaped free of the moat of the convent, into which we must otherwise have been precipitated. The Champion of Scotland was saved in the desperate attempt, but I, who fell among a heap of stones and rubbish, I, the disobedient daughter, well-nigh the apostate vestal, waked only from a long bed of sickness, to find myself the disfigured wretch which you now see me. I then learned that Malcolm had escaped from the fray, and shortly after I heard, with feelings less keen perhaps than they ought to have been, that my father was slain in one of the endless battles which took place between the contending factions. If he had lived, I might have submitted to the completion of my fate; but since he was no more, I felt that it would be a preferable lot to be a beggar in the streets of a Scottish village, than an Abbess in this miserable House of Saint Bride; nor was even that poor object of ambition, on which my father used to expatiate, when desirous of persuading me to enter the monastic state by milder means than throwing me off the battlements, long open to me. The old Abbess died of a cold caught the evening of the fray; and the place, which might have been kept open until I was capable of filling it, was disposed of otherwise, when the English thought fit to reform, as they termed it, the discipline of the house; and instead of electing a new Abbess, sent hither two or three friendly monks, who have now the absolute government of the community, and wield it entirely according to the pleasure of the English. But I, for one, who have had the honour to be supported by the arms of the Champion of my country, will not remain here to be commanded by this Abbot Jerome. I will go forth, nor do I fear to find relations and friends, who will provide a more fitting place of refuge for Margaret de Hautlieu than the convent of Saint Bride; you, too, dearest lady, shall obtain your freedom, and it will be well to leave such information as will make Sir John de Walton aware of the devotion with which his happy fate has inspired you.'

'It is not, then, your own intention,' said the Lady Augusta, 'to return into the world again, and you are about to renounce the lover, in a union with whom you and he once saw your joint happiness?'

'It is a question, my dearest child,' said Sister Ursula, 'which I dare not ask myself, and to which I am absolutely uncertain what answer I should return. I have not taken the final and irrevocable vows; I have done nothing to alter my situation with regard to Malcolm Fleming. He also, by the vows plighted in the Chancery of Heaven, is my affianced bridegroom, nor am I conscious that I less deserve his faith, in any respect now, than at the moment when it was pledged to me; but I confess, dearest lady, that rumours have reached me, which sting me to the quick; the reports of my wounds and scars are said to have estranged the knight of my choice. I am now, indeed, poor,' she added, with a sigh, 'and I am no longer possessed of those personal charms, which they say attract the love, and fix the fidelity of the other sex. I teach myself, therefore, to think, in my moments of settled resolution, that all betwixt me and Malcolm Fleming is at an end, saving good wishes on the part of both towards the other; and yet there is a sensation in my bosom which whispers, in spite of my reason, that if I absolutely believed that which I now say, there would be no object on earth worthy my living for in order to attain it. This insinuating prepossession whispers to my secret soul, and in very opposition to my reason and understanding, that Malcolm Fleming, who could pledge his all upon the service of his country, is incapable of nourishing the versatile affection of an ordinary, a coarse, or a venal character. Methinks, were

the difference upon his part instead of mine, he would not lose his interest in my eyes, because he were seamed with honourable scars, obtained in asserting the freedom of his choice, but that such wounds would, in my opinion, add to his merit, whatever they took away from his personal comeliness. Ideas rise on my soul, as if Malcolm and Margaret might yet be to each other all that their affections once anticipated with so much security, and that a change, which took nothing from the honour and virtue of the beloved person must rather add to than diminish the charms of the union. Look at me, dearest Lady Augusta!—look me—if you have the courage — full in the face, and tell me whether I do not rave when my fancy is thus converting mere possibilities into that which is natural and probable.'

The Lady of Berkely, conscious of the necessity, raised her eyes on the unfortunate nun, afraid of losing her own chance of deliverance by the mode in which she should conduct herself in this crisis; yet not willing at the same time to flatter the unfortunate Ursula, with suggesting ideas for which her own sense told her she could hardly find any rational grounds. But her imagination, stored with the minstrelsy of the time, brought back to her recollection the Loathly Lady in 'The Marriage of Sir Gawain,' and she conducted her reply in the following manner:—

'You ask me, my dear Lady Margaret, a trying question, which it would be unfriendly to answer otherwise than sincerely, and most cruel to answer with too much rashness. It is true that what is called beauty is the first quality on which we of the weaker sex learn to set a value; we are flattered by the imputation of personal charms, whether we actually possess them or not; and no doubt we learn to place upon them a great deal more consequence than in reality is found to belong to them. Women, however, even such as are held by their own sex, and perhaps in secret by themselves, as devoid of all pretensions to beauty, have been known to become, from their understanding, their talents, or their accomplishments, the undoubted objects of the warmest attachment. Wherefore, then, should you, in the mere rashness of your apprehension, deem it impossible that your Malcolm Fleming should be made of that porcelain clay of the earth, which despises the passing captivations of outward form in comparison to the charms of true affection, and the excellence of talents and virtue?'

The nun pressed her companion's hand to her bosom, and answered her with a deep sigh.

'I fear,' she said, 'you flatter me; and yet in a crisis like this it does one good to be flattered, even as cordials, otherwise dangerous to the constitution, are wisely given to support a patient through a paroxysm of agony, and enable him to endure at least what they cannot cure. Answer only one question, and it will be time to drop this conversation. Could you, sweet lady—you upon whom fortune has bestowed so many charms—could any argument make you patient under the irretrievable loss of your personal advantages, with the concomitant loss, as in my case is most probable, of that lover for whom you have already done so much?'

The English lady cast her eyes again on her friend, and could not help shuddering a little at the thought of her own beautiful countenance being exchanged for the seamed and scarred features of the Lady of Hautlieu, irregularly lighted by the beams of a single eye.

'Believe me,' she said, looking solemnly upwards, 'that even in the case which you suppose, I would not sorrow so much for myself, as I would for the poor-spirited thoughts of the lover who could leave me because those transitory charms (which must in any case ere long take their departure) had fled ere yet the bridal day. It is, however, concealed by the decrees of Providence, in what manner, or to what extent, other persons, with whose disposition we are not fully acquainted, may be affected by such changes. I can only assure you that my hopes go with yours, and that there is no difficulty which shall remain in your path in future, if it is in my power to remove it.—Hark!'——

'It is the signal of our freedom,' replied Ursula, giving attention to something resembling the whoop of the night owl. 'We must prepare to leave the convent in a few minutes. Have you anything to take with you?'

'Nothing,' answered the Lady of Berkely, 'except the few valuables, which I scarce know why I brought with me on my flight hither. This scroll, which I shall leave behind, gives my faithful minstrel permission to save himself, by confessing to Sir John de Walton who the person really is whom he has had within his reach.'

'It is strange,' said the novice of Saint Bride, 'through what extraordinary labyrinths this Love, this Will-of-the-wisp, guides his votaries. Take heed as you descend; this trap-door, carefully concealed, curiously jointed and oiled, leads to a secret postern, where I conceive the horses already wait, which will enable us speedily to bid adieu to Saint Bride's—Heaven's blessing on her, and on her convent! We can have no advantage from any light, until we are in the open air.'

During this time, Sister Ursula, to give her for the last time her conventual name, exchanged her stole, or loose upper garment, for the more succinct cloak and hood of a horseman. She led the way through divers passages, studiously complicated, until the Lady of Berkely, with throbbing heart, stood in the pale and doubtful moonlight, which was shining with grey uncertainty upon the walls of the ancient building. The imitation of an owlet's cry directed them to a neighbouring large elm, and, on approaching it, they were aware of three horses, held by one concerning whom they could only see that he was tall, strong, and accoutred in the dress of a man-at-arms.

'The sooner,' he said, 'we are gone from this place, Lady Margaret, it is so much the better. You have only to direct the course which we shall hold.'

Lady Margaret's answer was given beneath her breath; and replied to with a caution from the guide to ride slowly and silently

for the first quarter of an hour, by which time inhabited places would be left at a distance.

CHAPTER XII.

GREAT was the astonishment of the young Knight of Valence and the reverend Father Jerome, when, upon breaking into the cell, they discovered the youthful pilgrim's absence; and, from the garments which were left, saw every reason to think that the one-eyed novice, Sister Ursula, had accompanied him in his escape from custody. A thousand thoughts thronged upon Sir Aymer, how shamefully he had suffered himself to be outwitted by the artifices of a boy and of a novice. His reverend companion in error felt no less contrition for having recommended to the knight a mild exercise of his authority. Father Jerome had obtained his preferment as abbot upon the faith of his zeal for the cause of the English monarch, with the affected interest in which he was at a loss to reconcile his proceedings of the last night. A hurried inquiry took place, from which little could be learned, save that the young pilgrim had most certainly gone off with the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu, an incident at which the females of the convent expressed surprise, mingled with a great deal of horror; while that of the males, whom the news soon reached, was qualified with a degree of wonder, which seemed to be founded upon the very different personal appearance of the two fugitives.

'Sacred Virgin!' said a man, 'who could have conceived the hopeful votaress, Sister Ursula, so lately drowned in tears for her father's untimely fate, capable of eloping with a boy scarce fourteen years old?'

'And, holy Saint Bride!' said the Abbot Jerome, 'what could have made so handsome a young man lend his arm to assist such a nightmare as Sister Ursula in the commission of so great an enormity? Certainly he can neither plead temptation nor seduction, but must have gone, as the worldly phrase is,—to the devil with a dishclout.'

'I must disperse the soldiers to pursue the fugitives,' said De Valence, 'unless this letter, which the pilgrim must have left behind him, shall contain some explanations respecting our mysterious prisoner.'

After viewing the contents with some surprise, he read aloud,—'The undersigned, late residing in the House of Saint Bride, do you, Father Jerome, the Abbot of said House, to know, that finding you were disposed to treat me as a prisoner and a spy, in the sanctuary to which you had received me as a distressed person, I have resolved to use my natural liberty, with which you have no right to interfere, and therefore have withdrawn myself from your abbacy. Moreover, finding that the novice called in your convent Sister Ursula (who hath, by a monastic rule and discipline, a fair title to return to the world, unless she is pleased, after a year's novitiate, to profess herself sister of your order) is determined to use such privilege, I joyfully take the opportunity of her company in this her lawful resolution, as being what is in conformity to the law of God, and the precepts of Saint Bride, which gave you no authority to detain any person in your convent by force, who hath not taken upon her irrevocably the vows of the order.

'To you, Sir John de Walton, and Sir Aymer de Valence, knights of England, commanding the garrison of Douglas Dale, I have only to say that you have acted and are acting against me under a mystery, the solution of which is comprehended in a secret known only to my faithful minstrel, Bertram of the many Lays, as whose son I have found it convenient to pass myself. But as I cannot at this time prevail upon myself personally to discover a secret which cannot well be unfolded without feelings of shame, I not only give permission to the said Bertram the minstrel, but I charge and command him, that he tell to you the purpose with which I came originally to the Castle of Douglas. When this is discovered, it will only remain to express my feelings towards the two knights, in return for the pain and agony of mind which their violence and threats of further severities have occasioned me.

'And first respecting Sir Aymer de Valence, I freely and willingly forgive him for having been involved in a mistake to which I myself led the way, and I shall at all times be happy to meet with him as an acquaintance, and never to think further of his part in these few days' history, saving as matter of mirth and ridicule.

'But respecting Sir John de Walton, I must request of him to consider whether his conduct towards me, standing as we at present do towards each other, is such as he himself ought to forget or I ought to forgive; and I trust he will understand me when I tell him that all former connections must henceforth be at an end between him and the supposed

'AUGUSTINE.'

'This is madness,' said the abbot, when he had read the letter,—'very midsummer madness; not unfrequently an accompaniment of this pestilential disease, and I should do well in requiring of those soldiers who shall first apprehend this youth Augustine, that they reduce his victuals immediately to water and bread, taking care that the diet do not exceed in measure what is necessary to sustain nature; nay, I should be warranted by the learned, did I recommend a sufficient intermixture of flagellation with belts, stirrup-leathers, or surcingles, and, failing those, with riding-whips, switches, and the like.'

'Hush! my reverend father,' said De Valence; 'a light begins to break in upon me. John de Walton, if my suspicion be true, would sooner expose his own flesh to be hewn from his bones, than have this Augustine's finger stung by a gnat. Instead of treating this youth as a madman, I, for my own part, will be contented to avow that I myself have been bewitched and fascinated; and, by my honour, if I send out my attendants in quest of the fugitives, it shall be with the strict charge that, when apprehended, they treat them with all respect, and protect

them, if they object to return to this house, to any honourable place of refuge which they may desire.'

'I hope,' said the abbot, looking strangely confused, 'I shall be first heard in behalf of the Church concerning this affair of an abducted nun? You see yourself, Sir Knight, that this scapegrace of a minstrel avouches neither repentance nor contrition at his share in a matter so flagitious.'

'You shall be secured an opportunity of being fully heard,' replied the knight, 'if you shall find at last that you really desire one. Meantime, I must back, without a moment's delay, to inform Sir John de Walton of the turn which affairs have taken. Farewell, reverend father. By my honour, we may wish each other joy that we have escaped from a troublesome charge, which brought as much terror with it as the phantoms of a fearful dream, and is yet found capable of being dispelled by a cure as simple as that of awakening the sleeper. But, by Saint Bride! both churchmen and laymen are bound to sympathize with the unfortunate Sir John de Walton. I tell thee, father, that if this letter' —touching the missive with his finger—'is to be construed literally, as far as respects him, he is the man most to be pitied betwixt the brink of Solway and the place where we now stand. Suspend thy curiosity, most worthy churchman, lest there should be more in this matter than I myself see; so that, while thinking that I have lighted on the true explanation, I may not have to acknowledge that I have been again leading you into error. Sound to horse there! ho!' he called out from the window of the apartment; 'and let the party I brought hither prepare to scour the woods on their return.'

'By my faith,' said Father Jerome, 'I am right glad that this young nut-cracker is going to leave me to my own meditation. I hate when a young person pretends to understand whatever passes, while his betters are obliged to confess that it is all a mystery to them. Such an assumption is like that of the conceited fool Sister Ursula, who pretended to read with a single eye a manuscript which I myself could not find intelligible with the assistance of my spectacles.'

This might not have quite pleased the young knight, nor was it one of those truths which the abbot would have chosen to deliver in his hearing. But the knight had shaken him by the hand, said adieu, and was already at Hazelside, issuing particular orders to little troops of the archers and others, and occasionally chiding Thomas Dickson, who, with a degree of curiosity which the English knight was not very willing to excuse, had been endeavouring to get some account of the occurrences of the night.

'Peace, fellow!' he said, 'and mind thine own business, being well assured that the hour will come in which it will require all the attention thou canst give, leaving others to take care of their own affairs.'

'If I am suspected of anything,' answered Dickson, in a tone rather dogged and surly than otherwise, 'methinks it were but fair to let me know what accusation is brought against me. I need not tell you that chivalry prescribes that a knight should not attack an enemy undefied.'

'When you are a knight,' answered Sir Aymer de Valence, 'it will be time enough for me to reckon with you upon the points of form due to you by the laws of chivalry. Meanwhile you had best let me know what share you have had in playing off the martial phantom which sounded the rebellious slogan of Douglas in the town of that name.'

'I know nothing of what you speak,' answered the goodman of Hazelside.

'See then,' said the knight, 'that you do not engage yourself in the affairs of other people, even if your conscience warrants that you are in no danger from your own.'

So saying, he rode off, not waiting any answer. The ideas which filled his head were to the following purpose :—

'I know not how it is, but one mist seems no sooner to clear away than we find ourselves engaged in another. I take it for granted that the disguised damsel is no other than the goddess of Walton's private idolatry, who has cost him and me so much trouble, and some certain degree of misunderstanding, during these last weeks. By my honour! this fair lady is right lavish in the pardon which she has so frankly bestowed upon me, and if she is willing to be less complaisant to Sir John de Walton, why then—And what then?—It surely does not infer that she would receive me into that place in her affections, from which she has just expelled De Walton? Nor, if she did, could I avail myself of a change in favour of myself, at the expense of my friend and companion in arms. It were a folly even to dream of a thing so improbable. But with respect to the other business, it is worth serious consideration. Yon sexton seems to have kept company with dead bodies, until he is unfit for the society of the living; and as to that Dickson of Hazelside, as they call him, there is no attempt against the English during these endless wars, in which that man has not been concerned; had my life depended upon it, I could not have prevented myself from intimating my suspicions of him, let him take it as he lists.'

So saying, the knight spurred his horse, and, arriving at Douglas Castle without further adventure, demanded, in a tone of greater cordiality than he had of late used, whether he could be admitted to Sir John de Walton, having something of consequence to report to him. He was immediately ushered into an apartment, in which the governor was seated at his solitary breakfast. Considering the terms upon which they had lately stood, the governor of Douglas Dale was somewhat surprised at the easy familiarity with which De Valence now approached him.

'Some uncommon news,' said Sir John, rather gravely, 'have brought me the honour of Sir Aymer de Valence's company?'

'It is,' answered Sir Aymer, 'what seems of high importance to your interest, Sir John de Walton, and therefore I were to blame if I lost a moment in communicating it.'

'I shall be proud to profit by your intelligence,' said Sir John de Walton.

'And I too,' said the young knight, 'am loth

to lose the credit of having penetrated a mystery which blinded Sir John de Walton. At the same time, I do not wish to be thought capable of jesting with you, which might be the case were I, from misapprehension, to give a false key to this matter. With your permission, then, we will proceed thus: We go together to the place of Bertram the minstrel's confinement. I have in my possession a scroll from the young person who was entrusted to the care of the Abbot Jerome; it is written in a delicate female hand, and gives authority to the minstrel to declare the purpose which brought them to this vale of Douglas.'

'It must be as you say,' said Sir John de Walton, 'although I can scarce see occasion for adding so much form to a mystery which can be expressed in such small compass.'

Accordingly, the two knights, the warder leading the way, proceeded to the dungeon to which the minstrel had been removed.

CHAPTER XIII.

The doors of the stronghold being undone, displayed a dungeon such as in those days held victims hopeless of escape, but in which the ingenious knave of modern times would scarcely have deigned to remain many hours. The huge rings by which the fetters were soldered together, and attached to the human body, were, when examined minutely, found to be clenched together by riveting so very thin, that when rubbed with corrosive acid, or patiently ground with a bit of sandstone, the hold of the fetters upon each other might easily be forced asunder, and the purpose of them entirely frustrated. The locks also, large, and apparently very strong, were so coarsely made, that an artist of small ingenuity could easily contrive to get the better of their fastenings upon the same principle. The daylight found its way to the subterranean dungeon only at noon, and through a passage which was purposely made tortuous, so as to exclude the rays of the sun, while it presented no obstacle to wind or rain. The doctrine that a prisoner was to be esteemed innocent until he should be found guilty by his peers, was not understood in those days of brute force, and he was only accommodated with a lamp or other alleviation of his misery, if his demeanour was quiet, and he appeared disposed to give his jailor no trouble by attempting to make his escape. Such a cell of confinement was that of Bertram, whose moderation of temper and patience had nevertheless procured for him such mitigations of his fate as the warder could grant. He was permitted to carry into his cell the old book, in the perusal of which he found an amusement of his solitude, together with writing materials, and such other helps towards spending his time as were consistent with his abode in the bosom of the rock and the degree of information with which his minstrel craft had possessed him. He raised his head from the table as the knights entered, while the governor observed to the young knight,—

'As you seem to think yourself possessed of the secret of this prisoner, I leave it to you, Sir Aymer de Valence, to bring it to light in the manner which you shall judge most expedient. If the man or his son have suffered unnecessary hardship, it shall be my duty to make amends —which, I suppose, can be no very important matter.'

Bertram looked up, and fixed his eyes full upon the governor, but read nothing in his looks which indicated his being better acquainted than before with the secret of his imprisonment. Yet, upon turning his eye towards Sir Aymer, his countenance evidently lighted up, and the glance which passed between them was one of intelligence.

'You have my secret, then,' said he, 'and you know who it is that passes under the name of Augustine?'

Sir Aymer exchanged with him a look of acquiescence; while, the eyes of the governor glancing wildly from the prisoner to the Knight of Valence, he exclaimed,—

'Sir Aymer de Valence, as you are belted knight and Christian man, as you have honour to preserve on earth, and a soul to rescue after death, I charge you to tell me the meaning of this mystery! It may be that you conceive, with truth, that you have subject of complaint against me;—if so, I will satisfy you as a knight may.'

The minstrel spoke at the same moment.

'I charge this knight,' he said, 'by his vow of chivalry, that he do not divulge any secret belonging to a person of honour and of character, unless he has positive assurance that it is done entirely by that person's own consent.'

'Let this note remove your scruples,' said Sir Aymer, putting the scroll into the hands of the minstrel; 'and for you, Sir John de Walton, far from retaining the least feeling of any misunderstanding which may have existed between us, I am disposed entirely to bury it in forgetfulness, as having arisen out of a series of mistakes which no mortal could have comprehended. And do not be offended, my dear Sir John, when I protest, on my knightly faith, that I pity the pain which I think this scroll is likely to give you, and that if my utmost efforts can be of the least service to you in unravelling this tangled skein, I will contribute them with as much earnestness as ever I did aught in my life. This faithful minstrel will now see that he can have no difficulty in yielding up a secret, which I doubt not, but for the writing I have just put into his hands, he would have continued to keep with unshaken fidelity.'

Sir Aymer now placed in De Walton's hand a note, in which he had, ere he left Saint Bride's convent, signified his own interpretation of the mystery; and the governor had scarcely read the name it contained, before the same name was pronounced aloud by Bertram, who, at the same moment, handed to the governor the scroll which he had received from the Knight of Valence.

The white plume which floated over the knight's cap of maintenance, which was worn as a headpiece within doors, was not more pale in complexion than was the knight himself at the

unexpected and surprising information, that the lady who was, in chivalrous phrase, empress of his thoughts, and commander of his actions, and to whom, even in less fantastic times, he must have owed the deepest gratitude for the generous election which she had made in his favour, was the same person whom he had threatened with personal violence, and subjected to hardships and affronts which he would not willingly have bestowed even upon the meanest of her sex.

Yet Sir John de Walton seemed at first scarcely to comprehend the numerous ill consequences which might probably follow this unhappy complication of mistakes. He took the paper from the minstrel's hand, and while his eye, assisted by the lamp, wandered over the characters without apparently their conveying any distinct impression to his understanding, De Valence even became alarmed that he was about to lose his faculties.

'For Heaven's sake, sir,' he said, 'be a man, and support with manly steadiness these unexpected occurrences—I would fain think they will reach to nothing else—which the wit of man could not have prevented. This fair lady, I would fain hope, cannot be much hurt or deeply offended by a train of circumstances, the natural consequence of your anxiety to discharge perfectly a duty upon which must depend the accomplishment of all the hopes she had permitted you to entertain. In God's name, rouse up, sir; let it not be said that an apprehended frown of a fair lady hath damped to such a degree the courage of the boldest knight in England; be what men have called you, "Walton the Unwavering;" in Heaven's name, let us at least see that the lady is indeed offended, before we conclude that she is irreconcilably so. To whose fault are we to ascribe the source of all these errors? Surely, with all due respect, to the caprice of the lady herself, which has engendered such a nest of mistakes. Think of it as a man, and as a soldier. Suppose that you yourself, or I, desirous of proving the fidelity of our sentinels, or for any other reason, good or bad, attempted to enter this Dangerous Castle of Douglas without giving the password to the warders, would we be entitled to blame those upon duty, if, not knowing our persons, they manfully refused us entrance, made us prisoners, and mishandled us while resisting our attempt, in terms of the orders which we ourselves had imposed upon them? What is there that makes a difference between such a sentinel and yourself, John de Walton, in this curious affair, which, by Heaven! would rather form a gay subject for the minstrelsy of this excellent bard, than the theme of a tragic lay? Come! look not thus, Sir John de Walton; be angry, if you will, with the lady who has committed such a piece of folly, or with me who have rode up and down nearly all night on a fool's errand, and spoiled my best horse, in absolute uncertainty how I shall get another till my uncle of Pembroke and I shall be reconciled; or, lastly, if you desire to be totally absurd in your wrath, direct it against this worthy minstrel on account of his rare fidelity, and punish him for that for which he better deserves a chain of gold. Let passion out, if you will; but chase this desponding gloom from the brow of a man and a belted knight.'

Sir John de Walton made an effort to speak, and succeeded with some difficulty.

'Aymer de Valence,' he said, 'in irritating a madman you do but sport with your own life;' and then remained silent.

'I am glad you can say so much,' replied his friend; 'for I was not jesting when I said I would rather that you were at variance with me, than that you laid the whole blame on yourself. It would be courteous, I think, to set this minstrel instantly at liberty. Meantime, for his lady's sake, I will entreat him, in all honour, to be our guest till the Lady Augusta de Berkely shall do us the same honour, and to assist us in our search after her place of retirement.—Good minstrel,' he continued, 'you hear what I say, and you will not, I suppose, be surprised that, in all honour and kind usage, you find yourself detained for a short space in this Castle of Douglas?'

'You seem, Sir Knight,' replied the minstrel, 'not so much to keep your eye upon the right of doing what you should, as to possess the might of doing what you would. I must necessarily be guided by your advice, since you have the power to make it a command.'

'And I trust,' continued De Valence, 'that when your mistress and you again meet, we shall have the benefit of your intercession for anything which we may have done to displeasure her, considering that the purpose of our action was exactly the reverse.'

'Let me,' said Sir John de Walton, 'say a single word. I will offer thee a chain of gold, heavy enough to bear down the weight of these shackles, as a sign of regret for having condemned thee to suffer so many indignities.'

'Enough said, Sir John,' said De Valence; 'let us promise no more till this good minstrel shall see some sign of performance. Follow me this way, and I will tell thee in private of other tidings, which it is important that you should know.'

So saying, he withdrew De Walton from the dungeon, and, sending for the old knight, Sir Philip de Montenay, already mentioned, who acted as seneschal of the castle, he commanded that the minstrel should be enlarged from the dungeon, well looked to in other respects, yet prohibited, though with every mark of civility, from leaving the castle without a trusty attendant.

'And now, Sir John de Walton,' he said, 'methinks you are a little churlish in not ordering me some breakfast, after I have been all night engaged in your affairs; and a cup of muscadel would, I think, be no bad induction to a full consideration of this perplexed matter.'

'Thou knowest,' answered De Walton, 'that thou mayest call for what thou wilt, provided always thou tellest me, without loss of time, what else thou knowest respecting the will of the lady, against whom we have all sinned so grievously—and I, alas! beyond hope of forgiveness.'

'Trust me, I hope,' said the Knight of

Valence, 'the good lady bears me no malice, as indeed she has expressly renounced any ill-will against me. The words, you see, are as plain as you yourself may read—"The lady pardons poor Aymer de Valence, and willingly, for having been involved in a mistake, to which she herself led the way; she herself will at all times be happy to meet with him as an acquaintance, and never to think further of these few days' history, except as matter of mirth and ridicule." So it is expressly written and set down.'

'Yes,' replied Sir John de Walton, 'but see you not that her offending lover is expressly excluded from the amnesty granted to the lesser offender? Mark you not the concluding paragraph?' He took the scroll with a trembling hand, and read with a discomposed voice its closing words. 'It is even so: "All former connection must henceforth be at an end between him and the supposed Augustine." Explain to me how the reading of these words is reconcilable to anything but their plain sense of condemnation and forfeiture of contract, implying destruction of the hopes of Sir John de Walton?'

'You are somewhat an older man than I, Sir Knight,' answered De Valence, 'and, I will grant, by far the wiser and more experienced; yet I will uphold that there is no adopting the interpretation which you seem to have affixed in your mind to this letter, without supposing the preliminary, that the fair writer was distracted in her understanding,—nay, never start, look wildly, or lay your hand on your sword, I do not affirm this is the case. I say again, that no woman in her senses would have pardoned a common acquaintance for his behaving to her with unintentional disrespect and unkindness, during the currency of a certain masquerade, and, at the same time, sternly and irrevocably broke off with the lover to whom her troth was plighted, although his error in joining in the offence was neither grosser nor more protracted than that of the person indifferent to her love.'

'Do not blaspheme,' said Sir John de Walton; 'and forgive me, if, in justice to truth and to the angel whom I fear I have forfeited for ever, I point out to you the difference which a maiden of dignity and of feeling must make between an offence towards her, committed by an ordinary acquaintance, and one of precisely the same kind offered by a person who is bound by the most undeserved preference, by the most generous benefits, and by everything which can bind human feeling, to think and reflect ere he becomes an actor in any case in which it is possible for her to be concerned.'

'Now, by mine honour,' said Aymer de Valence, 'I am glad to hear thee make some attempt at reason, although it is but an unreasonable kind of reason too, since its object is to destroy thine own hopes, and argue away thine own chance of happiness; but if I have, in the progress of this affair, borne me sometimes towards thee as to give not only the governor, but even the friend, some cause of displeasure, I will make it up to thee now, John de Walton, by trying to convince thee in spite of thine own perverse logic. But here comes the muscadel and the breakfast; wilt thou take some refreshment?—or shall we go on without the spirit of muscadel?'

'For Heaven's sake,' replied De Walton, 'do as thou wilt, so thou make me clear of thy well-intended babble.'

'Nay, thou shalt not brawl me out of my powers of argument,' said De Valence, laughing, and helping himself to a brimming cup of wine; 'if thou acknowledgest thyself conquered, I am contented to give the victory to the inspiring strength of the jovial liquor.'

'Do as thou listest,' said De Walton, 'but make an end of an argument which thou canst not comprehend.'

'I deny the charge,' answered the younger knight, wiping his lips, after having finished his draught; 'and listen, Walton the Warlike, to a chapter in the history of women, in which thou art more unskilled than I would wish thee to be. Thou canst not deny that, be it right or wrong, the Lady Augusta hath ventured more forward with you than is usual upon the sea of affection; she boldly made thee her choice, while thou wert as yet known to her only as a flower of English chivalry,—faith, and I respect her for her frankness,—but it was a choice which the more cold of her own sex might perhaps claim occasion to term rash and precipitate.—Nay, be not, I pray thee, offended—I am far from thinking or saying so; on the contrary, I will uphold with my lance her selection of John de Walton against the minions of a court, to be a wise and generous choice, and her own behaviour as alike candid and noble. But she herself is not unlikely to dread unjust misconstruction; a fear of which may not improbably induce her, upon any occasion, to seize some opportunity of showing an unwonted and unusual rigour towards her lover, in order to balance her having extended towards him, in the beginning of their intercourse, somewhat of an unusual degree of frank encouragement. Nay, it might be easy for her lover so far to take part against himself, by arguing as thou dost, when out of thy senses, as to make it difficult for her to withdraw from an argument which he himself was foolish enough to strengthen; and thus, like a maiden too soon taken at her first nay-say, she shall perhaps be allowed no opportunity of bearing herself according to her real feelings, or retracting a sentence issued with the consent of the party whose hopes it destroys.'

'I have heard thee, De Valence,' answered the governor of Douglas Dale; 'nor is it difficult for me to admit that these thy lessons may serve as a chart to many a female heart, but not to that of Augusta de Berkely. By my life, I say I would much sooner be deprived of the merit of those few deeds of chivalry which thou sayest have procured for me such enviable distinction, than I would act upon them with the insolence, as if I said that my place in the lady's bosom was too firmly fixed to be shaken even by the success of a worthier man, or by my own gross failure in respect to the object of my attachment. No, herself alone shall have power to persuade me that even goodness equal

to that of an interceding saint will restore me to the place in her affections which I have most unworthily forfeited, by a stupidity only to be compared to that of brutes.'

'If you are so minded,' said Aymer de Valence, 'I have only one word more—forgive me if I speak it peremptorily — the lady, as you say, and say truly, must be the final arbitress in this question. My arguments do not extend to insisting that you should claim her hand, whether she herself will or no; but, to learn her determination, it is necessary that you should find out where she is, of which I am unfortunately not able to inform you.'

'How! what mean you?' exclaimed the governor, who now only began to comprehend the extent of his misfortune; 'whither hath she fled? or with whom?'

'She is fled, for what I know,' said De Valence, 'in search of a more enterprising lover than one who is so willing to interpret every air of frost as a killing blight to his hopes; perhaps she seeks the Black Douglas, or some such hero of the Thistle, to reward with her lands, her lordships, and beauty, those virtues of enterprise and courage, of which John de Walton was at one time thought possessed. But seriously, events are passing around us of strange import. I saw enough last night, on my way to Saint Bride's, to make me suspicious of every one. I sent to you as a prisoner the old sexton of the Church of Douglas. I found him contumacious as to some inquiries which I thought it proper to prosecute; but of this more at another time. The escape of this lady adds greatly to the difficulties which encircle this devoted castle.'

'Aymer de Valence,' replied De Walton, in a solemn and animated tone, 'Douglas Castle shall be defended, as we have hitherto been able, with the aid of Heaven, to spread from its battlements the broad banner of Saint George. Come of me what lists during my life, I will die the faithful lover of Augusta de Berkely, even although I no longer live as her chosen knight. There are cloisters and hermitages'——

'Ay, marry are there,' replied Sir Aymer; 'and girdles of hemp, moreover, and beads of oak; but all these we omit in our reckonings, till we discover where the Lady Augusta is, and what she purposes to do in this matter.'

'You say well,' replied De Walton; 'let us hold counsel together by what means we shall, if possible, discover the lady's too hasty retreat, by which she has done me great wrong; I mean, if she supposed her commands would not have been fully obeyed, had she honoured with them the governor of Douglas Dale, or any who are under his command.'

'Now,' replied De Valence, 'you again speak like a true son of chivalry. With your permission, I would summon this minstrel to our presence. His fidelity to his mistress has been remarkable, and, as matters stand now, we must take instant measures for tracing the place of her retreat.'

CHAPTER XIV.

The way is long, my children, long and rough—
The moors are dreary, and the woods are dark;
But he that creeps from cradle on to grave,
Unskill'd save in the velvet course of fortune,
Hath miss'd the discipline of noble hearts.

OLD PLAY.

It was yet early in the day, when, after the governor and De Valence had again summoned Bertram to their counsels, the garrison of Douglas was mustered, and a number of small parties, in addition to those already despatched by De Valence from Hazelside were sent out to scour the woods in pursuit of the fugitives, with strict injunctions to treat them, if overtaken, with the utmost respect, and to obey their commands, keeping an eye, however, on the place where they might take refuge. To facilitate this result, some who were men of discretion were entrusted with the secret who the supposed pilgrim and the fugitive nun really were. The whole ground, whether forest or moorland, within many miles of Douglas Castle, was covered and traversed by parties, whose anxiety to detect the fugitives was equal to the reward for their safe recovery, liberally offered by De Walton and De Valence. They spared not, meantime, to make such inquiries in all directions, as might bring to light any machinations of the Scottish insurgents which might be on foot in those wild districts, of which, as we have said before, De Valence, in particular, entertained strong suspicions. Their instructions were, in case of finding such, to proceed against the persons engaged, by arrest and otherwise, in the most rigorous manner, such as had been commanded by De Walton himself at the time when the Black Douglas and his accomplices had been the principal objects of his wakeful suspicions. These various detachments had greatly reduced the strength of the garrison, yet, although numerous, alert, and despatched in every direction, they had not the fortune either to fall on the trace of the Lady of Berkely, or to encounter any party whatever of the insurgent Scottish.

Meanwhile, our fugitives had, as we have seen, set out from the convent of Saint Bride under the guidance of a cavalier, of whom the Lady Augusta knew nothing, save that he was to guide their steps in a direction where they would not be exposed to the risk of being overtaken. At length Margaret de Hautlieu herself spoke upon the subject.

'You have made no inquiry,' she said, 'Lady Augusta, whither you are travelling, or under whose charge, although methinks it should much concern you to know.'

'Is it not enough for me to be aware,' answered Lady Augusta, 'that I am travelling, kind sister, under the protection of one to whom you yourself trust as to a friend; and why need I be anxious for any further assurance of my safety?'

'Simply,' said Margaret de Hautlieu, 'because the persons with whom, from national as well as personal circumstances, I stand connected, are perhaps not exactly the protectors to whom

you, lady, can with such perfect safety entrust yourself.'

'In what sense,' said the Lady Augusta, 'do you use these words?'

'Because,' replied Margaret de Hautlieu, 'the Bruce, the Douglas, Malcolm Fleming, and others of that party, although they are incapable of abusing such an advantage to any dishonourable purpose, might nevertheless, under a strong temptation, consider you as a hostage thrown into their hands by Providence, through whom they might meditate the possibility of gaining some benefit to their dispersed and dispirited party.'

'They might make me,' answered the Lady Augusta, 'the subject of such a treaty, when I was dead, but, believe me, never while I drew vital breath. Believe me also, that with whatever pain, shame, or agony, I would again deliver myself up to the power of De Walton, yes, I would rather put myself into his hands—what do I say? *his?*—I would rather surrender myself to the meanest archer of my native country, than combine with its foes to work mischief to merry England—my own England—that country which is the envy of every other country, and the pride of all who can term themselves her natives!'

'I thought that your choice might prove so,' said Lady Margaret; 'and since you have honoured me with your confidence, gladly would I provide for your liberty by placing you as nearly in the situation which you yourself desire, as my poor means have the power of accomplishing. In half-an-hour we shall be in danger of being taken by the English parties, which will be instantly dispersed in every direction in quest of us. Now, take notice, lady, I know a place in which I can take refuge with my friends and countrymen, those gallant Scots, who have never even in this dishonoured age bent the knee to Baal. For their honour, their nicety of honour, I could in other days have answered with my own; but of late, I am bound to tell you, they have been put to those trials by which the most generous affections may be soured, and driven to a species of frenzy, the more wild that it is founded originally on the noblest feelings. A person who feels himself deprived of his natural birthright, denounced, exposed to confiscation and death, because he avouches the rights of his king, the cause of his country, ceases on his part to be nice or precise in estimating the degree of retaliation which it is lawful for him to exercise in the requital of such injuries; and believe me, bitterly should I lament having guided you into a situation which you might consider afflicting or degrading.'

'In a word, then,' said the English lady, 'what is it you apprehend I am like to suffer at the hands of your friends, whom I must be excused for terming rebels?'

'If,' said the Sister Ursula, '*your* friends, whom I should term oppressors and tyrants, take our land and our lives, seize our castles, and confiscate our property, you must confess that the rough laws of war indulge *mine* with the privilege of retaliation. There can be no fear that such men, under any circumstances, would ever exercise cruelty or insult upon a lady of your rank; but it is another thing to calculate that they will abstain from such means of extorting advantage from your captivity as are common in warfare. You would not, I think, wish to be delivered up to the English, on consideration of Sir John de Walton surrendering the Castle of Douglas to its natural lord; yet, were you in the hands of the Bruce or Douglas, although I can answer for your being treated with all the respect which they have the means of showing, yet, I own, their putting you at such a ransom might be by no means unlikely.'

'I would sooner die,' said the Lady Berkely, 'than have my name mixed up in a treaty so disgraceful; and De Walton's reply to it would, I am certain, be to strike the head from the messenger, and throw it from the highest tower of Douglas Castle.'

'Where, then, lady, would you now go,' said Sister Ursula, 'were the choice in your power?'

'To my own castle,' answered Lady Augusta, 'where, if necessary, I could be defended even against the King himself, until I could place at least my person under the protection of the Church.'

'In that case,' replied Margaret de Hautlieu, 'my power of rendering you assistance is only precarious, yet it comprehends a choice which I will willingly submit to your decision, notwithstanding I thereby subject the secrets of my friends to some risk of being discovered and frustrated. But the confidence which you have placed in me imposes on me the necessity of committing to you a like trust. It rests with you, whether you will proceed with me to the secret rendezvous of the Douglas and his friends, which I may be blamed for making known, and there take your chance of the reception which you may encounter, since I cannot warrant you of anything save honourable treatment, so far as your person is concerned; or if you should think this too hazardous, make the best of your way at once for the Border; in which last case I will proceed as far as I can with you towards the English line, and then leave you to pursue your journey, and to obtain a guard and a conductor among your own countrymen. Meantime, it will be well for me if I escape being taken, since the Abbot would not shrink at inflicting upon me the death due to an apostate nun.'

'Such cruelty, my sister, could hardly be inflicted upon one who had never taken the religious vows, and who still, according to the laws of the Church, had a right to make a choice between the world and the veil.'

'Such choice as they gave their gallant victims,' said Lady Margaret, 'who have fallen into English hands during these merciless wars,—such choice as they gave to Wallace, the Champion of Scotland,—such as they gave to Hay, the gentle and the free,—to Sommerville, the flower of chivalry,—and to Athol, the blood relation of King Edward himself,—all of whom were as much traitors, under which name they were executed, as Margaret de Hautlieu is an apostate nun, and subject to the rule of the cloister.'

She spoke with some eagerness, for she felt as if the English lady imputed to her more coldness

than she was, in such doubtful circumstances, conscious of manifesting.

'And after all,' she proceeded, 'you, Lady Augusta de Berkely, what do you venture, if you run the risk of falling into the hands of your lover? What dreadful risk do you incur? You need not, methinks, fear being immured between four walls, with a basket of bread and a cruise of water, which, were I seized, would be the only support allowed to me for the short space that my life would be prolonged. Nay, even were you to be betrayed to the rebel Scots, as you call them, a captivity among the hills, sweetened by the hope of deliverance, and rendered tolerable by all the alleviations which the circumstances of your captors allowed them the means of supplying, were not, I think, a lot so very hard to endure.'

'Nevertheless,' answered the Lady of Berkely, 'frightful enough it must have appeared to me, since, to fly from such, I threw myself upon your guidance.'

'And whatever you think or suspect,' answered the novice, 'I am as true to you as ever was one maiden to another; and as sure as ever Sister Ursula was true to her vows, although they were never completed, so will I be faithful to your secret, even at the risk of betraying my own.'

'Hearken, lady!' she said, suddenly pausing, 'do you hear that?'

The sound to which she alluded was the same imitation of the cry of an owlet, which the lady had before heard under the walls of the convent.

'These sounds,' said Margaret de Hautlieu, 'announce that one is near, more able than I am to direct us in this matter. I must go forward and speak with him; and this man, our guide, will remain by you for a little space; nor, when he quits your bridle, need you wait for any other signal, but ride forward on the woodland path, and obey the advice and directions which will be given you.'

'Stay! stay! Sister Ursula!' cried the Lady de Berkely—'abandon me not in this moment of uncertainty and distress!'

'It must be, for the sake of both,' returned Margaret de Hautlieu. 'I also am in uncertainty—I also am in distress—and patience and obedience are the only virtues which can save us both.'

So saying, she struck her horse with the riding rod, and, moving briskly forward, disappeared among the boughs of a tangled thicket. The Lady of Berkely would have followed her companion, but the cavalier who attended them laid a strong hand upon the bridle of her palfrey, with a look which implied that he would not permit her to proceed in that direction. Terrified, therefore, though she could not exactly state a reason why, the Lady of Berkely remained with her eyes fixed upon the thicket, instinctively, as it were, expecting to see a band of English archers, or rugged Scottish insurgents, issue from its tangled skirts, and doubtful which she should have most considered as the objects of her terror. In the distress of her uncertainty, she again attempted to move forward, but the stern check which her attendant again bestowed upon her bridle, proved sufficiently that, in restraining her wishes, the stranger was not likely to spare the strength which he certainly possessed. At length, after some ten minutes had elapsed, the cavalier withdrew his hand from her bridle, and, pointing with his lance towards the thicket, through which there winded a narrow, scarce visible path, seemed to intimate to the lady that her road lay in that direction, and that he would no longer prevent her following it.

'Do you not go with me?' said the lady, who, having been accustomed to this man's company since they left the convent, had by degrees come to look upon him as a sort of protector. He, however, gravely shook his head, as if to excuse complying with a request which it was not in his power to grant; and, turning his steed in a different direction, retired at a pace which soon carried him from her sight. She had then no alternative but to take the path of the thicket, which had been followed by Margaret de Hautlieu, nor did she pursue it long before coming in sight of a singular spectacle.

The trees grew wider as the lady advanced, and when she entered the thicket, she perceived that, though hedged in as it were by an enclosure of copsewood, it was in the interior altogether occupied by a few of the magnificent trees, such as seemed to have been the ancestors of the forest, and which, though few in number, were sufficient to overshade all the unoccupied ground by the great extent of their complicated branches. Beneath one of these lay stretched something of a grey colour, which, as it drew itself together, exhibited the figure of a man sheathed in armour, but strangely accoutred, and in a manner so bizarre, as to indicate some of the wild fancies peculiar to the knights of that period. His armour was ingeniously painted, so as to represent a skeleton; the ribs being constituted by the corselet and its back-piece. The shield represented an owl with its wings spread, a device which was repeated upon the helmet, which appeared to be completely covered by an image of the same bird of ill omen. But that which was particularly calculated to excite surprise in the spectator, was the great height and thinness of the figure, which, as it arose from the ground, and placed itself in an erect posture, seemed rather to resemble an apparition in the act of extricating itself from the grave, than that of an ordinary man rising upon his feet. The horse, too, upon which the lady rode, started back and snorted, either at the sudden change of posture of this ghastly specimen of chivalry, or disagreeably affected by some odour which accompanied his presence. The lady herself manifested some alarm, for, although she did not utterly believe she was in the presence of a supernatural being, yet, among all the strange half-frantic disguises of chivalry, this was assuredly the most uncouth which she had ever seen; and, considering how often the knights of the period pushed their dreamy fancies to the borders of insanity, it seemed at best no very safe adventure to meet one accoutred in the emblems of the King of Terrors himself, alone, and in the midst of a wild forest. Be the knight's character and purposes what they might, she resolved, however, to accost him in the language and manner observed in romances upon such occasions, in the hope even that if he

were a madman he might prove a peaceable one and accessible to civility.

'Sir Knight,' she said, in as firm a tone as she could assume, 'right sorry am I, if, by my hasty approach, I have disturbed your solitary meditations. My horse, sensible, I think, of the presence of yours, brought me hither, without my being aware whom or what I was to encounter.'

'I am one,' answered the stranger, in a solemn tone, 'whom few men seek to meet, till the time comes that they can avoid me no longer.'

'You speak, Sir Knight,' replied the Lady de Berkely, 'according to the dismal character of which it has pleased you to assume the distinction. May I appeal to one whose exterior is so formidable, for the purpose of requesting some directions to guide me through this wild wood; as, for instance, what is the name of the nearest castle, town, or hostelry, and by what course am I best likely to reach such?'

'It is a singular audacity,' answered the Knight of the Tomb, 'that would enter into conversation with him who is termed the Inexorable, the Unsparing, and the Pitiless, whom even the most miserable forbears to call to his assistance, lest his prayers should be too soon answered.'

'Sir Knight,' replied the Lady Augusta, 'the character which you have assumed, unquestionably for good reasons, dictates to you a peculiar course of speech; but although your part is a sad one, it does not, I should suppose, render it necessary for you to refuse those acts of civility to which you must have bound yourself in taking the high vows of chivalry.'

'If you will trust to my guidance.' replied the ghastly figure, 'there is only one condition upon which I can grant you the information which you require; and that is, that you follow my footsteps without any questions asked as to the tendency of our journey.'

'I suppose I must submit to your conditions,' she answered, 'if you are indeed pleased to take upon yourself the task of being my guide. In my heart I conceive you to be one of the unhappy gentlemen of Scotland, who are now in arms, as they say, for the defence of their liberties. A rash undertaking has brought me within the sphere of your influence, and now the only favour I have to request of you, against whom I never did nor planned any evil, is the guidance which your knowledge of the country permits you easily to afford me in my way to the frontiers of England. Believe that what I may see of your haunts or of your practices, shall be to me things invisible, as if they were actually concealed by the sepulchre itself, of the king of which it has pleased you to assume the attributes; and if a sum of money, enough to be the ransom of a wealthy earl, will purchase such a favour at need, such a ransom will be frankly paid, and with as much fidelity as ever it was rendered by a prisoner to the knight by whom he was taken. Do not reject me, princely Bruce—noble Douglas—if indeed it is to either of these that I address myself in this my last extremity—men speak of both as fearful enemies, but generous knights and faithful friends. Let me entreat you to remember how much you would wish your own friends and connections to meet with compassion under similar circumstances, at the hands of the knights of England.'

'And have they done so?' replied the knight, in a voice more gloomy than before, 'or do you act wisely, while imploring the protection of one whom you believe to be a true Scottish knight, for no other reason than the extreme and extravagant misery of his appearance;—is it, I say, well or wise to remind him of the mode in which the lords of England have treated the lovely maidens and the high-born dames of Scotland? Have not their prison cages been suspended from the battlements of castles, that their captivity might be kept in view of every base burgher, who should desire to look upon the miseries of the noblest peeresses, yea, even the Queen of Scotland?* Is this a recollection which can inspire a Scottish knight with compassion towards an English lady? or is it a thought which can do aught but swell the deeply sworn hatred of Edward Plantagenet, the author of these evils, that boils in every drop of Scottish blood which still feels the throb of life? No;—it is all you can expect, if, cold and pitiless as the sepulchre I represent, I leave you unassisted in the helpless condition in which you describe yourself to be.'

'You will not be so inhuman,' replied the lady; 'in doing so you must surrender every right to honest fame, which you have won either by sword or lance. You must surrender every pretence to that justice which affects the merit of supporting the weak against the strong. You must make it your principle to avenge the wrongs and tyranny of Edward Plantagenet upon the dames and damosels of England, who have neither access to his councils, nor perhaps give him their approbation in his wars against Scotland.'

'It would not, then,' said the Knight of the Sepulchre, 'induce you to depart from your request, should I tell you the evils to which you would subject yourself should we fall into the hands of the English troops, and should they find you under such ill-omened protection as my own?'

'Be assured,' said the lady, 'the consideration of such an event does not in the least shake my resolution, or desire of confiding in your protection. You may probably know who I am, and may judge how far even Edward would hold himself entitled to extend punishment towards me.'

'How am I to know you,' replied the ghastly cavalier, 'or your circumstances? They must be extraordinary indeed, if they could form a check, either of justice or humanity, upon the revengeful feelings of Edward. All who know him are well assured that it is no ordinary motive that will induce him to depart from the indulgence of his evil temper. But be it as it may, you, lady, if a lady you be, throw yourself as a burden upon me, and I must discharge myself of my trust as I best may; for this purpose you must be guided implicitly by my directions, which will be given after the fashion of

* The queen of Robert the Bruce, and the Countess of Buchan, by whom, as one of Macduff's descent, he was crowned at Scone, were secured in the manner described.

those of the spiritual world, being intimations, rather than detailed instructions for your conduct, and expressed rather by commands, than by any reason or argument. In this way it is possible that I may be of service to you; in any other case, it is most likely that I may fail you at need, and melt from your side like a phantom which dreads the approach of day.'

'You cannot be so cruel!' answered the lady. 'A gentleman, a knight, and a nobleman—and I persuade myself I speak to all—hath duties which he cannot abandon.'

'He has, I grant it, and they are most sacred to me,' answered the Spectral Knight. 'But I have also duties whose obligations are doubly binding, and to which I must sacrifice those which would otherwise lead me to devote myself to your rescue. The only question is whether you feel inclined to accept my protection on the limited terms on which alone I can extend it, or whether you deem it better that each go their own way, and limit themselves to their own resources, and trust the rest to Providence?'

'Alas!' replied the lady, 'beset and hard pressed as I am, to ask me to form a resolution for myself, is like calling on the wretch in the act of falling from a precipice, to form a calm judgment by what twig he may best gain the chance of breaking his fall. His answer must necessarily be, that he will cling to that which he can easiest lay hold of, and trust the rest to Providence. I accept therefore your offer of protection in the modified way you are pleased to limit it, and I put my faith in Heaven and in you. To aid me effectually, however, you must know my name and my circumstances.'

'All these,' answered the Knight of the Sepulchre, 'have already been told me by your late companion; for deem not, young lady, that either beauty, rank, extended domains, unlimited wealth, or the highest accomplishments, can weigh anything in the consideration of him who wears the trappings of the tomb, and whose affections and desires are long buried in the charnel-house.'

'May your faith,' said the Lady Augusta de Berkely, 'be as steady as your words appear severe, and I submit to your guidance, without the least doubt or fear that it will prove otherwise than as I venture to hope.'

CHAPTER XV.

Like the dog following its master, when engaged in training him to the sport in which he desires he should excel, the Lady Augusta felt herself occasionally treated with a severity, calculated to impress upon her the most implicit obedience and attention to the Knight of the Tomb, in whom she had speedily persuaded herself she saw a principal man among the retainers of Douglas if not James of Douglas himself. Still, however, the ideas which the lady had formed of the redoubted Douglas, were those of a knight highly accomplished in the duties of chivalry, devoted in particular to the service of the fair sex, and altogether unlike the personage with whom she found herself so strangely united, or rather for the present enthralled to. Nevertheless, when, as if to abridge further communication, he turned short into one of the mazes of the wood, and seemed to adopt a pace, which, from the nature of the ground, the horse on which the Lady Augusta was mounted had difficulty to keep up with, she followed him with the alarm and speed of the young spaniel, which, from fear rather than fondness, endeavours to keep up with the track of its severe master. The simile, it is true, is not a very polite one, nor entirely becoming an age when women were worshipped with a certain degree of devotion; but such circumstances as the present were also rare, and the Lady Augusta de Berkely could not but persuade herself that the terrible champion, whose name had been so long the theme of her anxiety, and the terror indeed of the whole country, might be able, some way or other, to accomplish her deliverance. She therefore exerted herself to the utmost, so as to keep pace with the phantom-like apparition, and followed the knight, as the evening shadow keeps watch upon the belated rustic.

As the lady obviously suffered under the degree of exertion necessary to keep her palfrey from stumbling in these steep and broken paths, the Knight of the Tomb slackened his pace, looked anxiously around him, and muttered apparently to himself, though probably intended for his companion's ear, 'There is no occasion for so much haste.'

He proceeded at a slower rate, until they seemed to be on the brink of a ravine, being one of many irregularities on the surface of the ground, effected by the sudden torrents peculiar to that country, and which, winding among the trees and copsewood, formed, as it were, a net of places of concealment, opening into each other, so that there was perhaps no place in the world so fit for the purpose of ambuscade. The spot where the Borderer Turnbull had made his escape at the hunting match, was one specimen of this broken country, and perhaps connected itself with the various thickets and passes through which the knight and pilgrim occasionally seemed to take their way, though that ravine was at a considerable distance from their present route.

Meanwhile the knight led the way, as if rather with the purpose of bewildering the Lady Augusta amidst these interminable woods, than following any exact or fixed path. Here they ascended, and anon appeared to descend in the same direction, finding only boundless wildernesses, and varied combinations of tangled woodland scenery. Such part of the country as seemed arable, the knight appeared carefully to avoid; yet he could not direct his course with so much certainty but that he occasionally crossed the path of inhabitants and cultivators, who showed a consciousness of so singular a presence, but never, as the lady observed, evinced any symptoms of recognition. The inference was obvious, that the Spectre Knight was known in the country, and that he possessed adherents or accomplices there, who were at least so far his friends, as to avoid giving any alarm, which might be the means of his discovery. The well-imitated cry of the night-

owl, too frequent a guest in the wilderness that its call should be a subject of surprise, seemed to be a signal generally understood among them, for it was heard in different parts of the wood; and the Lady Augusta, experienced in such journeys by her former travels under the guidance of the minstrel Bertram, was led to observe that, on hearing such wild notes, her guide changed the direction of his course, and betook himself to paths which led through deeper wilds and more impenetrable thickets. This happened so often, that a new alarm came upon the unfortunate pilgrim, which suggested other motives of terror. Was she not the confidant, and almost the tool, of some artful design, laid with a view to an extensive operation, which was destined to terminate, as the efforts of Douglas had before done, in the surprise of his hereditary castle, the massacre of the English garrison—and, finally, in the dishonour and death of that Sir John de Walton upon whose fate she had long believed, or taught herself to believe, that her own was dependent?

It no sooner flashed across the mind of the Lady Augusta that she was engaged in some such conspiracy with a Scottish insurgent, than she shuddered at the consequences of the dark transactions in which she had now become involved, and which appeared to have a tendency so very different from what she had at first apprehended.

The hours of the morning of this remarkable day, being that of Palm Sunday, were thus drawn out in wandering from place to place; while the Lady de Berkely occasionally interposed by petitions for liberty, which she endeavoured to express in the most moving and pathetic manner, and by offers of wealth and treasures, to which no answer whatever was returned by her strange guide.

At length, as if worn out by his captive's importunity, the knight, coming close up to the bridle-rein of the Lady Augusta, said in a solemn tone,—

'I am, as you may well believe, none of those knights who roam through wood and wild, seeking adventures, by which I may obtain grace in the eyes of a fair lady; yet will I to a certain degree grant the request which thou dost solicit so anxiously, and the arbitration of thy fate shall depend upon the pleasure of him to whose will thou hast expressed thyself ready to submit thine own. I will, on our arrival at the place of our destination, which is now at hand, write to Sir John de Walton, and send my letter, together with thy fair self, by a special messenger. He will, no doubt, speedily attend our summons, and thou shalt thyself be satisfied, that even he who has as yet appeared deaf to entreaty, and insensible to earthly affections, has still some sympathy for beauty and for virtue. I will put the choice of safety, and thy future happiness, into thine own hands, and those of the man whom thou hast chosen; and thou mayst select which thou wilt betwixt those and misery.'

While he thus spoke, one of those ravines or clefts in the earth seemed to yawn before them, and, entering it at the upper end, the Spectre Knight, with an attention which he had not yet shown, guided the lady's courser by the rein down the broken and steep path by which alone the bottom of the tangled dingle was accessible.

When placed on firm ground, after the dangers of a descent in which her palfrey seemed to be sustained by the personal strength and address of the singular being who had hold of the bridle, the lady looked with some astonishment at a place so well adapted for concealment as that which she had now reached. It appeared evident that it was used for this purpose, for more than one stifled answer was given to a very low bugle-note emitted by the Knight of the Tomb; and when the same note was repeated, about half-a-score of armed men, some wearing the dress of soldiers, others those of shepherds and agriculturists, showed themselves imperfectly, as if acknowledging the summons.

CHAPTER XVI.

'HAIL to you, my gallant friends!' said the Knight of the Tomb to his companions, who seemed to welcome him with the eagerness of men engaged in the same perilous undertaking. 'The winter has passed over, the festival of Palm Sunday is come, and as surely as the ice and snow of this season shall not remain to chill the earth through the ensuing summer, so surely we, in a few hours, keep our word to those Southron braggarts, who think their language of boasting and malice has as much force over our Scottish bosoms as the blast possesses over the autumn fruits; but it is not so. While we choose to remain concealed, they may as vainly seek to descry us, as a housewife would search for the needle she has dropped among the withered foliage of yon gigantic oak. Yet a few hours, and the lost needle shall become the exterminating sword of the Genius of Scotland, avenging ten thousand injuries, and especially the life of the gallant Lord Douglas, cruelly done to death as an exile from his native country.'

An exclamation between a yell and a groan burst from the assembled retainers of Douglas, upon being reminded of the recent death of their chieftain; while they seemed at the same time sensible of the necessity of making little noise, lest they should give the alarm to some of the numerous English parties which were then traversing different parts of the forest. The acclamation, so cautiously uttered, had scarce died away in silence, when the Knight of the Tomb, or, to call him by his proper name, Sir James Douglas, again addressed his handful of faithful followers.

'One effort, my friends, may yet be made to end our strife with the Southron without bloodshed. Fate has within a few hours thrown into my power the young heiress of Berkely, for whose sake it is said Sir John de Walton keeps with such obstinacy the castle which is mine by inheritance. Is there one among you who dare go, as the honourable escort of Augusta de Berkely, bearing a letter, explaining the terms on which I am willing to restore her to her lover, to freedom, and to her English lordships?'

'If there is none other,' said a tall man, dressed in the tattered attire of a woodsman,

and being, in fact, no other than the very Michael Turnbull who had already given so extraordinary a proof of his undaunted manhood, 'I will gladly be the person who will be the lady's henchman on this expedition.'

'Thou art never wanting,' said the Douglas, 'where a manly deed is to be done; but remember, this lady must pledge to us her word and oath that she will hold herself our faithful prisoner, rescue or no rescue; that she will consider herself as pledged for the life, freedom, and fair usage of Michael Turnbull; and that if Sir John de Walton refuse my terms, she must hold herself obliged to return with Turnbull to our presence, in order to be disposed of at our pleasure.'

There was much in these conditions which struck the Lady Augusta with natural doubt and horror; nevertheless, strange as it may seem, the declaration of the Douglas gave a species of decision to her situation, which might have otherwise been unattainable; and from the high opinion which she entertained of the Douglas's chivalry, she could not bring herself to think that any part which he might play in the approaching drama would be other than that which a perfect good knight would, under all circumstances, maintain towards his enemy. Even with respect to De Walton, she felt herself relieved of a painful difficulty. The idea of her being discovered by the knight himself, in a male disguise, had preyed upon her spirits; and she felt as if guilty of a departure from the laws of womanhood, in having extended her favour towards him beyond maidenly limits; a step, too, which might tend to lessen her in the eyes of the lover for whom she had hazarded so much.

> The heart, she said, is lightly prized,
> That is but lightly won;
> And long shall mourn the heartless man,
> That leaves his love too soon.

On the other hand, to be brought before him as a prisoner, was indeed a circumstance equally perplexing and unpleasing, but it was one which was beyond her control, and the Douglas, into whose hands she had fallen, appeared to her to represent the deity in the play, whose entrance was almost sufficient to bring its perplexities to a conclusion; she therefore not unwillingly submitted to take what oaths and promises were required by the party in whose hands she found herself, and accordingly engaged to be a true prisoner, whatever might occur. Meantime she strictly obeyed the directions of those who had her motions at command, devoutly praying that circumstances, in themselves so adverse, might nevertheless work together for the safety of her lover and her own freedom.

A pause ensued, during which a slight repast was placed before the Lady Augusta, who was well-nigh exhausted with the fatigues of her journey.

Douglas and his partisans meanwhile whispered together, as if unwilling she should hear their conference; while, to purchase their goodwill, if possible, she studiously avoided every appearance of listening.

After some conversation, Turnbull, who appeared to consider the lady as peculiarly his charge, said to her in a harsh voice, 'Do not fear, lady; no wrong shall be done you; nevertheless, you must be content for a space to be blindfolded.'

She submitted to this in silent terror; and the trooper, wrapping part of a mantle round her head, did not assist her to remount her palfrey, but lent her his arm to support her in this blinded state.

CHAPTER XVII.

The ground which they traversed was, as Lady Augusta could feel, very broken and uneven, and sometimes, as she thought, encumbered with ruins, which were difficult to surmount. The strength of her comrade assisted her forward on such occasions; but his help was so roughly administered, that the lady once or twice, in fear or suffering, was compelled to groan or sigh heavily, whatever was her desire to suppress such evidence of the apprehension which she underwent, or the pain which she endured. Presently, upon an occasion of this kind, she was distinctly sensible that the rough woodsman was removed from her side, and another of the party substituted in his stead, whose voice, more gentle than that of his companions, she thought she had lately heard.

'Noble lady,' were the words, 'fear not the slightest injury at our hands, and accept of my ministry instead of that of my henchman, who has gone forward with our letter; do not think me presuming on my situation if I bear you in my arms through ruins where you could not easily move alone and blindfold.'

At the same time the Lady Augusta Berkely felt herself raised from the earth in the strong arms of a man, and borne onward with the utmost gentleness, without the necessity of making those painful exertions which had been formerly required. She was ashamed of her situation; but, however delicate, it was no time to give vent to complaints, which might have given offence to persons whom it was her interest to conciliate. She therefore submitted to necessity, and heard the following words whispered in her ear,—

'Fear nothing; there is no evil intended you; nor shall Sir John de Walton, if he loves you as you deserve at his hand, receive any harm on our part. We call on him but to do justice to ourselves and to you; and be assured you will best accomplish your own happiness by aiding our views, which are equally in favour of your wishes and your freedom.'

The Lady Augusta would have made some answer to this, but her breath, betwixt fear and the speed with which she was transported, refused to permit her to use intelligible accents. Meantime she began to be sensible that she was enclosed within some building, and probably a ruinous one — for although the mode of her transportation no longer permitted her to ascertain the nature of her path in any respect distinctly, yet the absence of the external air— which was, however, sometimes excluded, and sometimes admitted in furious gusts—intimated

that she was conducted through buildings partly entire, and in other places admitting the wind through wide rents and gaps. In one place it seemed to the lady as if she passed through a considerable body of people, all of whom observed silence, although there was sometimes heard among them a murmur, to which every one present in some degree contributed, although the general sound did not exceed a whisper. Her situation made her attend to every circumstance, and she did not fail to observe that these persons made way for him who bore her, until at length she became sensible that he descended by the regular steps of a stair, and that she was now alone excepting his company. Arrived, as it appeared to the lady, on more level ground, they proceeded on their singular road by a course which appeared neither direct nor easy, and through an atmosphere which was close to a smothering degree, and felt at the same time damp and disagreeable, as if from the vapours of a new-made grave. Her guide again spoke.

'Bear up, Lady Augusta, for a little longer, and continue to endure that atmosphere which must be one day common to us all. By the necessity of my situation, I must resign my present office to your original guide, and can only give you my assurance, that neither he, nor any one else, shall offer you the least incivility or insult—and on this you may rely, on the faith of a man of honour.'

He placed her, as he said these words, upon the soft turf, and, to her infinite refreshment, made her sensible that she was once more in the open air, and free from the smothering atmosphere which had before oppressed her like that of a charnel-house. At the same time, she breathed in a whisper an anxious wish that she might be permitted to disencumber herself from the folds of the mantle, which excluded almost the power of breathing, though intended only to prevent her seeing by what road she travelled. She immediately found it unfolded, agreeably to her request, and hastened, with uncovered eyes, to take note of the scene around her.

It was overshadowed by thick oak-trees, among which stood some remnants of buildings, or what might have seemed such, being perhaps the same in which she had been lately wandering. A clear fountain of living water bubbled forth from under the twisted roots of one of those trees, and offered the lady the opportunity of a draught of the pure element, and in which she also bathed her face, which had received more than one scratch in the course of her journey, in spite of the care, and almost the tenderness, with which she had latterly been borne along. The cool water speedily stopped the bleeding of those trifling injuries, and the application served at the same time to recall the scattered senses of the damsel herself. Her first idea was, whether an attempt to escape, if such should appear possible, was not advisable. A moment's reflection, however, satisfied her that such a scheme was not to be thought of; and such second thoughts were confirmed by the approach of the gigantic form of the huntsman Turnbull, the rough tones of whose voice were heard before his figure was obvious to her eye.

'Were you impatient for my return, fair lady? Such as I,' he continued, in an ironical tone of voice, 'who are foremost in the chase of wild stags and sylvan cattle, are not in use to lag behind, when fair ladies like you are the objects of pursuit; and if I am not so constant in my attendance as you might expect, believe me, it is because I was engaged in another matter, to which I must sacrifice for a little even the duty of attending on you.'

'I offer no resistance,' said the lady; 'forbear, however, in discharging thy duty, to augment my uneasiness by thy conversation, for thy master hath pledged me his word that he will not suffer me to be alarmed or ill treated.'

'Nay, fair one,' replied the huntsman, 'I ever thought it was fit to make interest by soft words with fair ladies; but if you like it not, I have no such pleasure in hunting for fine holiday terms, but that I can with equal ease hold myself silent. Come, then, since we must wait upon this lover of yours ere morning closes, and learn his last resolution touching a matter which is become so strangely complicated. I will hold no more intercourse with you as a female, but talk to you as a person of sense, although an Englishwoman.'

'You will,' replied the lady, 'best fulfil the intentions of those by whose orders you act, by holding no society with me whatever, otherwise than is necessary in the character of guide.'

The man lowered his brows, yet seemed to assent to what the Lady of Berkely proposed, and remained silent as they for some time pursued their course, each pondering over their own share of meditation, which probably turned upon matters essentially different. At length the loud blast of a bugle was heard at no great distance from the unsocial fellow-travellers. 'That is the person we seek,' said Turnbull; 'I know his blast from any other who frequents this forest, and my orders are to bring you to speech of him.'

The blood darted rapidly through the lady's veins, at the thought of being thus unceremoniously presented to the knight in whose favour she had confessed a rash preference, more agreeable to the manners of those times, when exaggerated sentiments often inspired actions of extravagant generosity, than in our days, when everything is accounted absurd which does not turn upon a motive connected with the immediate selfish interests of the actor himself. When Turnbull, therefore, winded his horn, as if in answer to the blast which they had heard, the lady was disposed to fly at the first impulse of shame and of fear. Turnbull perceived her intention, and caught hold of her with no very gentle grasp, saying—'Nay, lady; it is to be understood that you play your own part in the drama, which, unless you continue on the stage, will conclude unsatisfactorily to us all, in a combat at outrance between your lover and me, when it will appear which of us is most worthy of your favour.'

'I will be patient,' said the lady, bethinking her that even this strange man's presence, and the compulsion which he appeared to use towards her, was a sort of excuse to her female scruples for coming into the presence of her lover, at least at her first appearance before him, in a

disguise which her feelings confessed was not extremely decorous, or reconcilable to the dignity of her sex.

The moment after these thoughts had passed through her mind, the tramp of a horse was heard approaching; and Sir John de Walton, pressing through the trees, became aware of the presence of his lady, captive, as it seemed, in the grasp of a Scottish outlaw, who was only known to him by his former audacity at the hunting-match.

His surprise and joy only supplied the knight with those hasty expressions—'Caitiff, let go thy hold! or die in thy profane attempt to control the motions of one whom the very sun in heaven should be proud to obey.' At the same time, apprehensive that the huntsman might hurry the lady from his sight by means of some entangled path—such as upon a former occasion had served him for escape—Sir John de Walton dropped his cumbrous lance, of which the trees did not permit him the perfect use, and, springing from his horse, approached Turnbull with his drawn sword.

The Scotchman, keeping his left hand still upon the lady's mantle, uplifted with his right his battle-axe, or Jedwood staff, for the purpose of parrying and returning the blow of his antagonist, but the lady spoke.

'Sir John de Walton,' she said, 'for Heaven's sake, forbear all violence, till you hear upon what pacific object I am brought hither, and by what peaceful means these wars may be put an end to. This man, though an enemy of yours, has been to me a civil and respectful guardian; and I entreat you to forbear him while he speaks the purpose for which he has brought me hither.'

'To speak of compulsion and the Lady de Berkely in the same breath, would itself be cause enough for instant death,' said the governor of Douglas Castle; 'but you command, lady, and I spare his insignificant life, although I have causes of complaint against him, the least of which were good warrant, had he a thousand lives, for the forfeiture of them all.'

'John de Walton,' replied Turnbull, 'this lady well knows that no fear of thee operates in my mind to render this a peaceful meeting; and were I not withheld by other circumstances of great consideration to the Douglas as well as thyself, I should have no more fear in facing the utmost thou couldst do, than I have now in levelling that sapling to the earth it grows upon.'

So saying, Michael Turnbull raised his battle-axe, and struck from a neighbouring oak-tree a branch, well-nigh as thick as a man's arm, which (with all its twigs and leaves) rushed to the ground between De Walton and the Scotchman, giving a singular instance of the keenness of his weapon, and the strength and dexterity with which he used it.

'Let there be truce, then, between us, good fellow,' said Sir John de Walton, 'since it is the lady's pleasure that such should be the case, and let me know what thou hast to say to me respecting her.'

'On that subject,' said Turnbull, 'my words are few, but mark them, Sir Englishman. The Lady Augusta Berkely, wandering in this country, has become a prisoner of the noble Lord Douglas, the rightful inheritor of the castle and lordship, and he finds himself obliged to attach to the liberty of this lady the following conditions, being in all respects such as good and lawful warfare entitles a knight to exact. That is to say, in all honour and safety the Lady Augusta shall be delivered to Sir John de Walton, or those whom he shall name for the purpose of receiving her. On the other hand, the Castle of Douglas itself, together with all outposts or garrisons thereunto belonging, shall be made over and surrendered by Sir John de Walton, in the same situation, and containing the same provisions and artillery, as are now within their walls; and the space of a month of truce shall be permitted to Sir James Douglas and Sir John de Walton further to regulate the terms of surrender on both parts, having first plighted their knightly word and oath, that in the exchange of the honourable lady for the foresaid castle, lies the full import of the present agreement, and that every other subject of dispute shall, at the pleasure of the noble knights foresaid, be honourably compounded and agreed betwixt them; or, at their pleasure, settled knightly by single combat according to usage, and in a fair field, before any honourable person that may possess power enough to preside.'

It is not easy to conceive the astonishment of Sir John de Walton at hearing the contents of this extraordinary cartel; he looked towards the Lady of Berkely with that aspect of despair with which a criminal may be supposed to see his guardian angel prepare for departure. Through her mind also similar ideas flowed, as if they contained a concession of what she had considered as the summit of her wishes, but under conditions disgraceful to her lover, like the cherub's fiery sword of yore, which was a barrier between our first parents and the blessings of Paradise. Sir John de Walton, after a moment's hesitation, broke silence in these words:—

'Noble lady, you may be surprised if a condition be imposed upon me, having for its object your freedom; and if Sir John de Walton, already standing under those obligations to you, which he is proud of acknowledging, should yet hesitate on accepting, with the utmost eagerness, what must insure your restoration to freedom and independence; but so it is, that the words now spoken have thrilled in mine ear without reaching to my understanding, and I must pray the Lady of Berkely for pardon if I take time to reconsider them for a short space.'

'And I,' replied Turnbull, 'have only power to allow you half-an-hour for the consideration of an offer, in accepting which, methinks, you should jump shoulder-height, instead of asking any time for reflection. What does this cartel exact, save what your duty as a knight implicitly obliges you to? You have engaged yourself to become the agent of the tyrant Edward, in holding Douglas Castle, as his commander, to the prejudice of the Scottish nation, and of the Knight of Douglas Dale, who never, as a community or as an individual, were guilty of the least injury towards you; you are therefore pro-

secuting a false path, unworthy of a good knight. On the other hand, the freedom and safety of your lady are now proposed to be pledged to you, with a full assurance of her liberty and honour, on consideration of your withdrawing from the unjust line of conduct in which you have suffered yourself to be imprudently engaged. If you persevere in it, you place your own honour, and the lady's happiness, in the hands of men whom you have done everything in your power to render desperate, and whom, thus irritated, it is most probable you may find such.'

'It is not from thee, at least,' said the knight, 'that I shall learn to estimate the manner in which Douglas will explain the laws of war, or De Walton receive them at his dictating.'

'I am not, then,' said Turnbull, 'received as a friendly messenger? Farewell, and think of this lady as being in any hands but those which are safe, while you make up at leisure your mind upon the message I have brought you. Come, madam, we must be gone.'

So saying, he seized upon the lady's hand, and pulled her, as if to force her to withdraw. The lady had stood motionless, and almost senseless, while these speeches were exchanged between the warriors; but when she felt the grasp of Michael Turnbull, she exclaimed, like one almost beside herself with fear—'Help me, De Walton!'

The knight, stung to instant rage, assaulted the Forester with the utmost fury, and dealt him with his long sword, almost at unawares, two or three heavy blows, by which he was so wounded that he sunk backwards in the thicket, and De Walton was about to despatch him, when he was prevented by the anxious cry of the lady—'Alas! De Walton, what have you done? This man was only an ambassador, and should have passed free from injury, while he confined himself to the delivery of what he was charged with; and if thou hast slain him, who knows how frightful may prove the vengeance exacted!'

The voice of the lady seemed to recover the huntsman from the effects of the blows he had received: he sprung on his feet, saying—'Never mind me, nor think of my becoming the means of making mischief. The knight, in his haste, spoke without giving me warning and defiance, which gave him an advantage which, I think, he would otherwise have scorned to have taken in such a case. I will renew the combat on fairer terms, or call another champion, as the knight pleases.' With these words he disappeared.

'Fear not, empress of De Walton's thoughts,' answered the knight, 'but believe that, if we regain together the shelter of Douglas Castle, and the safeguard of Saint George's Cross, thou mayst laugh at all. And if you can but pardon, what I shall never be able to forgive myself, the mole-like blindness which did not recognise the sun while under a temporary eclipse, the task cannot be named too hard for mortal valour to achieve, which I shall not willingly undertake, to wipe out the memory of my grievous fault.'

'Mention it no more,' said the lady; 'it is not at such a time as this, when our lives are for the moment at stake, that quarrels upon slighter topics are to be recurred to. I can tell you, if you do not yet know, that the Scots are in arms in this vicinity, and that even the earth has yawned to conceal them from the sight of your garrison.'

'Let it yawn, then,' said Sir John de Walton, 'and suffer every fiend in the infernal abyss to escape from his prison-house and reinforce our enemies—still, fairest, having received in thee a pearl of matchless price, my spurs shall be hacked from my heels by the basest scullion, if I turn my horse's head to the rear before the utmost force these ruffians can assemble, either upon earth or from underneath it. In thy name I defy them all to instant combat.'

As Sir John de Walton pronounced these last words in something of an exalted tone, a tall cavalier, arrayed in black armour of the simplest form, stepped forth from that part of the thicket where Turnbull had disappeared. 'I am,' he said, 'James of Douglas, and your challenge is accepted. I, the challenged, name the arms our knightly weapons as we now wear them, and our place of combat this field or dingle, called the Bloody Sykes, the time being instant, and the combatants, like true knights, foregoing each advantage on either side.'*

'So be it, in God's name,' said the English knight, who, though surprised at being called upon to so sudden an encounter with so formidable a warrior as young Douglas, was too proud to dream of avoiding the combat. Making a sign to the lady to retire behind him, that he might not lose the advantage which he had gained by setting her at liberty from the Forester, he drew his sword, and, with a deliberate and prepared attitude of offence, moved slowly to the encounter. It was a dreadful one, for the courage and skill both of the native Lord of Douglas Dale, and of De Walton, were among the most renowned of the times, and perhaps the world of chivalry could hardly have produced two knights more famous. Their blows fell as if urged by some mighty engine, where they were met and parried with equal strength and dexterity; nor seemed it likely, in the course of ten minutes' encounter, that an advantage would be gained by either combatant over the other. An instant they stopped by mutually implied assent, as it seemed, for the purpose of taking breath, during which Douglas said, 'I beg that this noble lady may understand that her own freedom is no way concerned in the present contest, which entirely regards the injustice done by this Sir John de Walton, and by his nation of England, to the memory of my father, and to my own natural rights.'

'You are generous, Sir Knight,' replied the lady; 'but in what circumstances do you place me, if you deprive me of my protector by death or captivity, and leave me alone in a foreign land?'

'If such should be the event of the combat,' replied Sir James, 'the Douglas himself, lady,

* The ominous name of Bloodmire-sink, or Syke, marks a narrow hollow to the north-west of Douglas Castle, from which it is distant about the third of a mile. Mr. Haddow states that, according to local tradition, the name was given in consequence of Sir James Douglas having at this spot intercepted and slain part of the garrison of the castle, while De Walton was in command.

will safely restore thee to thy native land; for never did his sword do an injury for which he was not willing to make amends with the same weapon; and if Sir John de Walton will make the slightest admission that he renounces maintaining the present strife, were it only by yielding up a feather from the plume of his helmet, Douglas will renounce every purpose on his part which can touch the lady's honour or safety, and the combat may be suspended until the national quarrel again brings us together.'

Sir John de Walton pondered a moment, and the lady, although she did not speak, looked at him with eyes which plainly expressed how much she wished that he would choose the less hazardous alternative. But the knight's own scruples prevented his bringing the case to so favourable an arbitrament.

'Never shall it be said of Sir John de Walton,' he replied, 'that he compromised, in the slightest degree, his own honour, or that of his country. This battle may end in my defeat, or rather death, and in that case my earthly prospects are closed, and I resign to Douglas, with my last breath, the charge of the Lady Augusta, trusting that he will defend her with his life, and find the means of replacing her with safety in the halls of her fathers. But while I survive, she may have a better, but will not need another protector than he who is honoured by being her own choice; nor will I yield up, were it a plume from my helmet, implying that I have maintained an unjust quarrel, either in the cause of England, or of the fairest of her daughters. Thus far alone I will concede to Douglas—an instant truce, provided the lady shall not be interrupted in her retreat to England, and the combat be fought out upon another day. The castle and territory of Douglas are the property of Edward of England, the governor in his name is the rightful governor, and on this point I will fight while my eyelids are unclosed.'

'Time flies,' said Douglas, 'without waiting for our resolves; nor is there any part of his motions of such value as that which is passing with every breath of vital air which we presently draw. Why should we adjourn till to-morrow that which can be as well finished to-day? Will our swords be sharper, or our arms stronger to wield them, than they are at this moment? Douglas will do all which knight can do to succour a lady in distress; but he will not grant to her knight the slightest mark of deference, which Sir John de Walton vainly supposes himself able to extort by force of arms.'

With these words, the knights engaged once more in mortal combat, and the lady felt uncertain whether she should attempt her escape through the devious paths of the wood, or abide the issue of this obstinate fight. It was rather her desire to see the fate of Sir John de Walton, than any other consideration, which induced her to remain, as if fascinated, upon the spot, where one of the fiercest quarrels ever fought was disputed by two of the bravest champions that ever drew sword. At last the lady attempted to put a stop to the combat, by appealing to the bells which began to ring for the service of the day, which was Palm Sunday.

'For Heaven's sake,' she said—'for your own sakes, and for that of lady's love, and the duties of chivalry, hold your hands only for an hour, and take chance, that where strength is so equal, means will be found of converting the truce into a solid peace. Think, this is Palm Sunday, and will you defile with blood such a peculiar festival of Christianity? Intermit your feud at least so far as to pass to the nearest church, bearing with you branches, not in the ostentatious mode of earthly conquerors, but as rendering due homage to the rules of the blessed Church, and the institutions of our holy religion.'

'I was on my road, fair lady, for that purpose, to the holy Church of Douglas,' said the Englishman, 'when I was so fortunate as to meet you at this place; nor do I object to proceed thither even now, holding truce for an hour, and I fear not to find there friends to whom I can commit you with assurance of safety, in case I am unfortunate in the combat which is now broken off, to be resumed after the service of the day.'

'I also assent,' said the Douglas, 'to a truce for such short space; nor do I fear that there may be good Christians enough at the church, who will not see their master overpowered by odds. Let us go thither, and each take the chance of what Heaven shall please to send us.'

From these words Sir John de Walton little doubted that Douglas had assured himself of a party among those who should there assemble; but he doubted not of so many of the garrison being present as would bridle every attempt at rising; and the risk, he thought, was worth incurring, since he should thereby secure an opportunity to place Lady Augusta de Berkely in safety, at least so far as to make her liberty depend on the event of a general conflict, instead of the precarious issue of a combat between himself and Douglas.

Both these distinguished knights were inwardly of opinion that the proposal of the lady, though it relieved them of their present conflict, by no means bound them to abstain from the consequences which an accession of force might add to their general strength, and each relied upon his superiority, in some degree provided for by their previous proceedings. Sir John de Walton made almost certain of meeting with several of his bands of soldiers, who were scouring the country and traversing the woods by his direction; and Douglas, it may be supposed, had not ventured himself in person, where a price was set upon his head, without being attended by a sufficient number of approved adherents, placed in more or less connection with each other, and stationed for mutual support. Each, therefore, entertained well-grounded hopes that, by adopting the truce proposed, he would insure himself an advantage over his antagonist, although neither exactly knew in what manner or to what extent this success was to be obtained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

His talk was of another world—his bodiments
Strange, doubtful, and mysterious; those who heard him
Listen'd as to a man in feverish dreams,
Who speaks of other objects than the present,
And mutters like to him who sees a vision.
OLD PLAY

ON the same Palm Sunday when De Walton and Douglas measured together their mighty swords, the minstrel Bertram was busied with the ancient Book of Prophecies, which we have already mentioned as the supposed composition of Thomas the Rhymer, but not without many anxieties as to the fate of his lady, and the events which were passing around him. As a minstrel he was desirous of an auditor to enter into the discoveries which he should make in that mystic volume, as well as to assist in passing away the time; Sir John de Walton had furnished him, in Gilbert Greenleaf the archer, with one who was well contented to play the listener 'from morn to dewy eve,' provided a flask of Gascon wine, or a stoup of good English ale, remained on the board. It may be remembered that De Walton, when he dismissed the minstrel from the dungeon, was sensible that he owed him some compensation for the causeless suspicion which had dictated his imprisonment, more particularly as he was a valued servant, and had shown himself the faithful confidant of the Lady Augusta de Berkely, and the person who was moreover likely to know all the motives and circumstances of her Scottish journey. To secure his good wishes was therefore politic; and De Walton had intimated to his faithful archer that he was to lay aside all suspicion of Bertram, but at the same time keep him in sight, and, if possible, in good humour with the governor of the castle and his adherents. Greenleaf accordingly had no doubt in his own mind that the only way to please a minstrel was to listen with patience and commendation to the lays which he liked best to sing, or the tales which he most loved to tell; and in order to insure the execution of his master's commands, he judged it necessary to demand of the butler such store of good liquor as could not fail to enhance the pleasure of his society.

Having thus fortified himself with the means of bearing a long interview with the minstrel, Gilbert Greenleaf proposed to confer upon him the bounty of an early breakfast, which, if it pleased him, they might wash down with a cup of sack, and, having his master's commands to show the minstrel anything about the castle which he might wish to see, refresh their over-wearied spirits by attending a part of the garrison of Douglas to the service of the day, which, as we have already seen, was of peculiar sanctity. Against such a proposal the minstrel, a good Christian by profession, and, by his connection with the Joyous Science, a good fellow, having no objections to offer, the two comrades, who had formerly little good-will towards each other, commenced their morning's repast on that fatal Palm Sunday with all manner of cordiality and good-fellowship.

'Do not believe, worthy minstrel,' said the archer, 'that my master in any respect disparages your worth or rank in referring you for company or conversation to so poor a man as myself. It is true I am no officer of this garrison; yet for an old archer, who, for these thirty years, has lived by bow and bowstring, I do not (Our Lady make me thankful!) hold less share in the grace of Sir John de Walton, the Earl of Pembroke, and other approved good soldiers, than many of those giddy young men on whom commissions are conferred, and to whom confidences are entrusted, not on account of what they have done, but what their ancestors have done before them. I pray you to notice among them one youth placed at our head in De Walton's absence, and who bears the honoured name of Aymer de Valence, being the same with that of the Earl of Pembroke, of whom I have spoken; this knight has also a brisk young page, whom men call Fabian Harbothel.'

'Is it to these gentlemen that your censure applies?' answered the minstrel; 'I should have judged differently, having never, in the course of my experience, seen a young man more courteous and amiable than the young knight you named.'

'I nothing dispute that it may be so,' said the archer, hastening to amend the false step which he had made; 'but in order that it should be so, it will be necessary that he conform to the usages of his uncle, taking the advice of experienced old soldiers in the emergencies which may present themselves; and not believing that the knowledge which it takes many years of observation to acquire can be at once conferred by the slap of the flat of a sword, and the magic words, "Rise up, Sir Arthur"—or however the case may be.'

'Doubt not, Sir Archer,' replied Bertram, 'that I am fully aware of the advantage to be derived from conversing with men of experience like you: it benefiteth men of every persuasion, and I myself am oft reduced to lament my want of sufficient knowledge of armorial bearings, signs, and cognisances, and would right fain have thy assistance, where I am a stranger alike to the names of places, of persons, and description of banners and emblems by which great families are distinguished from each other, so absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of my present task.'

'Pennons and banners,' answered the archer, 'I have seen right many, and can assign, as is a soldier's wont, the name of the leader to the emblem under which he musters his followers; nevertheless, worthy minstrel, I cannot presume to understand what you call prophecies, with or under warranted authority of old painted books, expositions of dreams, oracles, revelations, invocations of damned spirits, judicials, astrologicals, and other gross and palpable offences, whereby men, pretending to have the assistance of the devil, do impose upon the common people, in spite of the warnings of the Privy Council; not, however, that I suspect you, worthy minstrel, of busying yourself with these attempts to explain futurity, which are dangerous attempts, and may be truly said to be penal, and part of treason.'

'There is something in what you say,' replied the minstrel; 'yet it applieth not to books and manuscripts such as I have been consulting; part of which things therein written having already come to pass, authorize us surely to expect the completion of the rest; nor would I have much difficulty in showing you, from this volume, that enough has been already proved true, to entitle us to look with certainty to the accomplishment of that which remains.'

'I should be glad to hear that,' answered the archer, who entertained little more than a soldier's belief respecting prophecies and auguries, but yet cared not bluntly to contradict the minstrel upon such subjects, as he had been instructed by Sir John de Walton to comply with his humour. Accordingly the minstrel began to recite verses, which, in our time, the ablest interpreter could not make sense out of.

'When the cock crows, keep well his comb,
For the fox and the fulmart they are false both.
When the raven and the rook have rounded together,
And the kid in his cliff shall accord to the same,
Then shall they be bold, and soon to battle thereafter.
Then the birds of the raven rugs and reives,
And the leal men of Lothian are louping on their horse;
Then shall the poor people be spoiled full near,
And the Abbeys be burnt truly that stand upon Tweed;
They shall burn and slay, and great reif make;
There shall no poor man who say whose man he is:
Then shall the land be lawless, for love there is none.
Then falset shall have foot fully five years:
Then truth surely shall be tint, and none shall lippen to other;
The one cousing shall not trust the other,
Not the son the father, nor the father the son;
For to have his goods he would have him hanged.'
Etc. etc. etc.

The archer listened to these mystic prognostications, which were not the less wearisome that they were, in a considerable degree, unintelligible; at the same time subduing his Hotspur-like disposition to tire of the recitation, yet at brief intervals comforting himself with an application to the wine flagon, and enduring as he might what he neither understood nor took interest in. Meanwhile the minstrel proceeded with his explanation of the dubious and imperfect vaticinations of which we have given a sufficient specimen.

'Could you wish,' said he to Greenleaf, 'a more exact description of the miseries which have passed over Scotland in these latter days? Have not these the raven and rook, the fox and the fulmart, explained; either because the nature of the birds or beasts bears an individual resemblance to those of the knights who display them on their banners, or otherwise are bodied forth by actual blazonry on their shields, and come openly into the field to ravage and destroy? Is not the total disunion of the land plainly indicated by these words, that connections of blood shall be broken asunder, that kinsmen shall not trust each other, and that the father and son, instead of putting faith in their natural connection, shall seek each other's life, in order to enjoy his inheritance? The *leal men* of Lothian are distinctly mentioned as taking arms, and there is plainly allusion to the other events of these late Scottish troubles. The death of this last William is obscurely intimated under the type of a hound, which was that good lord's occasional cognisance.

'The hound that was harm'd then muzzled shall be,
Who loved him worst shall weep for his wreck;
Yet shall a whelp rise of the same race,
That rudely shall roar, and rule the whole north,
And quit the whole quarrel of old deeds done,
Though he from his hold be kept back awhile.
True Thomas told me this in a troublesome time,
In a harvest morning at Eldoun hills.'

'This hath a meaning, Sir Archer,' continued the minstrel, 'and which flies as directly to its mark as one of your own arrows, although there may be some want of wisdom in making the direct explication. Being, however, upon assurance with you, I do not hesitate to tell you that in my opinion this lion's whelp that waits its time, means this same celebrated Scottish prince, Robert the Bruce, who, though repeatedly defeated, has still, while hunted with blood-hounds, and surrounded by enemies of every sort, maintained his pretensions to the crown of Scotland, in despite of King Edward, now reigning.'

'Minstrel,' answered the soldier, 'you are my guest, and we have sat down together as friends to this simple meal in good comradeship. I must tell thee, however, though I am loth to disturb our harmony, that thou art the first who hast adventured to speak a word before Gilbert Greenleaf in favour of that outlawed traitor, Robert Bruce, who has by his seditions so long disturbed the peace of this realm. Take my advice, and be silent on this topic; for believe me, the sword of a true English archer will spring from its scabbard without consent of its master, should it hear aught said to the disparagement of bonnie Saint George and his Ruddy Cross; nor shall the authority of Thomas the Rhymer, or any other prophet in Scotland, England, or Wales, be considered as an apology for such unbecoming predictions.'

'I were loth to give offence at any time,' said the minstrel, 'much more to provoke you to anger, when I am in the very act of experiencing your hospitality. I trust, however, you will remember that I do not come your uninvited guest, and that if I speak to you of future events, I do so without having the least intention to add my endeavour to bring them to pass; for, God knows, it is many years since my sincere prayer has been for peace and happiness to all men, and particularly honour and happiness to the land of bowmen, in which I was born, and which I am bound to remember in my prayers beyond all other nations in the world.'

'It is well that you do so,' said the archer; 'for so you shall best maintain your bounden duty to the fair land of your birth, which is the richest that the sun shines upon. Something, however, I would know, if it suits with your pleasure to tell me, and that is, whether you find anything in these rude rhymes appearing to affect the safety of the Castle of Douglas, where we now are?—for mark me, Sir Minstrel, I have observed that these mouldering parchments, when or by whomsoever composed, have so far a certain coincidence with the truth, that when such predictions which they contain are spread abroad in

the country, and create rumours of plots, conspiracies, and bloody wars, they are very apt to cause the very mischances which they would be thought only to predict.'

'It were not very cautious in me,' said the minstrel, 'to choose a prophecy for my theme, which had reference to any attack on this garrison; for in such case I should, according to your ideas, lay myself under suspicion of endeavouring to forward what no person could more heartily regret than myself.'

'Take my word for it, good friend,' said the archer, 'that it shall not be thus with thee; for I neither will myself conceive ill of thee, nor report thee to Sir John de Walton as meditating harm against him or his garrison—nor, to speak truth, would Sir John de Walton be willing to believe any one who did. He thinks highly, and no doubt deservedly, of thy good faith towards thy lady, and would conceive it unjust to suspect the fidelity of one who has given evidence of his willingness to meet death rather than betray the least secret of his mistress.'

'In preserving her secret,' said Bertram, 'I only discharged the duty of a faithful servant, leaving it to her to judge how long such a secret ought to be preserved; for a faithful servant ought to think as little of the issue towards himself of the commission which he bears, as the band of flock silk concerns itself with the secret of the letter which it secures. And touching your question—I have no objections, although merely to satisfy your curiosity, to unfold to you that these old prophecies do contain some intimations of wars befalling in Douglas Dale, between an haggard, or wild hawk, which I take to be the cognisance of Sir John de Walton, and the three stars, or martlets, which is the cognisance of the Douglas; and more particulars I could tell of these onslaughts, did I know whereabouts is a place in these woods termed Bloody Sykes, the scene also, as I comprehend, of slaughter and death, between the followers of the three stars and those who hold the part of the Saxon, or King of England.'

'Such a place,' replied Gilbert Greenleaf, 'I have heard often mentioned by that name among the natives of these parts; nevertheless it is in vain to seek to discover the precise spot, as these wily Scots conceal from us with care everything respecting the geography of their country, as it is called by learned men; but we may here mention the Bloody Sykes, Bottomless Myre, and other places, as portentous names, to which their traditions attach some signification of war and slaughter. If it suits your wish, however, we can, on our way to the church, try to find this place called Bloody Sykes, which I doubt not we shall trace out long before the traitors who meditate an attack upon us will find a power sufficient for the attempt.'

Accordingly, the minstrel and archer, the latter of whom was by this time reasonably well refreshed with wine, marched out of the Castle of Douglas, without waiting for others of the garrison, resolving to seek the dingle bearing the ominous name of Bloody Sykes, concerning which the archer only knew that by mere accident he had heard of a place bearing such a name, at the hunting-match made under the auspices of Sir John de Walton, and knew that it lay in the woods somewhere near the town of Douglas, and in the vicinage of the castle.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hotspur. I cannot choose; sometimes he angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin, and his prophecies;
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clipt-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,
A couching lion and a ramping cat,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff,
As puts me from my faith.
KING HENRY IV.

THE conversation between the minstrel and the ancient archer naturally pursued a train somewhat resembling that of Hotspur and Glendower,* in which Gilbert Greenleaf by degrees took a larger share than was apparently consistent with his habits and education; but the truth was that, as he exerted himself to recall the recognisances of military chieftains, their war-cries, emblems, and other types by which they distinguished themselves in battle, and might undoubtedly be indicated in prophetic rhymes, he began to experience the pleasure which most men entertain when they find themselves unexpectedly possessed of a faculty which the moment calls upon them to employ, and renders them important in the possession of. The minstrel's sound good sense was certainly somewhat surprised at the inconsistencies sometimes displayed by his companion, as he was carried off by the willingness to make show of his newly-discovered faculty on the one hand, and, on the other, to call to mind the prejudices which he had nourished during his whole life against minstrels, who, with the train of legends and fables, were the more likely to be false, as being generally derived from the 'North Countrie.'

As they strolled from one glade of the forest to another, the minstrel began to be surprised at the number of Scottish votaries whom they met, and who seemed to be hastening to the church, and, as it appeared by the boughs which they carried, to assist in the ceremony of the day. To each of these the archer put a question respecting the existence of a place called Bloody Sykes, and where it was to be found—but all seemed either to be ignorant on the subject, or desirous of evading it, for which they found some pretext in the jolly archer's manner of interrogation, which savoured a good deal of the genial breakfast. The general answer was, that they knew no such place, or had other matters to attend to upon the morn of a holy-tide than answering frivolous questions. At last, when, in one or two instances, the answer of the Scottish almost approached to sullenness, the minstrel remarked it, observing that there was ever some mischief on foot when the people of this country could not find a civil answer to their betters, which is usually so ready among them, and that they appeared to be making a strong muster for the service of Palm Sunday.

'You will doubtless, Sir Archer,' continued the

* [In Shakespeare's *King Henry IV.*]

minstrel, 'make your report to your knight accordingly; for I promise you, that if you do not, I myself, whose lady's freedom is also concerned, will feel it my duty to place before Sir John de Walton the circumstances which make me entertain suspicion of this extraordinary confluence of Scottish men, and the surliness which has replaced their wonted courtesy of manners.'

'Tush, Sir Minstrel,' replied the archer, displeased at Bertram's interference, 'believe me, that armies have ere now depended on my report to the general, which has always been perspicuous and clear, according to the duties of war. Your walk, my worthy friend, has been in a separate department, such as affairs of peace, old songs, prophecies, and the like, in which it is far from my thoughts to contend with you; but credit me, it will be most for the reputation of both, that we do not attempt to interfere with what concerns each other.'

'It is far from my wish to do so,' replied the minstrel; 'but I would wish that a speedy return should be made to the castle, in order to ask Sir John de Walton's opinion of that which we have but just seen.'

'To this,' replied Greenleaf, 'there can be no objection; but, would you seek the governor at the hour which now is, you will find him most readily by going to the Church of Douglas, to which he regularly wends on occasions such as the present, with the principal part of his officers, to insure, by his presence, that no tumult arise (of which there is no little dread) between the English and the Scottish. Let us therefore hold to our original intention of attending the service of the day, and we shall rid ourselves of these entangled woods, and gain the shortest road to the Church of Douglas.'

'Let us go, then, with all despatch,' said the minstrel; 'and with the greater haste, that it appears to me that something has passed on this very spot this morning, which argues that the Christian peace due to the day has not been inviolably observed. What mean these drops of blood?' alluding to those which had flowed from the wounds of Turnbull—'Wherefore is the earth impressed with these deep dints, the footsteps of armed men advancing and retreating, doubtless, according to the chances of a fierce and heady conflict?'

'By Our Lady,' returned Greenleaf, 'I must own that thou seest clear. What were my eyes made of when they permitted thee to be the first discoverer of these signs of conflict? Here are feathers of a blue plume, which I ought to remember, seeing my knight assumed it, or at least permitted me to place it in his helmet, this morning, in sign of returning hope, from the liveliness of its colour. But here it lies, shorn from his head, and if I may guess, by no friendly hand. Come, friend, to the church—to the church—and thou shalt have my example of the manner in which De Walton ought to be supported when in danger.'

He led the way through the town of Douglas, entering at the southern gate, and up the very street in which Sir Aymer de Valence had charged the Phantom Knight.

We can now say more fully that the Church of Douglas had originally been a stately Gothic building, whose towers, arising high above the walls of the town, bore witness to the grandeur of its original construction. It was now partly ruinous, and the small portion of open space which was retained for public worship was fitted up in the family aisle where its deceased lords rested from worldly labours and the strife of war. From the open ground in the front of the building, their eye could pursue a considerable part of the course of the river Douglas, which approached the town from the south-west, bordered by a line of hills fantastically diversified in their appearance, and in many places covered with copsewood, which descended towards the valley, and formed a part of the tangled and intricate woodland by which the town was surrounded. The river itself, sweeping round the west side of the town, and from thence northward, supplied that large inundation or artificial piece of water which we have already mentioned. Several of the Scottish people, bearing willow branches, or those of yew, to represent the palms which were the symbol of the day, seemed wandering in the churchyard as if to attend the approach of some person of peculiar sanctity, or procession of monks and friars, come to render the homage due to the solemnity. At the moment almost that Bertram and his companion entered the churchyard, the Lady of Berkely, who was in the act of following Sir John de Walton into the church, after having witnessed his conflict with the young Knight of Douglas, caught a glimpse of her faithful minstrel, and instantly determined to regain the company of that old servant of her house and confidant of her fortunes, and trust to the chance afterwards of being rejoined by Sir John de Walton, with a sufficient party to provide for her safety, which she in no respect doubted it would be his care to collect. She darted away accordingly from the path in which she was advancing, and reached the place where Bertram, with his new acquaintance Greenleaf, was making some inquiries of the soldiers of the English garrison, whom the service of the day had brought there.

Lady Augusta Berkely, in the meantime, had an opportunity to say privately to her faithful attendant and guide, 'Take no notice of me, friend Bertram, but take heed, if possible, that we be not again separated from each other.' Having given him this hint, she observed that it was adopted by the minstrel, and that he presently afterwards looked round and set his eye upon her, as, muffled in her pilgrim's cloak, she slowly withdrew to another part of the cemetery, and seemed to halt until, detaching himself from Greenleaf, he should find an opportunity of joining her.

Nothing, in truth, could have more sensibly affected the faithful minstrel than the singular mode of communication which acquainted him that his mistress was safe, and at liberty to choose her own motions, and, as he might hope, disposed to extricate herself from the dangers which surrounded her in Scotland, by an immediate retreat to her own country and domain. He would gladly have approached and joined her, but she took an opportunity by a sign to caution him against doing so, while at the same time he remained somewhat apprehensive of the consequences of bringing her under the notice of

his new friend Greenleaf, who might perhaps think it proper to busy himself so as to gain some favour with the knight who was at the head of the garrison. Meantime the old archer continued his conversation with Bertram, while the minstrel, like many other men similarly situated, heartily wished that his well-meaning companion had been a hundred fathoms under ground, so his evanishment had given him licence to join his mistress; but all he had in his power was to approach her as near as he could without creating any suspicion.

'I would pray you, worthy minstrel,' said Greenleaf, after looking carefully round, 'that we may prosecute together the theme which we were agitating before we came hither; is it not your opinion that the Scottish natives have fixed this very morning for some of those dangerous attempts which they have repeatedly made, and which are so carefully guarded against by the governors placed in this district of Douglas by our good King Edward, our rightful sovereign?'

'I cannot see,' replied the minstrel, 'on what grounds you found such an apprehension, or what you see here in the churchyard different from that you talked of as we approached it, when you held me rather in scorn for giving way to some suspicions of the same kind.'

'Do you not see,' added the archer, 'the numbers of men with strange faces, and in various disguisements, who are thronging about these ancient ruins, which are usually so solitary? Yonder, for example, sits a boy who seems to shun observation, and whose dress, I will be sworn, has never been shaped in Scotland.'

'And if he is an English pilgrim,' replied the minstrel, observing that the archer pointed towards the Lady of Berkely, 'he surely affords less matter of suspicion.'

'I know not that,' said old Greenleaf; 'but I think it will be my duty to inform Sir John de Walton, if I can reach him, that there are many persons here, who in outward appearance neither belong to the garrison, nor to this part of the country.'

'Consider,' said Bertram, 'before you harass with accusation a poor young man, and subject him to the consequences which must necessarily attend upon suspicions of this nature, how many circumstances call forth men peculiarly to devotion at this period. Not only is this the time of the triumphal entrance of the Founder of the Christian religion into Jerusalem, but the day itself is called *Dominica Confitentium*, or the Sunday of Confessors, and the palm-tree, or the box and yew, which are used as its substitutes, and which are distributed to the priests, are burnt solemnly to ashes, and those ashes distributed among the pious, by the priests, upon the Ash-Wednesday of the succeeding year, all which rites and ceremonies in our country are observed, by order of the Christian Church; nor ought you, gentle archer, nor can you without a crime, persecute those as guilty of designs upon your garrison, who can ascribe their presence here to their desire to discharge the duties of the day; and look ye at yon numerous procession approaching with banner and cross, and, as it appears, consisting of some churchman of rank and his attendants; let us first inquire who he is, and it is probable we shall find in his name and rank sufficient security for the peaceable and orderly behaviour of those whom piety has this day assembled at the Church of Douglas.'

Greenleaf accordingly made the investigation recommended by his companion, and received information that the holy man who headed the procession was no other than the diocesan of the district, the Bishop of Glasgow, who had come to give his countenance to the rites with which the day was to be sanctified.

The prelate accordingly entered the walls of the dilapidated churchyard, preceded by his cross-bearers, and attended by numbers with boughs of yew and other evergreens, used on the festivity instead of palms. Among them the holy father showered his blessing, accompanied by signs of the cross, which were met with devout exclamations by such of the worshippers as crowded around him:—'To thee, reverend father, we apply for pardon for our offences, which we humbly desire to confess to thee, in order that we may obtain pardon from Heaven.'

In this manner the congregation and the dignified clergyman met together, exchanging pious greeting, and seemingly intent upon nothing but the rites of the day. The acclamations of the congregation mingled with the deep voice of the officiating priest, dispensing the sacred ritual; the whole forming a scene which, conducted with the Catholic skill and ceremonial, was at once imposing and affecting.

The archer, on seeing the zeal with which the people in the churchyard, as well as a number who issued from the church, hastened proudly to salute the bishop of the diocese, was rather ashamed of the suspicions which he had entertained of the sincerity of the good man's purpose in coming hither. Taking advantage of a fit of devotion, not perhaps very common with old Greenleaf, who at this moment thrust himself forward to share in those spiritual advantages which the prelate was dispensing, Bertram slipped clear of his English friend, and, gliding to the side of the Lady Augusta, exchanged by the pressure of the hand a mutual congratulation upon having rejoined company. On a sign by the minstrel, they withdrew to the inside of the church, so as to remain unobserved amidst the crowd, in which they were favoured by the dark shadows of some parts of the building.

The body of the church, broken as it was, and hung round with the armorial trophies of the last Lords of Douglas, furnished rather the appearance of a sacrilegiously desecrated ruin, than the inside of a holy place; yet some care appeared to have been taken to prepare it for the service of the day. At the lower end hung the great escutcheon of William Lord of Douglas, who had lately died a prisoner in England; around that escutcheon were placed the smaller shields of his sixteen ancestors, and a deep black shadow was diffused by the whole mass, unless where relieved by the glance of the coronets, or the glimmer of bearings particularly gay in emblazonry. I need not say that in other respects the interior of the church was much dismantled, it being the very same place in

which Sir Aymer de Valence held an interview with the old sexton; and who now, drawing into a separate corner some of the straggling parties whom he had collected and brought to the church, kept on the alert, and appeared ready for an attack as well at mid-day as at the witching hour of midnight. This was the more necessary, as the eye of Sir John de Walton seemed busied in searching from one place to another, as if unable to find the object he was in quest of, which the reader will easily understand to be the Lady Augusta de Berkely, of whom he had lost sight in the pressure of the multitude. At the eastern part of the church was fitted up a temporary altar, by the side of which, arrayed in his robes, the Bishop of Glasgow had taken his place, with such priests and attendants as composed his episcopal retinue. His suite was neither numerous nor richly attired, nor did his own appearance present a splendid specimen of the wealth and dignity of the episcopal order. When he laid down, however, his golden cross, at the stern command of the King of England, that of simple wood, which he assumed instead thereof, did not possess less authority, nor command less awe, among the clergy and people of the diocese.

The various persons, natives of Scotland, now gathered around, seemed to watch his motions, as those of a descended saint, and the English waited in mute astonishment, apprehensive that at some unexpected signal an attack would be made upon them, either by the powers of earth or heaven, or perhaps by both in combination. The truth is, that so great was the devotion of the Scottish clergy of the higher ranks to the interests of the party of Bruce, that the English had become jealous of permitting them to interfere even with those ceremonies of the Church which were placed under their proper management, and thence the presence of the Bishop of Glasgow, officiating at a high festival in the Church of Douglas, was a circumstance of rare occurrence, and not unattended both with wonder and suspicion. A Council of the Church, however, had lately called the distinguished prelates of Scotland to the discharge of their duty on the festivity of Palm Sunday, and neither English nor Scottish saw the ceremony with indifference. An unwonted silence which prevailed in the church, filled, as it appeared, with persons of different views, hopes, wishes, and expectations, resembled one of those solemn pauses which often take place before a strife of the elements, and are well understood to be the forerunners of some dreadful concussion of nature. All animals, according to their various nature, express their sense of the approaching tempest: the cattle, the deer, and other inhabitants of the walks of the forest, withdraw to the inmost recesses of their pastures; the sheep crowd into their fold; and the dull stupor of universal nature, whether animate or inanimate, presages its speedily awaking into general convulsion and disturbance, when the lurid lightning shall hiss at command of the diapason of the thunder.

It was thus that, in deep suspense, those who had come to the church in arms, at the summons of Douglas, awaited and expected every moment a signal to attack, while the soldiers of the English garrison, aware of the evil disposition of the natives towards them, were reckoning every moment when the well-known shout of 'Bows and bills!' should give signal for a general conflict, and both parties, gazing fiercely upon each other, seemed to expect the fatal onset.

Notwithstanding the tempest which appeared every moment ready to burst, the Bishop of Glasgow proceeded with the utmost solemnity to perform the ceremonies proper to the day; he paused from time to time to survey the throng, as if to calculate whether the turbulent passions of those around him would be so long kept under as to admit of his duties being brought to a close in a manner becoming the time and place.

The prelate had just concluded the service, when a person advanced towards him with a solemn and mournful aspect, and asked if the reverend father could devote a few moments to adminster comfort to a dying man, who was lying wounded close by.

The churchman signified a ready acquiescence, amidst a stillness which, when he surveyed the lowering brows of one party, at least of those who were in the church, boded no peaceable termination to this fated day. The father motioned to the messenger to show him the way, and proceeded on his mission, attended by some of those who were understood to be followers of the Douglas.

There was something peculiarly striking, if not suspicious, in the interview which followed. In a subterranean vault was deposited the person of a large tall man, whose blood flowed copiously through two or three ghastly wounds, and streamed amongst the trusses of straw on which he lay; while his features exhibited a mixture of sternness and ferocity, which seemed prompt to kindle into a still more savage expression.

The reader will probably conjecture that the person in question was no other than Michael Turnbull, who, wounded in the rencontre of the morning, had been left by some of his friends upon the straw, which was arranged for him by way of couch, to live or die as he best could. The prelate, on entering the vault, lost no time in calling the attention of the wounded man to the state of his spiritual affairs, and assisting him to such comfort as the doctrine of the Church directed should be administered to departing sinners. The words exchanged between them were of that grave and severe character which passes between the ghostly father and his pupil, when one world is rolling away from the view of the sinner, and another is displaying itself in all its terrors, and thundering in the ear of the penitent that retribution which the deeds done in the flesh must needs prepare him to expect. This is one of the most solemn meetings which can take place between earthly beings; and the courageous character of the Jedwood Forester, as well as the benevolent and pious expression of the old churchman, considerably enhanced the pathos of the scene.

'Turnbull,' said the churchman, 'I trust you will believe me when I say that it grieves my heart to see thee brought to this situation by

wounds which, it is my duty to tell you, you must consider mortal.'

'Is the chase ended, then?' said the Jedwood man, with a sigh. 'I care not, good father, for I think I have borne me as becomes a gallant quarry, and that the old Forest has lost no credit by me, whether in pursuit or in bringing to bay; and even in this last matter, methinks this gay English knight would not have come off with such advantage had the ground on which we stood been alike indifferent to both, or had I been aware of his onset; but it will be seen, by any one who takes the trouble to examine, that poor Michael Turnbull's foot slipped twice in the *mêlée*, otherwise it had not been his fate to be lying here in the dead-thraw; * while yonder Southron would probably have died like a dog, upon this bloody straw, in his place.'

The bishop replied, advising his penitent to turn from vindictive thoughts respecting the death of others, and endeavour to fix his attention upon his own departure from existence, which seemed shortly about to take place.

'Nay,' replied the wounded man, 'you, father, undoubtedly know best what is fit for me to do; yet methinks it would not be very well with me if I had prolonged to this time of day the task of revising my life, and I am not the man to deny that mine has been a bloody and a desperate one. But you will grant me, I never bore malice to a brave enemy for having done me an injury; and show me the man, being a Scotchman born, and having a natural love for his own country, who hath not, in these times, rather preferred a steel-cap to a hat and feather, or who hath not been more conversant with drawn blades than with prayer-book; and you yourself know, father, whether, in our proceedings against the English interest, we have not uniformly had the countenance of the sincere fathers of the Scottish Church, and whether we have not been exhorted to take arms and make use of them for the honour of the King of Scotland, and the defence of our own rights.'

'Undoubtedly,' said the prelate, 'such have been our exhortations towards our oppressed countrymen, nor do I now teach you a different doctrine; nevertheless, having now blood around me, and a dying man before me, I have need to pray that I have not been misled from the true path, and thus become the means of misdirecting others. May Heaven forgive me if I have done so, since I have only to plead my sincere and honest intention in excuse for the erroneous counsel which I may have given to you and others touching these wars. I am conscious that, encouraging you so to stain your swords in blood, I have departed in some degree from the character of my profession, which enjoins that we neither shed blood, nor are the occasion of its being shed. May Heaven enable us to obey our duties, and to repent of our errors, especially such as have occasioned the death or distress of our fellow-creatures. And above all, may this dying Christian become aware of his errors, and repent with sincerity of having done to others that which he would not willingly have suffered at their hand!'

* Or death agony.

'For that matter,' answered Turnbull, 'the time has never been when I would not exchange a blow with the best man who ever lived; and if I was not in constant practice of the sword, it was because I have been brought up to the use of the Jedwood-axe, which the English call a partisan, and which makes little difference, I understand, from the sword and poniard.'

'The distinction is not great,' said the bishop; 'but I fear, my friend, that life taken with what you call a Jedwood-axe, gives you no privilege over him who commits the same deed, and inflicts the same injury, with any other weapon.'

'Nay, worthy father,' said the penitent, 'I must own that the effect of the weapons is the same, as far as concerns the man who suffers; but I would pray of you information, why a Jedwood man ought not to use, as is the custom of his country, a Jedwood-axe, being, as is implied in the name, the offensive weapon proper to his country?'

'The crime of murder,' said the bishop, 'consists not in the weapon with which the crime is inflicted, but in the pain which the murderer inflicts upon his fellow-creature, and the breach of good order which he introduces into Heaven's lovely and peaceable creation; and it is by turning your repentance upon this crime that you may fairly expect to propitiate Heaven for your offences, and at the same time to escape the consequences which are denounced in Holy Writ against those by whom man's blood shall be shed.'

'But, good father,' said the wounded man, 'you know as well as any one, that in this company, and in this very church, there are upon the watch scores of both Scotchmen and Englishmen, who come here not so much to discharge the religious duties of the day, as literally to bereave each other of their lives, and give a new example of the horror of those feuds which the two extremities of Britain nourish against each other. What conduct, then, is a poor man like me to hold? Am I not to raise this hand against the English, which methinks I still can make a tolerably efficient one—or am I, for the first time in my life, to hear the war-cry when it is raised, and hold back my sword from the slaughter? Methinks it will be difficult, perhaps altogether impossible, for me to do so; but if such is the pleasure of Heaven, and your advice, most reverend father, unquestionably I must do my best to be governed by your directions, as of one who has a right and title to direct us in every dilemma, or case, as they term it, of troubled conscience.'

'Unquestionably,' said the bishop, 'it is my duty, as I have already said, to give no occasion this day for the shedding of blood, or the breach of peace; and I must charge you, as my penitent, that upon your soul's safety you do not minister any occasion to affray or bloodshed, either by maintaining such in your own person, or inciting others to the same; for by following a different course of advice, I am certain that you, as well as myself, would act sinfully and out of character.'

'So I will endeavour to think, reverend father,' answered the huntsman; 'nevertheless, I hope

it will be remembered in my favour, that I am the first person bearing the surname of Turnbull, together with the proper name of the prince of archangels himself, who has at any time been able to sustain the affront occasioned by the presence of a Southron with a drawn sword, and was not thereby provoked to pluck forth his own weapon and to lay about him.'

'Take care, my son,' returned the prelate of Glasgow, 'and observe, that even now thou art departing from those resolutions which, but a few minutes since, thou didst adopt upon serious and just consideration; wherefore do not be, O my son! like the sow that has wallowed in the mire, and, having been washed, repeats its act of pollution, and becomes again yet fouler than it was before.'

'Well, reverend father,' replied the wounded man, 'although it seems almost unnatural for Scottishmen and English to meet and part without a buffet, yet I will endeavour most faithfully not to minister any occasion of strife, nor, if possible, to snatch at any such occasion as shall be ministered to me.'

'In doing so,' returned the bishop, 'thou wilt best atone for the injury which thou hast done to the law of Heaven upon former occasions, and thou shalt prevent the causes for strife betwixt thee and thy brethren of the Southern land, and shalt eschew the temptation towards that blood-guiltiness which is so rife in this our day and generation. And do not think that I am imposing upon thee, by these admonitions, a duty more difficult than it is in thy covenant to bear, as a man and as a Christian. I myself am a man and a Scotchman, and, as such, I feel offended at the unjust conduct of the English towards our country and sovereign; and thinking as you do yourself, I know what you must suffer when you are obliged to submit to national insults, unretaliated and unrevenged. But let us not conceive ourselves the agents of that retributive vengeance which Heaven has, in a peculiar degree, declared to be its own attribute. Let us, while we see and feel the injuries inflicted on our own country, not forget that our own raids, ambuscades, and surprisals, have been at least equally fatal to the English as their attacks and forays have been to us; and, in short, let the mutual injuries of the crosses of Saint Andrew and of Saint George be no longer considered as hostile to the inhabitants of the opposite district, at least during the festivals of religion; but as they are mutually signs of redemption, let them be, in like manner, intimations of forbearance and peace on both sides.'

'I am contented,' answered Turnbull, 'to abstain from all offences towards others, and shall even endeavour to keep myself from resenting those of others towards me, in the hope of bringing to pass such a quiet and godly state of things as your words, reverend father, induce me to expect.' Turning his face to the wall, the Borderer lay in stern expectation of approaching death, which the bishop left him to contemplate.

The peaceful disposition which the prelate had inspired into Michael Turnbull, had in some degree diffused itself among those present, who heard with awe the spiritual admonition to suspend the national antipathy, and remain in truce and amity with each other. Heaven had, however, decreed that the national quarrel, in which so much blood had been sacrificed, should that day again be the occasion of deadly strife.

A loud flourish of trumpets, seeming to proceed from beneath the earth, now rung through the church, and roused the attention of the soldiers and worshippers then assembled. Most of those who heard these warlike sounds betook themselves to their weapons, as if they considered it useless to wait any longer for the signal of conflict. Hoarse voices, rude exclamations, the rattle of swords against their sheaths, or their clashing against other pieces of armour, gave an awful presage of an onset, which, however, was for a time averted by the exhortations of the bishop. A second flourish of trumpets having taken place, the voice of a herald made proclamation to the following purpose:—

'That whereas there were many noble pursuivants of chivalry presently assembled in the Kirk of Douglas, and whereas there existed among them the usual causes of quarrel and points of debate for their advancement in chivalry, therefore the Scottish knights were ready to fight any number of the English who might be agreed, either upon the superior beauty of their ladies, or upon the national quarrel in any of its branches, or upon whatever point might be at issue between them, which should be deemed satisfactory ground of quarrel by both; and the knights who should chance to be worsted in such dispute should renounce the prosecution thereof, or the bearing arms therein thereafter, with such other conditions to ensue upon their defeat as might be agreed upon by a council of the knights present at the Kirk of Douglas aforesaid. But foremost of all, any number of Scottish knights, from one to twenty, will defend the quarrel which has already drawn blood, touching the freedom of Lady Augusta de Berkely, and the rendition of Douglas Castle to the owner here present. Wherefore it is required that the English knights do intimate their consent that such trial of valour take place, which, according to the rules of chivalry, they cannot refuse, without losing utterly the reputation of valour, and incurring the diminution of such other degree of estimation as a courageous pursuivant of arms would willingly be held in, both by the good knights of his own country, and those of others.'

This unexpected gage of battle realized the worst fears of those who had looked with suspicion on the extraordinary assemblage this day of the dependents of the House of Douglas. After a short pause, the trumpets again flourished lustily, when the reply of the English knights was made in the following terms:—

'That God forbid the rights and privileges of England's knights, and the beauty of her damsels, should not be asserted by her children, or that such English knights as were here assembled should show the least backwardness to accept the combat offered, whether grounded upon the superior beauty of their ladies, or whether upon the causes of dispute between the countries, for either or all of which the knights of England here present were willing to do battle

in the terms of the indenture aforesaid, while sword and lance shall endure. Saving and excepting the surrender of the Castle of Douglas, which can be rendered to no one but England's King, or those acting under his orders.'

CHAPTER XX.

Cry the wild war-note, let the champions pass,
Do bravely each, and God defend the right;
Upon Saint Andrew thrice can they thus cry,
And thrice they shout on height,
And then marked them on the Englishmen,
As I have told you right.
Saint George the bright, our ladies' knight,
To name they were full fain;
Our Englishmen they cried on height,
And thrice they shout again.

OLD BALLAD.

THE extraordinary crisis mentioned in the preceding chapter was the cause, as may be supposed, of the leaders on both sides now throwing aside all concealment, and displaying their utmost strength, by marshalling their respective adherents; the renowned Knight of Douglas, with Sir Malcolm Fleming and other distinguished cavaliers, was seen in close consultation.

Sir John de Walton, startled by the first flourish of trumpets, while anxiously endeavouring to secure a retreat for the Lady Augusta, was in a moment seen collecting his followers, in which he was assisted by the active friendship of the Knight of Valence.

The Lady of Berkely showed no craven spirit at these warlike preparations; she advanced, closely followed by the faithful Bertram, and a female in a riding-hood, whose face, though carefully concealed, was no other than that of the unfortunate Margaret de Hautlieu, whose worst fears had been realized as to the faithlessness of her betrothed knight.

A pause ensued, which for some time no one present thought himself of authority sufficient to break.

At last the Knight of Douglas stepped forward, and said loudly, 'I wait to know whether Sir John de Walton requests leave of James of Douglas to evacuate his castle without further wasting that daylight which might show us to judge a fair field, and whether he craves Douglas's protection in doing so?'

The Knight of Walton drew his sword. 'I hold the Castle of Douglas,' he said, 'in spite of all deadly,—and never will I ask the protection from any one which my own sword is competent to afford me!'

'I stand by you, Sir John,' said Aymer de Valence, 'as your true comrade, against whatever odds may oppose themselves to us.'

'Courage, noble English,' said the voice of Greenleaf; 'take your weapons, in God's name. Bows and bills! bows and bills!—A messenger brings us notice that Pembroke is in full march hither from the borders of Ayrshire, and will be with us in half-an-hour. Fight on, gallant English! Valence to the rescue! and long life to the gallant Earl of Pembroke!'

Those English within and around the church no longer delayed to take arms, and De Walton, crying out at the height of his voice, 'I implore the Douglas to look nearly to the safety of the ladies,' fought his way to the church door, the Scottish finding themselves unable to resist the impression of terror which affected them at the sight of this renowned knight, seconded by his brother in arms, both of whom had been so long the terror of the district. In the meantime, it is possible that De Walton might altogether have forced his way out of the church, had he not been met boldly by the young son of Thomas Dickson of Hazelside, while his father was receiving from Douglas the charge of preserving the stranger ladies from all harm from the fight, which, so long suspended, was now on the point of taking place.

De Walton cast his eye upon the Lady Augusta, with a desire of rushing to the rescue; but was forced to conclude that he provided best for her safety by leaving her under the protection of Douglas's honour.

Young Dickson, in the meantime, heaped blow on blow, seconding with all his juvenile courage every effort he could make, in order to attain the prize due to the conqueror of the renowned De Walton.

'Silly boy,' at length said Sir John, who had for some time forborne the stripling, 'take, then, thy death from a noble hand, since thou preferrest that to peace and length of days.'

'I care not,' said the Scottish youth, with his dying breath; 'I have lived long enough, since I have kept you so long in the place where you now stand.'

And the youth said truly, for, as he fell, never again to rise, the Douglas stood in his place, and, without a word spoken, again engaged with De Walton in the same formidable single combat, by which they had already been distinguished, but with even additional fury. Aymer de Valence drew up to his friend De Walton's left hand, and seemed but to desire the apology of one of Douglas's people attempting to second him, to join in the fray; but as he saw no person who seemed disposed to give him such opportunity, he repressed the inclination, and remained an unwilling spectator. At length it seemed as if Fleming, who stood foremost among the Scottish knights, was desirous to measure his sword with De Valence. Aymer himself, burning with the desire of combat, at last called out, 'Faithless Knight of Boghall! step forth and defend yourself against the imputation of having deserted your lady-love, and of being a mansworn disgrace to the rolls of chivalry!'

'My answer,' said Fleming, 'even to a less gross taunt, hangs by my side.' In an instant his sword was in his hand, and even the practised warriors who looked on felt difficulty in discovering the progress of the strife, which rather resembled a thunderstorm in a mountainous country than the stroke and parry of two swords, offending on the one side, and keeping the defensive on the other.

Their blows were exchanged with surprising rapidity; and although the two combatants did not equal Douglas and De Walton in maintaining a certain degree of reserve, founded upon a respect which these knights mutually entertained for each other, yet the want of art was supplied by

a degree of fury, which gave chance at least an equal share in the issue.

Seeing their superiors thus desperately engaged, the partisans, as they were accustomed, stood still on either side, and looked on with the reverence which they instinctively paid to their commanders and leaders in arms. One or two of the women were in the meanwhile attracted, according to the nature of the sex, by compassion for those who had already experienced the casualties of war. Young Dickson, breathing his last among the feet of the combatants,* was in some sort rescued from the tumult by the Lady of Berkely, in whom the action seemed less strange, owing to the pilgrim's dress which she still retained, and who in vain endeavoured to solicit the attention of the boy's father to the task in which she was engaged.

'Cumber yourself not, lady, about that which is bootless,' said old Dickson, 'and distract not your own attention and mine from preserving you, whom it is the Douglas's wish to rescue, and whom, so please God and Saint Bride, I consider as placed by my chieftain under my charge. Believe me, this youth's death is in no way forgotten, though this be not the time to remember it. A time will come for recollection, and an hour for revenge.'

So said the stern old man, reverting his eyes from the bloody corpse which lay at his feet, a model of beauty and strength. Having taken one more anxious look, he turned round, and placed himself where he could best protect the Lady of Berkely, not again turning his eyes on his son's body.

In the interim the combat continued, without the least cessation on either side, and without a decided advantage. At length, however, fate seemed disposed to interfere; the Knight of Fleming, pushing fiercely forward, and brought by chance almost close to the person of the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu, missed his blow, and his foot sliding in the blood of the young victim Dickson, he fell before his antagonist, and was in imminent danger of being at his mercy, when Margaret de Hautlieu, who inherited the soul of a warrior, and besides was a very strong, as well as an undaunted person, seeing a mace of no great weight lying on the floor, where it had been dropped by the fallen Dickson, it at the same instant caught her eye, armed her hand, and intercepted or struck down the sword of Sir Aymer de Valence, who would otherwise have remained the master of the day at that interesting moment. Fleming had more to do to avail himself of an unexpected chance of recovery, than to make a commentary upon the manner in which it had been so singularly brought about; he instantly recovered the advantage he had lost, and was able in the ensuing close to trip up the feet of his antagonist, who fell on the pavement, while the voice of his conqueror, if he could properly be termed such, resounded through the church with the fatal words, 'Yield thee, Aymer de Valence—rescue or no rescue—yield thee!—yield thee!' he added, as he placed his sword to the throat of the fallen knight, 'not to me, but to this noble lady—rescue or no rescue.'

With a heavy heart the English knight perceived that he had fairly lost so favourable an opportunity of acquiring fame, and was obliged to submit to his destiny, or be slain upon the spot. There was only one consolation, that no battle was ever more honourably sustained, being gained as much by accident as by valour.

The fate of the protracted and desperate combat between Douglas and De Walton did not much longer remain in suspense; indeed, the number of conquests in single combat achieved by the Douglas in these wars was so great, as to make it doubtful whether he was not, in personal strength and skill, even a superior knight to Bruce himself, and he was at least acknowledged nearly his equal in the art of war.

So, however, it was, that when three-quarters of an hour had passed in hard contest, Douglas and De Walton, whose nerves were not actually of iron, began to show some signs that their human bodies were feeling the effect of the dreadful exertion. Their blows began to be drawn more slowly, and were parried with less celerity. Douglas, seeing that the combat must soon come to an end, generously made a signal, intimating to his antagonist to hold his hand for an instant.

'Brave De Walton,' he said, 'there is no mortal quarrel between us, and you must be sensible that, in this passage of arms, Douglas, though he is only worth his sword and his cloak, has abstained from taking a decisive advantage when the chance of arms has more than once offered it. My father's house, the broad domains around it, the dwelling and the graves of my ancestors, form a reasonable reward for a knight to fight for, and call upon me in an imperative voice to prosecute the strife which has such an object, while you are as welcome to the noble lady, in all honour and safety, as if you had received her from the hands of King Edward himself; and I give you my word, that the utmost honours which can attend a prisoner, and a careful absence of everything like injury or insult, shall attend De Walton when he yields up the castle, as well as his sword, to James of Douglas.'

'It is the fate to which I am perhaps doomed,' replied Sir John de Walton; 'but never will I voluntarily embrace it, and never shall it be said that my own tongue, saving in the last extremity, pronounced upon me the fatal sentence to sink the point of my own sword. Pembroke is upon the march with his whole army, to rescue the garrison of Douglas. I hear the tramp of his horse's feet even now; and I will maintain my ground while I am within reach of support; nor do I fear that the breath which now begins to fail will not last long enough to uphold the struggle till the arrival of the expected succour. Come on, then, and treat me not as a child, but as one who, whether I stand or fall, fears not to encounter the utmost force of my knightly antagonist.'

'So be it, then,' said Douglas, a darksome hue, like the lurid colour of the thundercloud, changing his brow as he spoke, intimating that he meditated a speedy end to the contest, when, just as the noise of horses' feet drew nigh, a Welsh knight, known as such by the diminutive size of his steed, his naked limbs, and his bloody

* Note C. Death of Young Dickson.

spear, called out loudly to the combatants to hold their hands.

'Is Pembroke near?' said De Walton.

'No nearer than Loudon Hill,' said the prestantin; 'but I bring his commands to John de Walton.'

'I stand ready to obey them through every danger,' answered the knight.

'Woe is me,' said the Welshman, 'that my mouth should bring to the ears of so brave a man tidings so unwelcome! The Earl of Pembroke yesterday received information that the Castle of Douglas was attacked by the son of the deceased Earl, and the whole inhabitants of the district. Pembroke, on hearing this, resolved to march to your support, noble knight, with all the forces he had at his disposal. He did so, and accordingly entertained every assurance of relieving the castle, when unexpectedly he met, on Loudon Hill, a body of men of no very inferior force to his own, and having at their head that famous Bruce whom the Scottish rebels acknowledge as their king. He marched instantly to the attack, swearing he would not even draw a comb through his grey beard until he had rid England of this recurring plague. But the fate of war was against us.'

He stopped here for lack of breath.

'I thought so!' exclaimed Douglas. 'Robert Bruce will now sleep at night, since he has paid home Pembroke for the slaughter of his friends and the dispersion of his army at Methven Wood. His men are, indeed, accustomed to meet with dangers, and to conquer them; those who follow him have been trained under Wallace, besides being partakers of the perils of Bruce himself. It was thought that the waves had swallowed them when they shipped themselves from the west; but know, that the Bruce was determined with the present reviving spring to awaken his pretensions, and that he retires not from Scotland again while he lives, and while a single lord remains to set his foot by his sovereign, in spite of all the power which has been so feloniously employed against him.'

'It is even too true,' said the Welshman Meredith, 'although it is said by a proud Scotchman.—The Earl of Pembroke, completely defeated, is unable to stir from Ayr, towards which he has retreated with great loss; and he sends his instructions to Sir John de Walton to make the best terms he can for the surrender of the Castle of Douglas, and trust nothing to his support.'

The Scottish, who heard this unexpected news, joined in a shout so loud and energetic, that the ruins of the ancient church seemed actually to rock, and threaten to fall on the heads of those who were crowded within it.

The brow of De Walton was overclouded at the news of Pembroke's defeat, although in some respects it placed him at liberty to take measures for the safety of the Lady of Berkely. He could not, however, claim the same honourable terms which had been offered to him by Douglas before the news of the battle of Loudon Hill had arrived.

'Noble knight,' he said, 'it is entirely at your pleasure to dictate the terms of surrender of your paternal castle; nor have I a right to claim from you those conditions which, a little while since, your generosity put in my offer. But I submit to my fate; and upon whatever terms you think fit to grant me, I must be content to offer to surrender to you the weapon, of which I now put the point in the earth, in evidence that I will never more direct it against you until a fair ransom shall place it once more at my own disposal.'

'God forbid,' answered the noble James of Douglas, 'that I should take such advantage of the bravest knight out of not a few who have found me work in battle! I will take example from the Knight of Fleming, who has gallantly bestowed his captive in guerdon upon a noble damsel here present; and in like manner I transfer my claim upon the person of the redoubted Knight of Walton, to the high and noble Lady Augusta Berkely, who, I hope, will not scorn to accept from the Douglas a gift which the chance of war has thrown into his hands.'

Sir John de Walton, on hearing this unexpected decision, looked up like the traveller who discovers the beams of the sun breaking through and dispersing the tempest which has accompanied him for a whole morning. The Lady of Berkely recollected what became her rank, and showed her sense of the Douglas's chivalry. Hastily wiping off the tears which had unwillingly flowed to her eyes, while her lover's safety and her own were resting on the precarious issue of a desperate combat, she assumed the look proper to a heroine of that age, who did not feel averse to accept the importance which was conceded to her by the general voice of the chivalry of the period. Stepping forward, bearing her person gracefully, yet modestly, in the attitude of a lady accustomed to be looked to in difficulties like the present, she addressed the audience in a tone which might not have misbecome the Goddess of Battle, dispensing her influence at the close of a field covered with the dead and the dying.

'The noble Douglas,' she said, 'shall not pass without a prize from the field which he has so nobly won. This rich string of brilliants, which my ancestor won from the Sultan of Trebizond,* itself a prize of battle, will be honoured by sustaining under the Douglas's armour, a lock of hair of the fortunate lady whom the victorious lord has adopted for his guide in chivalry; and if the Douglas, till he shall adorn it with that lock, will permit the honoured lock of hair which it now bears to retain its station, she on whose head it grew will hold it as a signal that poor Augusta de Berkely is pardoned for having gaged any mortal man in strife with the Knight of Douglas.'

'Woman's love,' replied the Douglas, 'shall not divorce this locket from my bosom, which I will keep till the last day of my life, as emblematic of female worth and female virtue. And, not to encroach upon the valued and honoured province of Sir John de Walton, be it known to all men, that whoever shall say that the Lady Augusta of Berkely has, in this entangled matter,

* [A branch of the Comneni, the ruling dynasty of Constantinople, founded a separate kingdom at Trebizond, on the south side of the Black Sea, in the thirteenth century.]

acted otherwise than becomes the noblest of her sex, he will do well to be ready to maintain such a proposition with his lance against James of Douglas in a fair field.'

This speech was heard with approbation on all sides; and the news brought by Meredith of the defeat of the Earl of Pembroke, and his subsequent retreat, reconciled the fiercest of the English soldiers to the surrender of Douglas Castle. The necessary conditions were speedily agreed on, which put the Scottish in possession of this stronghold, together with the stores, both of arms and ammunition, of every kind, which it contained. The garrison had it to boast that they obtained a free passage with their horses and arms, to return by the shortest and safest route to the marches of England, without either suffering or inflicting damage.

Margaret of Hautlieu was not behind in acting a generous part; the gallant Knight of Valence was allowed to accompany his friend De Walton and the Lady Augusta to England, and without ransom.

The venerable prelate of Glasgow, seeing what appeared at one time likely to end in a general conflict, terminate so auspiciously for his country, contented himself with bestowing his blessing on the assembled multitude, and retiring with those who came to assist in the service of the day.

This surrender of Douglas Castle upon the Palm Sunday of 19th March 1306-7, was the beginning of a career of conquest which was uninterrupted, in which the greater part of the strengths and fortresses of Scotland were yielded to those who asserted the liberty of their country, until the crowning mercy was gained in the celebrated field of Bannockburn, where the English sustained a defeat more disastrous than is mentioned upon any other occasion in their annals.

Little need be said of the fate of the persons of this story. King Edward was greatly enraged at Sir John de Walton for having surrendered the Castle of Douglas, securing at the same time his own object, the envied hand of the heiress of Berkely. The knights to whom he referred the matter as a subject of inquiry, gave it nevertheless as their opinion that De Walton was void of all censure, having discharged his duty in its fullest extent, till the commands of his superior officer obliged him to surrender the Dangerous Castle.

A singular renewal of intercourse took place, many months afterwards, between Margaret of Hautlieu and her lover, Sir Malcolm Fleming. The use which the lady made of her freedom, and of the doom of the Scottish Parliament, which put her in possession of her father's inheritance, was to follow her adventurous spirit through dangers not usually encountered by those of her sex; and the Lady of Hautlieu was not only a daring follower of the chase, but it was said that she was even not daunted in the battlefield. She remained faithful to the political principles which she had adopted at an early period; and it seemed as if she had formed the gallant resolution of shaking the god Cupid from her horse's mane, if not treading him beneath her horse's feet.

The Fleming, although he had vanished from the neighbourhood of the counties of Lanark and Ayr, made an attempt to state his apology to the Lady de Hautlieu herself, who returned his letter unopened, and remained to all appearance resolved never again to enter upon the topic of their original engagement. It chanced, however, at a later period of the war with England, while Fleming was one night travelling upon the Border, after the ordinary fashion of one who sought adventures, a waiting-maid, equipped in a fantastic habit, asked the protection of his arm in the name of her lady, who, late in the evening, had been made captive, she said, by certain ill-disposed caitiffs, who were carrying her by force through the forest. The Fleming's lance was of course in its rest, and woe betide the faitour whose lot it was to encounter its thrust; the first fell, incapable of further combat, and another of the felons encountered the same fate with little more resistance. The lady, released from the discourteous cord which restrained her liberty, did not hesitate to join company with the brave knight by whom she had been rescued; and although the darkness did not permit her to recognise her old lover in her liberator, yet she could not but lend a willing ear to the conversation with which he entertained her, as they proceeded on the way. He spoke of the fallen caitiffs as being Englishmen, who found a pleasure in exercising oppression and barbarities upon the wandering damsels of Scotland, and whose cause, therefore, the champions of that country were bound to avenge while the blood throbbed in their veins. He spoke of the injustice of the national quarrel, which had afforded a pretence for such deliberate oppression; and the lady, who herself had suffered so much by the interference of the English in the affairs of Scotland, readily acquiesced in the sentiments which he expressed on a subject which she had so much reason for regarding as an afflicting one. Her answer was given in the spirit of a person who would not hesitate, if the times should call for such an example, to defend even with her hand the rights which she asserted with her tongue.

Pleased with the sentiments which she expressed, and recognising in her voice that secret charm, which, once impressed upon the human heart, is rarely wrought out of the remembrance by a long train of subsequent events, he almost persuaded himself that the tones were familiar to him, and had at one time formed the key to his innermost affections. In proceeding on their journey, the knight's troubled state of mind was augmented instead of being diminished. The scenes of his earliest youth were recalled by circumstances so slight, as would in ordinary cases have produced no effect whatever; the sentiments appeared similar to those which his life had been devoted to enforce, and he half persuaded himself that the dawn of day was to be to him the beginning of a fortune equally singular and extraordinary.

In the midst of this anxiety, Sir Malcolm Fleming had no anticipation that the lady whom he had heretofore rejected was again thrown into his path, after years of absence; still less, when daylight gave him a partial view

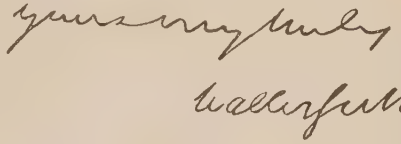
of his fair companion's countenance, was he prepared to believe that he was once again to term himself the champion of Margaret de Hautlieu, but it was so. The lady, on that direful morning when she retired from the Church of Douglas, had not resolved (indeed, what lady ever did ?) to renounce, without some struggle, the beauties which she had once possessed. A long process of time, employed under skilful hands, had succeeded in obliterating the scars which remained as the marks of her fall. These were now considerably effaced, and the lost organ of sight no longer appeared so great a blemish, concealed as it was by a black ribbon and the arts of the tirewoman, who made it her business to shadow it over by a lock of hair. In a word, he saw the same Margaret de Hautlieu, with no very different style of expression from that which her face, partaking of the high and passionate character of her soul, had always presented. It seemed to both, therefore, that their fate, by bringing them together after a separation which appeared so decisive, had intimated its *fiat* that their fortunes were inseparable from each other. By the time that the summer sun had climbed high in the heavens, the two travellers rode apart from their retinue, conversing together with an eagerness which marked the important matters in discussion between them ; and in a short time it was made generally known through Scotland, that Sir Malcolm Fleming and the Lady Margaret de Hautlieu were to be united at the court of the good King Robert, and the husband invested with the honours of Biggar and Cumbernauld, an earldom so long known in the family of Fleming.

ABBOTSFORD, *September* 1831.

THE gentle reader is acquainted that these are, in all probability, the last tales which it will be the lot of the Author to submit to the public. He is now on the eve of visiting foreign parts ; a ship of war is commissioned by its Royal Master to carry the Author of Waverley to climates in which he may possibly obtain such a restoration of health as may serve him to spin his thread to an end in his own country. Had he continued to prosecute his usual literary labours, it seems indeed probable that at the term of years he has already attained, the bowl, to use the pathetic language of Scripture, would have been broken at the fountain ; and little can one, who has enjoyed on the whole an uncommon share of the most inestimable of worldly blessings, be entitled to complain, that life, advancing to its period, should be attended with its usual proportions of shadows and storms. They have affected him, at least, in no more painful manner than is inseparable from the discharge of this part of the debt of humanity. Of those whose relation to him in the ranks of life might have insured him their sympathy under indisposition, many are now no more ; and those who may yet follow in his wake are entitled to expect, in bearing inevitable evils, an example of firmness and patience, more especially on the part of one who has enjoyed no small good fortune during the course of his pilgrimage.

The public have claims on his gratitude, for which the Author of Waverley has no adequate means of expression ; but he may be permitted to hope that the powers of his mind, such as they are, may not have a different fate from those of his body ; and that he may again meet his patronizing friends, if not exactly in his old fashion of literature, at least in some branch which may not call forth the remark, that—

Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.



NOTES TO CASTLE DANGEROUS.

Note A, p. 806.—Douglas Castle.

[The following notice of Douglas Castle, etc., is from the *Description of the Sheriffdom of Lanark*, by William Hamilton of Wishaw, written in the beginning of the last century, and printed by the Maitland Club of Glasgow in 1831 :—

'Douglass parish, and baronie and lordship, heth very long appertained to the family of Douglass, and continued with the Earles of Douglass untill their fatall forfeiture, anno 1455 ; during which tyme there are many noble and important actions recorded in histories performed by them, by the lords and earls of that great family. It was thereafter given to Douglass, Earle of Anguse, and continued with them untill William, Earle of Anguse, was created Marquess of Douglass, anno 1633 ; and is now the principal seat of the Marquess of Douglass his family. It is a large baronie and parish, and ane laick patronage ; and the Marquess is both titular and patron. He heth there, near to the church, a very considerable great house, called the Castle of Douglas ; and near the church is a fyne village, called the town of Douglass, long since erected in a burgh of baronie. It heth ane handsome church, with many ancient monuments and inscriptions on the old interments of the Earles of this place.

'The water of Douglass runs quyte through the whole length of this parish, and upon either side of the water it is called Douglasdale. It toucheth Clyde towards the north, and is bounded by Lesmahagow to the west, Kyle to the south-west, Crawford John and Carmichaell to the south and south-east. It is a pleasant strath, plentifull in grass and corn, and coal ; and the minister is well provided.

'The lands of Heysleside, belonging to Samuel Douglass, has a good house and pleasant seat, close by a wood, etc.—P. 65.]

Note B, p. 833.—Scottish Wild Cattle.

These Bulls are thus described by Hector Boetius [as translated by John Bellenden] concerning whom he says :—'In this wood (namely the Caledonian wood) were sometime white bulls, with crisp and curling manes, like fierce lions ; and though they seemed meek and tame in the remanent figure of their bodies, they were more wild than any other beasts, and had such hatred against the society and company of men, that they never came in the woods nor lesuries where they found any foot or hand thereof, and many days after they eat not of the herbs that were touched or handled by man. These bulls were so wild, that they were never taken but by slight and crafty labour, and so impatient, that after they were taken they died from insupportable dolour. As soon as any man invaded these bulls, they rushed with such terrible press upon him that they struck him to the earth, taking no fear of hounds, sharp lances, or other most penetrative weapons.'—Boetius, *Chron. Scot.* vol. i. p. xxxix.

The wild cattle of this breed, which are now only known in one manor in England, that of Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland (the seat of the Earl of Tankerville), were, in the memory of man, still preserved in three places in Scotland—namely, Drumlanrig, Cumbernauld, and the upper park at Hamilton Palace—at all of which places, except the last, I believe, they have now been destroyed, on account of their ferocity. But though those of modern days are remarkable for their white colour, with black muzzles, and exhibiting, in a small degree, the black mane, about three or four inches long, by which the bulls in particular are distinguished, they do not by any means come near the terrific description given us by the ancient authors, which has made some naturalists think that these animals should probably be referred to a different species, though possessing the same general habits, and included in the same genus. The bones, which are often discovered in Scottish mosses, belong certainly to a race of animals much larger than those of Chillingham, which seldom grow to above 80 stone (of 14 lbs.), the general weight varying from 60 to 80 stone. We should be accounted very negligent by one class of readers, did we not record that the beef furnished by those cattle is of excellent flavour and finely marbled.

[British wild cattle now exist only in Cadzow Forest, Chillingham Park, Lyme Park, and Chartley, in all of which they are strictly preserved. The purest bred are those of Chillingham—a park which was in existence in the 13th century. These have red ears with brownish muzzle, and show all the characteristics of wild animals. According to Mr. Hindmarsh, who obtained his information from the proprietor, 'they hide their young, feed in the night, basking or sleeping during the day ; they are fierce when pressed, but, generally speaking, very timorous, moving off on the appearance of any one even at a great distance.' The bulls engage in fierce contest for the leadership of the herd, and the wounded are set upon by the others and killed ; thus few bulls attain a great age, and even those, when they grow feeble, are gored to death by their fellows. The white cattle of Cadzow are very similar to those of Chillingham in their habits, but, being confined to a narrow area, are less wild. They still form a considerable herd, but of late years, it has been stated, they have all become polled. It is probable, as Sir Walter Scott used to maintain, that Cadzow and Chillingham are but the extremities of what, in ruder times, was a continuous forest, and that the white cattle are the remnants of those herds of 'tauri sylvestres' described by early Scottish writers as abounding in the forests of Caledonia, and to which Scott evidently refers in his poem of *Cadzow Forest* :—

> Mightiest of all the beasts of chase
> That roam in woody Caledon,
> Crashing the forest in his race,
> The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

Encyc. Brit., Ninth Edit., Art. 'Cattle.']

[The following is an extract from a letter received by Sir Walter Scott, some time after the publication of the novel :—

'When it is wished to kill any of the cattle at Chillingham, the keeper goes into the herd on horseback, in which way they are quite accessible, and, singling out his victim, takes aim with a large rifle-gun, and seldom fails in bringing him down. If the poor animal makes much bellowing in his agony, and especially if the ground be stained with his blood, his companions become very furious, and are themselves, I believe, accessory to his death. After which, they fly off to a distant part of the park, and he is drawn away on a sledge. Lord Tankerville is very tenacious of these singular animals ; he will on no account part with a living one, and hardly allows of a sufficient number being killed to leave pasturage for those that remain.

'It happened on one occasion, three or four years ago, that a party visiting at the castle, among whom were some *men of war*, who had hunted buffaloes in foreign parts, obtained permission to do the keeper's work, and shoot one of the wild cattle. They sallied out on horseback, and, duly equipped for the enterprise, attacked their object. The poor animal received several wounds, but none of them proving fatal, he retired before his pursuers, roaring with pain and rage, till, planting himself against a wall, or tree, he stood at bay, offering a front of defiance.

In this position, the youthful heir of the castle, Lord Ossulston, rode up to give him the fatal shot. Though warned of the danger of approaching near to the enraged animal, and especially of firing without first having turned his horse's head in a direction to be ready for flight, he discharged his piece; but, ere he could turn his horse round to make his retreat, the raging beast had plunged his immense horns into its flank. The horse staggered, and was near falling, but, recovering by a violent effort, he extricated himself from his infuriated pursuer, making off with all the speed his wasting strength supplied, his entrails meanwhile dragging on the ground, till at length he fell, and died at the same moment. The animal was now close upon his rear, and the young lord would unquestionably have shared the fate of his unhappy steed, had not the keeper, deeming it full time to conclude the *day's diversion*, fired at the instant. His shot brought the beast to the ground, and, running in with his large knife, he put a period to its existence.

'This scene of gentlemanly pastime was viewed from a turret of the castle by Lady Tankerville and her female visitors. Such a situation for the mother of the young hero was anything but enviable.']

NOTE C, p. 884.—DEATH OF YOUNG DICKSON.

[The fall of this brave stripling by the hand of the English governor, and the stern heroism of the father in turning from the spot where he lay, 'a model of beauty and strength,' that he might not be withdrawn from the duty which Douglas had assigned him of protecting the Lady of Berkely, excites an interest for both, with which it is almost to be regretted that history interferes. It was the old man, Thomas Dickson, not his son, who fell. The *slogan*, 'A Douglas, a Douglas,' having been prematurely raised, Dickson, who was within the church, thinking that his young lord with his armed band was at hand, drew his sword, and, with only one man to assist him, opposed the English, who now rushed to the door. Cut across the middle by an English sword, he still continued his opposition, till he fell lifeless at the threshold. Such is tradition, and it is supported by a memorial of some authority—a tombstone, still to be seen in the churchyard of Douglas, on which is sculptured a figure of Dickson, supporting with his left arm his protruding entrails, and raising his sword with the other in the attitude of combat. —*Note by the* Rev. Mr. STEWART *of Douglas.*]

DOUGLAS CASTLE, LANARKSHIRE.

GLOSSARY TO SURGEON'S DAUGHTER AND CASTLE DANGEROUS.

Abune, above.
Accolade, the ceremony of conferring knighthood.
A clocking-hen, a hen sitting on eggs.
Ae, one.
Aigrette, a small plume.
Ain, own.
Alcade, or *alcalde*, a Spanish magistrate or judge.
Alla Akber, God is great.
Ambuscado, an ambush.
Amende honorable, an ample apology or restitution.
An non sis Ricardus, etc. (p. 771), Are you not a certain Richard Middlemas of the town of Middlemas? Answer in Latin.
Anodyne, an opiate or narcotic.
Argosy, a Mediterranean trading-vessel in the late Middle Ages.
Assoilzie, to acquit one of one's sins.
A' thegither, all together.
Auld, old.
Aya, a black female nurse, generally a native of India.

Banka, a courtier.
Basilisk, a fabulous serpent-like creature that inhabited the deserts of Arabia; its glance was held to be fatal to living creatures.
Bastinado, a mode of Eastern punishment, the culprit being beaten on the bare soles of the feet with rods.
Baulder, bolder.
Beaux yeux de ma casette, the beauties (beautiful eyes) of my purse.
Bedral, a sexton, beadle.
Begum, a lady of high rank.
Bent, ta'en the, taken to the open field, provided for one's safety.
Bismillah, in the name of God!
Blate, civil, bashful.
Bonnie dye, the pretty toy.
Bon vivant, a lover and judge of good living.
Borrel, unlearned, simple.
Bourg, borough, town.
Breviary, the service-book of the Roman Catholic Church.
Browst, a brewing.
Brusten, burst.
Buckle, the curl of a wig.
Bukshee, a general.

Cadgy, lively, frolicsome.
Caitiff, a villain, rascal.
Carle, a fellow, person.
Carline, an old woman.
Carpe diem, make the most of the present day.
Cartel, a challenge to single combat.
Cela n'est pas honnête, that is not honourable.
Chabootra, a platform.
Chabouk, a long whip.
Chield, a fellow, person.
Chobdar, an usher, mace-bearer.
Chowry, a flap or fan made of a cow's tail.
Chuckie-stanes, five stones—a child's game.
Cicerone, a guide, conductor.
Claver, chatter, tattling.
Cleek to, to seize upon.
Close, a bout, turn.
Corselet, a coat of armour.
Costume, custom.
Coup de soleil, a sunstroke.
Cousing, a cousin.
Cowries, small shells used as money in India, 6000 or 7000 being worth a rupee or two shillings.
Creeze, or *kris*, a short knife or sword, worn in the East.
Cresset, a fixed candlestick, or small portable fire.
Crimping, kidnapping men for the army or navy.
Crore, ten million rupees, worth £1,000,000.
Cull in the ken, a man or boy in the house.
Cummerband, a sash.

Daffing, free conversation, frolicking.
Dais, a canopy; also the chief table, usually somewhat higher than the others.
Damosel, a damsel.
Dead-thraw, the death-agony.
Deil, the devil.
Demesne, the estate cultivated by a feudal lord himself.
Dénouement, the settlement, conclusion.
Devoir, duty.
Dewan, a treasurer.
Dirk, a short dagger or knife.
Dirking, stabbing with the dirk.
Divan, the council of an Eastern sovereign.
Doctus utriusque juris, learned in both civil and ecclesiastical law; that is, duly qualified to practise.
Dolour, a pining, fretting at captivity.
Dominica confitentium, the Sunday of Confessors.
Domum servavit, lanam fecit, she stayed at home, and spun the wool.
Donjon, the principal tower in a feudal castle.
Dormant table, a fixed stationary table, as distinguished from one made of boards laid on trestles, which was the usual fashion in the Middle Ages.
Dour, stubborn.
Dowrah, the official guide of a Hindu village.
Drink-geld, a tip; money.
Dubash, a steward.
Durbar, an official reception.
Dye, bonnie, the pretty toy.

Eclaircissement, an explanation, clearing up of a difficulty.
Een, eyes.
Elève, a pupil.
Esculapian, belonging to Esculapius or Æsculapius, the ancient Greeks' god of medicine.
Ex officio, by official appointment.

Faitour, a traitor.
Fakir, a Hindu, in the text a Mohammedan, religious enthusiast.
Falset, falsehood.
Fanfaronade, vain boasting, swaggering.
Fashes, gives himself trouble or pains.
Fause-face, a false face, a mask.
Feringis, Franks; that is, Europeans of all nations.
Feringi Sahib, a European gentleman.
Feu de joie, a discharge of firearms, a salute.
Fiat, decision, decree.
Florentine (veal), a pie.
Flyting, scolding.
Fyke, trouble, pains, worry.

Gallooned, ornamented with galloon, a kind of thread lace used for binding.
Gie, to give.
Girning and gabbling, grinning and talking.
Gled, a kite.
Glowering, staring.
Good-daughter, daughter-in-law.
Gowffing, playing golf.
Groat, an old English coin worth fourpence.
Guerdon, a free gift.
Guide, to treat ill, use ill.

Haggard, a wild hawk.
Haggis, the lights, liver, and heart of a sheep, mixed with oatmeal, beef suet, onions, and condiments, the whole boiled in a sheep's stomach-bag.
Hakim, a physician.
Hank, a hold; a position.
Hie, high, principal (street).
Hogg, a shilling.
Hookah, the tobacco-pipe of Oriental races, consists of a bowl for holding the tobacco, and a bottle for holding water, through which the smoke passes in an indiarubber tube.
Horning and hooping, blowing of horns and shouting (whooping), as by the Wild Huntsman in the opera.
Houri, a beauteous maiden in the Mohammedan paradise.
Howdahed, provided with a howdah, or enclosed seat for persons to ride in.

Jalousing, suspecting, opining.
Jigger-dubber, a door-shutter, porter.
Jouk and let the jaw gae by, stoop, or give way, and let the wave go by.

Kaffila, a caravan of merchants.
Kafr, an infidel, from the standpoint of a Mohammedan.
Kail, cabbage.
Kail-yard, cabbage-plot.
Ken, to know.
Kerne, a light-armed foot-soldier.
Khan, an Oriental inn.
Khelaut, a dress of honour.
Killedar, the governor or commandant of a fort.
Kirtle, a gown, outer petticoat.

Lac, the sum of 100,000 rupees, worth £10,000.
Laick, lay.
Landlouper, stroller, adventurer.
Landward, the outlying rural districts.
Leal, loyal.
Lesuries, pastures.
Levée, a formal audience or interview.
Lippen, to trust to, confide in.
Lobscouse, a hash of meat and vegetables; stewed biscuit and salt meat.
Loon, fellow.
Lootie, a marauder, plunderer.
Los, praise.
Louping, leaping.
Lucky, dame; a title given to old women.

Mainrent, vassalage.
Mair, more.
Mais c'est égal, but it's all the same.
Malleus Scotorum, the hammer of the Scots.
Maud, a Lowland plaid.
Mêlée, a general combat at close quarters.
Mohur, a British Indian gold coin, worth thirty shillings.
Mootee Mahul, pearl of the palace, a term of endearment.
Mort-skin, the skin of a lamb or sheep that has died accidentally.
Mosque, a Mohammedan place of worship.
Motakul, a meeting.
Moullah, a Mohammedan priest.
Muezzin, the officer of a mosque who announces the hours of prayer from a lofty minaret or slender tower.
Muscadel, a sweet, strong wine of Italy and France.
Musnud, a state cushion.

Na blate, uncivil, immodest, bold.
Nabob, a provincial governor or commander of an army in India; a rich man who has made his fortune in India.
Naggra, a state drum.
Nautch, a spectacle by professional dancers.
Necromancy, witchcraft.
Neophyte, a beginner, inexperienced person.
Nisi Dominus custodiet, unless the Lord keep (the house)——
Nourjehan, light of the world, a term of endearment.
Nouz, for *nous*, intelligence and enterprise.
Nullah, a small brook or torrent.
Nuzzar, a tribute of gold mohurs.

Oe, a grandchild.
Oriflamme, the sacred banner of France.
Outrance, to the extreme, bitter end.
Owliah, or *wali*, a Mohammedan saint.

Pagoda, a Hindu temple.
Palanquin, a structure like a small wheelless carriage, in which people were carried from place to place on men's shoulders.
Par excellence, in a very special manner.
Partisan, a kind of halbert or pike.
Patois, a dialect.
Paynim, pagan, heathen.
Peon, a foot-soldier.
Pettah, the town or suburb outside a fortified place.
Pibroch, an air on the bagpipes.
Picaresca, what is knavish, adventurous, and not over honest.
Pickaninnies, small children.
Podagra, the gout.
Poursuivant, an attendant, especially a herald's attendant.
Prestantin, or *præstantin*, one who receives military pay (*præstantia*).
Pro tanto, so far as this matter is concerned.
Protégé, one who is under the protection of, or whose interests are advanced by, another.
Pro tempore, for the time being.
Puissance, power, doughty service.
Punctilio, a trifle, trifling mark of respect.

Quantum sufficit, the needful amount or quantity.
Quos ego. Neptune threatens to punish the winds for raising a storm without his permission; but breaks off his half-uttered threat in order to allay the storm. *Æn.* i. 139.

Rajah, a Hindu prince who is a ruler of territories.
Rajahpoot, a noble or aristocrat of India.
Raploch, coarse woollen, homespun.
Rationale, the reasons.
Rattan, a species of cane.
Rebeck, a stringed instrument, not unlike a violin in appearance.
Recheat, the huntsman's signal of recall from the hunt.
Reif, robbery.
Rendition, the surrender.
Reveillez, or *reveille*, the military signal given at daybreak.
Rokelay, a short cloak, worn by women.
Rose-noble, an old gold coin, worth 6s. 8d.; so called because a rose was shown on one side of the coin after Edward IV.'s reign.
Rote, a kind of harp or guitar, played by turning a handle.
Rugs and reives, tears and carries off by violence.
Rupee, a silver coin of India, nominally worth two shillings.

Sack, a kind of dry wine.
Sahib Angrezie, an English gentleman.
Salam, a curtsey, obeisance.
Salam alaikum, peace be with you.

Salam alaikum bema sebartem, peace abide with you, for that ye have endured patiently.
Sang froid, cool and collected bearing or feeling.
Sasine, the legal instrument or document which testifies that so and so has been put in lawful possession of certain property.
Screeds, pieces torn off, shreds.
Scunner, gie a, to make a gesture of loathing or disgust at.
Seneschal, a steward.
Seraglio, the palace of an Eastern prince.
Shaw, wild wood or forest.
Sherbet, a kind of Persian lemonade.
Shieling, a hut.
Sholto dhu Glass, see yon dark grey man.
Siller, silver, money.
Sipahi, or *Sepoy*, a native foot-soldier in India.
Sirdar, a chieftain, captain, officer.
Skaithless, unhurt, uninjured.
Skirls, screams.
Slogan, the war-cry of a Highland clan.
Solecism, a gross mistake in using language.
Souple, supple, active.
Sowar, a native cavalryman in Indian armies.
Sowarree, a grand procession.
Springald, a youth, active young man.
Stole, a loose upper garment worn by a religious novice.
Sum ille miserrimus, I am that unhappy one.
Swivel, a small cannon fixed on a swivel.
Syllabub, a dish of wine with milk or cream, a sort of curd.

Tantivy, a fit of violence.
Tappiced, concealed, hidden.
Tatoo, a small horse of Southern India.
Tauridor, a bull-fighter.
Telinga, a native soldier in the East India Company's Service.
Tête-à-tête, a quiet confidential conversation.
Thane, an earl or noble.
Thirlage, the obligation of a tenant to get his corn ground at a particular mill.
Threep, persist.
Tinchel, a great drive of game, made by a wide ring of beaters.
Tineing, a loss.
Tint, lost.
Tope, a knoll or slight eminence.
Townfit, the foot (one end) of the town.
Townhead to the townfit, from the head to the foot (one end to the other) of the town.
Toy, a headdress worn by old women of the lower classes.
Upsides, on an equal footing with.

Vakeel, a government messenger.
Vavasour, a vassal of intermediate rank.
Velis et remis, with oars out and all sails spread.

Weans, children.
Wight, strong and active.

Yin, one.
Yule, Christmas-tide.

Zenana, the harem, or wives, with their attendants, of an Indian prince or noble.

TIPPOO SULTAN'S KORAN.

GENERAL INDEX TO THE WAVERLEY NOVELS.

KEY TO THE ABBREVIATIONS.

ABB.	Abbot.
A. GEI.	Anne of Geierstein.
ANT.	Antiquary.
B. DW.	Black Dwarf.
BET.	Betrothed.
B. LM.	Bride of Lammermoor.
CAS. D.	Castle Dangerous.
CH. CAN.	Chronicles of the Canongate.
C. RT.	Count Robert of Paris.
F. M. P.	Fair Maid of Perth.
F. NG.	Fortunes of Nigel.
G. MNG.	Guy Mannering.
HT. MID.	Heart of Midlothian.
H. WID.	Highland Widow.
IVA.	Ivanhoe.
KEN.	Kenilworth.
L. JOCK.	Laird's Jock.
L. MONT.	Legend of Montrose.
MAR'S. M.	Aunt Margaret s Mirror.
MON.	Monastery.
O. MRT.	Old Mortality.
PEV.	Peveril of the Peak.
PIR.	Pirate.
Q. DR.	Quentin Durward.
REDG.	Redgauntlet.
R. R.	Rob Roy.
S. DT.	Surgeon's Daughter.
ST. RON.	St. Ronan's Well.
TAL.	Talisman.
TAP. CH.	Tapestried Chamber.
TWO DR.	Two Drovers.
WAV.	Waverley.
WOOD.	Woodstock.

The Roman numerals refer to the bound volumes—I. to V.

ABBESS, Eveline's aunt, 603; wants to postpone the wedding, 614 . BET. IV.
—— of Wilton, 681 R. R. I.
Abbot. *See* Boniface. MON. II.
—— Ambrosius. *See* Ambrosius. . . ABB. III.
—— of St. Bride, 819, 844; under examination, 850 CAS. D. V.
—— of Unreason, 49, 167 ABB. III.
Abbot's heart, burial of, 166, 171 . . . ABB. III.
Abdallah, the Templar's squire, 509 . . IVA. II.
—— el Hadgi, 843 TAL. IV.
Abercromby, his adventure with Rob Roy, 172 WAV. I.
Aberfoil, bridge at, 527; inn, 628; village, 637, 681 R. R. I.
Absence, effects of, on a lover, 76 . . WAV. I.
Accommodation bills, 249 ST. RON. IV.
Accumulation of evils sometimes advantageous, 590 R. R. I.
Achilles Tatius (the Follower), instructs Hereward in Greek policy, 594; at court, 601; sounds Hereward, 618; meets Agelastes, 627; conspires with him, 664; hears of Count Robert's escape, 675; his plot, 688; suspected by the Emperor, 717; pardoned, 728 C. RT. V.
Ackermann, Mr., 869 MAR'S. M. IV.
Acolyte. *See* Achilles Tatius. . . C. RT. V.
Acoulouthos. *See* Achilles Tatius. . C. RT. V.
Adlard's work on Amy Robsart, 180 KEN. III.
Adolphus's Letters, 721 F. NG. III.
Adonbec. *See* Saladin. TAL. IV.
Adullam, cave of, 134 WAV. I.
—— 476 . REDG. IV.
Adversity advantageous to the Scotch character, 709 O. MRT. I.
Advertisement, Mrs. Macleuchar's lying, 366 ANT. I.
Advocate, Scotch, passing of a, 366; Herries' opinion of, 504 . REDG. IV.
Advocates, Scottish, convivial habits of, 355 G. MNG. I.
—— Faculty of, 489 B. LM. II.
Affection, erring, may require support, 793 O. MRT. I.
A forfeit! a forfeit! 288 G. MNG. I.
Agatha. *See* Bertha. C. RT. V.
Agelastes, Michael, the cynic, 601; conspiring interview with Hereward, 625, 679; and Achilles Tatius, 627; meeting with Count Robert and Brenhilda, 636; his story of the enchanted princess, 637; his retreat, 642; distrust of the Emperor, 652; conspiring with Achilles, 664; ominous meeting with the Emperor, 694; tries to undermine Brenhilda's faith, 697; strangled by the ape, 699 . . . C. RT. V.
Agitation, mental, levelling effect of, 842 O. MRT. I.
Agnes, Queen, 452 A. GEI. V.
Agramant, Frank's verses on, 585 . . R. R. I.
Agriculture, Scotch, in 1700, 377 . . . PIR. III.
Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh, 28 Q. DR. IV.
Ah, poor Louise! The livelong day, 247 F. M. P. V.
Ahriman, hymn of, 749 TAL. IV.
Aikin Drum's lang ladle, 376 . . . ANT. I.
Aikwood, Ringan, the poinder, 454 . ANT. I.
Ailie Dinmont. *See* Dinmont. . G. MNG. I.
Ailsie Gourlay, appointed nurse to Lucy, 472; evil prognostications at the wedding, 480; and at the funeral, 484 B. LM. II.
Aix, 532 . A. GEI. V.
A la mort, Waverley? 70 WAV. I.
Alan Fairford, his companionship with Darsie, 369; jokes him about the young lady, 381; first meeting with Green Mantle, 395; letter from, 396; called to the bar, 398; takes up Peter Peebles's cause, 418; pleads in the court, 424; flight, 425; his character, 456; interrogates Provost Crosbie about Darsie's disappearance, 456; visits Mount Sharon, 459; questions Maxwell, 465; receives from him a letter to Herries, 467; visit to the smugglers of Annan, 469; on board the Jumping Jenny, 475; conversation with Nanty, 476; put ashore sea-sick, 481; received at Fairladies, 484; interview with Father Buonaventure, 486; Maxwell's letter opened, 488; receives a safe-conduct, 492; meeting with Darsie at Crackenthorp's, 507; delivers his letter to Herries, 513; apprehended by Peter Peebles, 514; interview with Green Mantle, 525; recognised by Peter, 527; marriage, 531; note on, 399, 532 REDG. IV.
Alarm of invasion, note on, 520 . . . ANT. I
—— note, 143 B. DW. II.
Alas! alas! Not ours the grace, 725 . MON. II.
Alasco (Dr. Doboobie), 220; Wayland's narrative of, 226; seen by Wayland in London, 259; interview with Leicester, 261; and with Varney, 262; sent down to Cumnor, 266; in his laboratory, 278; his grand secret, 279; found dead, 349; note on Dr. Julio, 352 KEN. III.

Albany, Joseph (Rochecliffe), encounter with Holdenough, 83; sees his ghost, 84, 174. *See* Rochecliffe. WOOD. v.

—— Robert, Duke of, 244; advises the combat at Perth, 262; implicates Rothsay in Proudfute's murder, 301; and urges his seclusion after the bier-right, 312; suspected of Rothsay's murder, 356; hears of his death, 360; upbraided by the King, 370 . . F. M. P. v.

Albert Lee. *See* Lee. WOOD. v.

Aldobrand Oldenbuck, the ghost of Monkbarns, 395, 397 . . . ANT. I.

Aldrovand, Father, fears treachery, 562; charge against Flammock, 566; absolves him, 569; assists him on the battlements, 572; advice to the mutineers, 649. . BET. IV.

Alexander III. of Scotland, 822 . . CAS. D. v.

Alexiad, quotations from, 575 . . C. RT. v.

Alexius Comnenus. *See* Comnenus. C. RT. v.

Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed, 826 . . TAL. IV.

Alice, Blind, visited by Sir W. Ashton and Lucy, 382; visit from Lucy and Ravenswood, 434; apparition and death of, 450 B. LM. II.

Alice Bane Lane, at the cave, 48; in the hut, 95; how she delivered up Waverley's papers, 154 WAV. I.

Alice Bridgenorth. *See* Bridgenorth. . PEV. III.

Alice Lee. *See* Lee. WOOD. v.

Alick Polwarth, 135, 160 WAV. I.

Alison Jaup, 746, 748 S. DT. v.

Alison Wilson. *See* Wilson, Alison. . O. MRT. I.

Allan. *See* M'Aulay. L. MONT. II.

—— Major, of the Royalist army, 754 O. MRT. I.

—— Mrs., the housekeeper, surprise at the Dominie, 317 G. MNG. I.

Allan-a-Dale at Templestowe, 664 . IVA. II.

Alle guten Geistern, 451 ANT. I.

Allen, Long, 819 TAL. IV.

All is prepared, 693 C. RT. v.

Alpine scenery, 392 A. GEI. v.

Alsace, scenery of, 472 A. GEI. v.

Alsatia. *See* Whitefriars. F. NG. III.

Alsatian characters, note, 714 . . F. NG. III.

Altamont, Frederick. *See* Bunce. . . PIR. III.

Althorpe Library, 736 PEV. III.

Amazon Gaita, note on, 733 C. RT. v.

Ambrose, servant at Fairladies, 485 REDG. IV.

—— the priest, 597 IVA. II.

Ambrosius, Abbot, 47; his speech to the revellers, 51; meeting with his brother, 56; admonishes Roland at Kinross, 117; appears at Lochleven Castle, 148; at Langside, 157 . ABB. III.

Amelot, the page, 637; his authority slighted, 639 BET. IV.

American reprints, 582 C. RT. v.

Amhurst, Nicholas, note on, 171 . . . WAV. I.

A mightier wizard far, 746 MON. II.

Amours, time of tale, 788 MON. II.

Amy Robsart, Goldthred's account of, 187; interview with Tressilian, 194; description of her, 202; interview with Varney and Foster, 203; visit of Leicester, 205; begs him to declare their marriage, 207; upholds Tressilian, 209; circumstances of her youth, 216; buys from the pedlar, 269; asked by Leicester to bear name of Varney, 274; encounter with Varney, 276; drinks the potion, 280; escapes with Wayland, 281; enters Kenilworth Castle, 293; sends a letter to Leicester, 295, 300, 341; meeting with Tressilian, 297; her case before the Queen, 308; her apartment invaded by Lambourne, 316; meeting with the Queen, 319; exculpates Leicester, 321; put in confinement, 321; last interview with Leicester, 324; slandered by Varney, 326; her lost letter, 340; carried back to Cumnor, 346; her death, 350; note on, 353 KEN. III.

Anachronisms in fiction, 734 PEV. III.

Ancestry, Quaker's view of, 389 . . REDG. IV.

—— ridiculed, 120 Q. DR. IV.

And be he safe restored ere evening set, 645 R. R. I.

And did you not hear of a mirth befell, 184 WAV. I.

Anderson. *See* Montrose, Marquis of. L. MONT. II.

—— of Whitburgh, note on, 174 . . WAV. I.

And, pausing, on the banner gazed, 85 L. MONT. II.

Andrea di Ferrara, note on, 175 . . WAV. I.

Andrew, the gardener, 220 G. MNG. I.

Andrew Arnot, one of the Scotch archer guard, 30 Q. DR. IV.

Andrew Fairservice. *See* Fairservice. . R. R. I.

Andrews, a trooper, 738 O. MRT. I.

Andrew Skurliewhitter, the scrivener, 565, 591; receives the redemption money, 698; interview with Dalgarno, 699; and Colepepper, 700 F. NG. III.

And what though winter will pinch severe, 776 O. MRT. I.

And you shall deal the funeral dole, 459 PIR. III.

Anglers, visitors to the Cleikum Inn, 195 ST. RON. IV.

Angling, 783 . . PEV. III.

—— with Benjie, 374 REDG. IV.

Anglo-Indians, Christianity of, 378 . ST. RON. IV.

Anglo-Saxons in the Byzantine-Greek service, 589 C. RT. v.

Angus. *See* M'Aulay L. MONT. II.

An hour with thee, 126 WOOD. v.

Anjou, Margaret of. *See* Margaret. A. GEI. v.

Annabella, Queen, 241 F. M. P. v.

Anna Comnena. *See* Comnena. . C. RT. v.

Anna Marie, love, 651 IVA. II.

Annan, smugglers in, 469 REDG. IV

Annandale riders, 255 F. M. P. v.

Annaple, the nurse, 110 B. DW. II.

Annaple Bailzou, 342 HT. MID. II.

Anne of Geierstein, rescues Arthur on the Alps, 400; description of her, 401; takes the bow to Arthur, 408; her origin, 413, 436, 444; stops the duel, 417; at Graffslust, 425; apparition of, 429, 499; rescues Arthur from the dungeon, 458; warns Arthur on the road, 473; at Arnheim Castle, 494; interview with Arthur, 498; and Schreckenwald, 501; travels to Strassburg, 503; her memento to Arthur, 520: marriage, 568 A. GEI. v.

—— novel, 569 A. GEI. v.

Annette Veilchen at Arnheim, 492; tells Anne of Arthur's arrival, 494; chidden by her mistress, 498; her reflections, 503; settled, 568 A. GEI. v

Annot Lyle, history of, 23; description of, 25, 35; the ill-omened gift, 26; M'Eagh's story of her abstraction from Ardenvohr, 48; acts as nurse after the battle, 73; declared to be Sir Duncan Campbell's child, 76; marriage with Menteith, 81 L. MONT. II.

Annuals, 869 MAR'S. M. IV.

Anonymity of the Waverley Novels, 6 . . WAV. I.

—— 671 . CH. CAN. IV.

Anonymous writing, 527 R. R. I.

—— privileges of, 543 F. NG. III.

Another for Eachin! 366 F. M. P. v.

Anselmo, I knew, 359 ANT. I.

Anster, Hob. 110. ABB. III.

Anthony English archer, 816 . CAS D v.

Anthony-a-Wood, the antiquary, 371 . ANT. I.

Antiburghers and swearing, 273 . . G. MNG. I.

Antiquarian communications and the Post Office, 504 . IVA. II.

Antiquary, The. *See* Oldbuck, Jonathan. ANT. I.

—— novel, 669 CH. CAN. IV.

—— Author's explanations, 361 . . . ANT. I

Antiquary's shop easily established, 690 CH CAN IV.

Antiquities, low opinion of, at Fairport, 467 ANT I

Antonio the guide 392; entreats Philipson, 397 A GEI V.

Apollyon, Geierstein's steed, 439 A GEI. v.

Apology, Rashleigh's, 572 R. R. I.

—— Women's last, 747 O. MRT. I.

Apparition of Mrs C—, 532 REDG. IV.

Apparitions, note on, 867 O. MRT. I.

Apprentices of London, time of James I., 546 F NG III.

Arab cavalry 760; horses, 844, 826 . . TAL. IV.

Arboriculture, a Highland laird's, 179 HT. MID. II.

Arbroath (Fairport), note, 370; Abbey (St Ruth's), note, 432 . . ANT. I.

—— Lord Douglas's visit to, note, 246; and requisition on the monks, 264 F. M. P. v.

Archers, French body-guard, 29; quarrels, 41; banquet of, 42 Q. DR. IV.

—— Welsh, 724 . BET. IV.

Archery tournaments, 551 IVA. II.

Archibald, the Duke of Argyle's servant, 304, 307 HT. MID. II.

Archie, Duke of Roxburgh's servant, note, 520 ANT. I.

Ard, Loch, scene at, 638–645 . . . R. R. I.

Ardennes, Boar of *See* Marck . Q. DR. IV.

Ardenvohr Castle, 37 L. MONT II.

Argentin, Sieur d. *See* Comines, Philip de A. GEI. v.

Argument generally influenced by a selfish motive, 87 . . Q DR. IV.

Argyle, Duke of, connection with Rob Roy, 559, 580, 685 . . R. R. I.

—— John, Duke of, and the King, 244, 358; position at Court, 286; receives Jeanie, 287; interview with Queen Caroline, 293; visits Mrs. Glass's shop, 301; intimacy with Effie (Lady Staunton), 332 . . HT. MID. II.

—— Marquis of, influence among the Presbyterians, 7; disliked by his neighbours, 28; receives Dalgetty, 43; description of his person, 43; enters the dungeon in disguise, 47; in the fight at Inverlochy, 67 . L. MONT. II.

Arlecchino, Author's likeness to, 668 CH. CAN. IV.

Arlington, Earl of, 863, note, 961 . . PEV. III.

Armada, Spanish, wreck of, on Fair Isle, note, 535 PIR. III.

Armitage Churchyard, scene in, 453 . B. LM. II.

Armour, silk- note, 962 PEV. III.

Arms, law of, 596 C. RT. v.

Armstrong. *See* Grace. B. DW. II.

Armstrong, son of Laird's Jock, 890 L. Jock iv.
—— John, the Border champion, 890 . L. Jock iv.
—— Sir Thomas, 930 Pev. iii.
Army, character of, time of Louis XI., 2 Q. Dr. iv.
Arnauts, 271 St. Ron. iv.
Arnheim, Barons of, 436, 499 . . A. Gei. v.
—— Herman of, history of, 437; marries the Persian, 499 . . A. Gei. v.
—— Castle, 492 A. Gei. v.
Arnold. *See* Biederman. A. Gei. v.
Ars Topiaria, 371 Ant. i.
Artamenes, by Scudéry, note, 750 . O. Mrt. i.
Artavan de Hautlieu, adventure of, 637 C. Rt. v.
Arthur. *See* Philipson. A. Gei. v.
—— King, 431. *See* also Philipson, Arthur. A. Gei. v.
Arthuret, Miss Angelica, 485 . . Redg. iv.
—— Miss Seraphina, 484 Redg. iv.
Arthur's Seat, favourite resort of the Author, 176; Ht. Mid. ii.
—— before the battle of Prestonpans, 109 Wav. i.
Artists, character of, 216 St. Ron. iv.
Ashby tournament, 527; second day of, 546; banquet, 553 . . Iva. ii.
Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, 177 Ken. iii.
Ashton, Colonel, resents Ravenswood's interference, 476; challenges Ravenswood, 484 B. Lm. ii.
—— Henry, frightened at Edgar's appearance, 433; loses his dagger, 480 B. Lm. ii.
—— Lady, 376; unexpected arrival at Ravenswood Castle, 446; requests Edgar to leave the castle, 448; encourages Bucklaw and Lucy, 468; cuts the ribbon, 478 B. Lm. ii.
—— Lucy, at her lute, 380; takes her father to blind Alice, 382; rescued from the bull, 385; her thoughts of Ravenswood, 388; led by Ravenswood into Wolf's Crag, 406; her conduct to Edgar, 420; his influence on her, 425; betrothal scene, 437; love passages, 440; her reception of Bucklaw, 468; persecuted by her mother, 471; arrival of Ravenswood, 476; allows her mother to cut the ribbon, 478; her wedding day, 480; stabs her husband, 482 . . B. Lm. ii.
—— Sir William, 375; hears of the tumult at Ravenswood's funeral, 378; visit to Blind Alice, 382; meets with Ravenswood, 387; tones down his complaint against Ravenswood, 389; asks a reconciliation with Ravenswood, 420; insecurity of his estate, 422; removes Ravenswood's suspicions of him, 427; his policy towards Edgar, 440; rated by his wife, 448; menaced with an appeal, 465 . . B. Lm. ii.
Ask thy heart, 746 Mon. ii.
As lords their labourers hire, 456 . . Redg. iv.
Aspramonte, tournament of, 635 . . C. Rt. v.
Assassins, employment of, in England, note, 961 Pev. iii.
Assembly of the Scotch Kirk, High Commissioner to, 341 . Ht. Mid. ii.
Astarte, the caligrapher, 600 . . C. Rt. v.
Astrologer. *See* Galeotti Marti. . Q. Dr. iv.
—— M'Kinlay's story of, 193 . . G. Mng. i.
Astrology, belief in, 261 Ken. iii.
—— a recent believer in, and his scheme, 196; the Dominie's opinion of, 205; general belief in, 206 G. Mng. i.
—— Louis XI.'s belief in, note, 182 . Q. Dr. iv.
Atheism, insensibility of, 305 . . Ken. iii.
Athelstane at the tournament, 530; enlists on the side of the Templar, 546; his aspirations, 566; defies the Normans in Torquilstone, 596; struck down by the Templar, 614; his funeral, 659; and resuscitation, 661; relinquishes Rowena, 663 . Iva. ii.
Athole, Duke of, Rob Roy's escape from, 698 R. R. i
—— hunting, Lindsay of Pitscottie on, 62 Wav. i.
A thousand winters dark have flown, 441 Pir. iii.
Aubrey, the ghost-seer, 394 Ant. i.
Auchenbreck (Sir Duncan Campbell), 67 L. Mont. ii.
Auchmithie (Musselcrag), note, 370 . . Ant. i.
Auchtermuchty the carrier, 140 . . . Abb. iii.
Augsburg Confession in 4to, 400 . . . Ant. i.
Augusta, Lady of Berkely, on her pilgrimage, 813; at Hazelside, 814; repels De Walton, 844; interrogated by Aymer, 853; account of her vow, 855; escape from St. Bride's, 859; led by Ursula to Lord Douglas, 865; meets the Knight of the Tomb, 866; conducted to De Walton, 870; meeting at Bloody Sykes, 872; in Douglas Church, 883; De Walton surrenders, 885 Cas. D. v.
Augustine, the minstrel's boy. *See* Augusta. Cas. D. v.
Auld Robin Gray, ballad, note, 468 . Pir. iii.
Aunt Margaret, her house, 871; description of her, 871; finds an old tombstone of her ancestor, 871; her tale of the mirror, 873 Mar's. M. iv.
Austria, Archduke. *See* Leopold. . Tal. v.
Author, anonymous privileges of, 543; errors, won't persist in, 721; plan of writing, 722; source of 'old plays,' 722; claim to a seat in Parliament, 723; advantages from conversations with all and sundry, 663 . . F. Ng. iii.
—— drops his mask, 668; financial misfortunes, 668; late of beginning to publish, 671; motives of concealment, 671; avowal at Theatrical Fund Dinner, 728 . . Ch. Can. iv.
—— his account of Legend of Montrose, 4 L. Mont. ii.
—— his address to all in general, 186 . Wav. i.
—— his conclusion, 887 Cas. D. v.
—— his explanations to Ivanhoe, 495 . Iva. ii.
—— his illness during the progress of the Bride of Lammermoor, 488 B. Lm. ii.
—— his preface, 4; his fame resting on his metrical romances, 8 Q. Dr. iv.
—— his residence with the Quakers, note, 532 Redg. iv.
—— his resolution to write history, 546 . Bet. iv.
Author or novelist, Scott's opinion of, 1 . Abb. iii.
Authors, habits of jealousy of, 671 . Ch. Can. iv.
—— should not write for money, 723; the best have been voluminous, 724 F. Ng. iii.
Authorship of Waverley, 185 Wav. i.
Auto da fé of the Covenanters, 827 O. Mrt. i.
Autumn, scenery of, 312 St. Ron. iv.
Avenel, Julian, Roland's likeness to, 72; the father of Roland, 155. Abb. iii. *See also* Julian Avenel.
—— Lady, on the battlements, 6; takes Roland into her service, 11; expels him, 23 . Abb. iii.
—— Lady, seeks refuge at Glendearg, 693; studying the Book, 696; death of, 710 . . . Mon. ii.
—— Mary, 694; sees the White Lady, 694; sees her father's ghost, 696; with the two brothers, 721; description of, 729; expostulates with Halbert, 758; accuses Sir Piercie of murder, 776; visited by the White Lady, 794; her care for the Book, 804; wedding, 826 . . . Mon. ii.
—— Castle, 766 . Mon. ii.
Avery, Old, the pirate, 479 Redg. iv.
—— note, 498 . Pir. iii.
Avondhu Bridge, 527 R. R. i.
Awe, Loch, 701 H. Wid. iv.
Ay, and I taught thee the word, 723 . . Mon. ii.
Aymer, Prior. *See* Prior Aymer . Iva. ii.
—— de Valence. *See* De Valence, Aymer. Cas. D. v.
Babe-eaters, 99; note on, 518 . . Wood. v.
Babie, Alice Gray's servant, 383 . B. Lm. ii.
Baconian philosophy, influence of, 542 F. Ng. iii.
Badger, Will, Sir Hugh Robsart's attendant, 230 Ken. iii.
Badger-hunt at Charlieshope, 258 . G. Mng. i.
Bagpipers, Highland, 28 L. Mont. ii.
Bahr-Geist, 595, 724 Bet. iv.
Baiglie, Wicks of, 206; note on, 374 . F. M. P. v.
Bailie, Giles, the gipsy, 216 G. Mng. i.
Bailie Nicol Jarvie. *See* Jarvie. . . R. R. i.
Bailie of St. Mary's Convent, 717 . . Mon. ii.
Bakers' nick-sticks, note on, 520 . . . Ant. i.
Balaam's sword, anecdote, note, 357 . G. Mng. i.
Balafré, interview with his nephew, 29; character of, 33; rescues Quentin from the hangman, 38; surprised at the preference for his nephew, 56; refuses to act executioner, 139; helps to spend the astrologer's money, 152; slays La Marck, 176; makes over his claim to his nephew, 177 Q. Dr. iv.
Balchristie, Mrs. Janet, housekeeper at Dumbiedykes, 249 Ht. Mid. ii.
Balderston, Caleb. *See* Caleb. . B. Lm. ii.
Baldrick, the Saxon, 598 Bet. iv.
Baldringham House, 588; the spectre of, 597 . Bet. iv.
Baldwin, Count, the Crusader, 576 C. Rt. v.
—— Archbishop of Canterbury, 547; interview with De Lacy, 608 . Bet. iv.
Bâle, inhospitality of, 423 A. Gei. v.
Balfour, John, of Kinloch. *See* Burley. O. Mrt. i.
Baliol, Edward, 449 Redg. iv.
Baliol, Mrs. Bethune, 858; prototype of, 672; description of, 691, 695; her lodging in the Canongate, 692; reminiscences of Scotland, 696; her story of the Highland Widow, 699 Ch. Can. iv.
—— 201 . F. M. P. v.
Ball, at Holyrood, 106 Wav. i.
Ballantyne, James, his connection with the Waverley Novels, 6 . Wav. i.
Ballantynes, the printers, 488 . . B. Lm. ii.
Ballantynian ordeal, 579 C. Rt. v.
Ballenkeiroch, refuses to drink Waverley's health, 55; and Bradwardine after the battle, 117 Wav. i.
Bally-Brough, Pass of, 45 Wav. i.
Balmawhapple, Laird of, 29; quarrel at Luckie Macleary's, 31; apology to Waverley, 33; rencontre with Bradwardine, 38;

escorts Waverley from Doune, 97; death of, at Prestonpans, 117; note on, 175 . . Wav. I.
Balm wine, Grizel's specific, 382 . . . Ant. I.
Balquhidder, Rob Roy's tomb at, 691 . R. R. I.
Balruddery, Laird of, 210 G. Mng. I.
Balue, Cardinal, 45; lifts the gauntlet, 50; bad horsemanship at the boar-hunt, 53; intrigue with Crèvecœur, 54; dines with the king, 59; confined in his own cage, 166; note, 180; note, 182 Q. Dr. IV.
Balveny, Lord, a kinsman of the Earl of Douglas, 355, 411 . F. M. P. V.
Bamberg, Bishop of, 441 A. Gei. V.
Ban and Buscar, Bradwardine's dogs, 34, 159 Wav. I.
Bane Lane, Alice. *See* Alice. . . Wav. I.
—— Donald, interview in his cave, 46; raid on the bridegroom Gilliewhackit, 50; Flora's dislike to, 62; disguised as a pedlar, rescues Waverley, 91, 154; intriguing with Waverley's seal, 124; end of, and confession, 145; how he rescued Waverley, 154 . Wav. I.
Bangalore, 798 S. Dt. V.
Bankton, Lord, a Scottish judge, 370 Redg. IV.
Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 678 Ch. Can. IV.
Banner, English, dispute about, 783; watched by Kenneth, 787; stolen, 793 Tal. IV.
Banneret, 640 . Bet. IV.
Bannockburn, 886 Cas. D. V.
Banquet, at Tully-Veolan, 29 . . . Wav. I.
—— of the Scotch Guard, 42 . . Q. Dr. IV.
Banshie, the Stanley, 819 Pev. III.
Baptista Damiotti, 876 Mar's. M. IV.
Baptist's festival at Burgh Westra, 409 . Pir. III.
Bar, Scottish, convivial habits of, note, 355. *See* Advocates, and Lawyer. G. Mng. I.
Barak el Hadgi, cured by Hartley, 784; assists Hartley at Seringapatam, 797 . . S. Dt. V.
Barante, quotation from, 569 A. Gei. V.
Barbara Yellowley. *See* Yellowley. . Pir. III.
Barber's shop, time of James I., 636; at Greenwich, 665 F. Ng. III.
Barcaldine, Highland soldier, 708, 719 H. Wid. IV.
Bard, at Glennaquoich, 55, 57 . . . Wav. I.
Barefooted Friar, song, 564 Iva. II.
Bargany, Lairds of, 674 Iva. II.
Barnes, Mannering's valet, 285 . . G. Mng. I.
Barony Laigh Kirk, Glasgow, 596 . . R. R. I.
Barri, Giraldus de, preacher of Crusades, 547 Bet. IV.
Bartholomew, the false guide, 472 A. Gei. V.
Basil Olifant. *See* Olifant. O. Mrt. I.
Bastardy, the bend of, on Knockwinnock Castle, 406 . . . Ant. I.
Battle Bridge, 557; Vidal at the, 655 . Bet. IV.
Battle song of Flora Mac-Ivor, 60 . . Wav. I.
Bauldie, an old shepherd, 92 . . L. Mont. II.
—— Geddes' stable boy, 390 . . Redg. IV.
Bean in the cake, 559 A. Gei. V.
Bear, the blessed, of Bradwardine, 30; restored, 169; prototype at Glammis, note, 172 . . Wav. I.
Bear and ragged staff, the Leicester cognisance, 210, 256 . . Ken. III.
Bear-baiting, 256 Ken. III.
Bearcliff, Deacon, 224; familiarity with Glossin, 275 . . G. Mng. I.
Beauchamp, Earl of. *See* Vernon . . R. R I.
Beauffet the butler, 693 Ch. Can. IV.
Beaujeu, Comte de, 137 Wav. I.
Beaujeu and his ordinary, 598 . . F. Ng. III.
Beaumanoir, the Grand Master, 630; receives the Jew, 632; presides at Rebecca's trial, 636; his sentence, 642; at the trial by combat, 642; retires with his followers, 668 Iva. II.
Beau-seant, the Templar's banner, 547 . Iva. II.
—— 763 . . Tal. IV.
Beauty, importance of, in feudal times, 206 F. M. P. V.
—— in suffering, 427 A. Gei. V.
Be brave, she cried, you yet may be our guest, motto, 392 . . . Ant. I.
Because the hour's come, and the man, 343 G. Mng. I.
Bedesman, note on, 362 Ant. I.
Beersheba, the Butlers' cottage, 177 Ht. Mid. II.
Bees, Andrew Fairservice's, 587 . . . R. R. I.
Begg, Callum. *See* Callum. Wav. I.
Beggars, Scotch, note on, 362 . . . Ant. I.
Begum Mootee. *See* Montreville. . S. Dt. V.
'Behold the Tiber!' the vain Roman cried, 205 F. M. P. V.
Bellenden, Edith, 714; at the popinjay, 717; solicitude for Morton as prisoner, 743; gains access to him, 745; writes in his behalf to Major Bellenden, 747; on the bartizan, 749; begs Evandale's intercession for Morton, 755; her rival suitors, 756; horror at Morton's joining the rebels, 792; guarded by him in her flight to Edinburgh, 805; Cuddie's report of her betrothal to Evandale, 835; with him in the cottage where Morton was lodged, 837; hears a sigh, 839; urges Evandale not to join the rising, 857; sorrow at his death, 859; marriage, 861 O. Mrt. I.
Bellenden, Lady Margaret, at the popinjay, 714; dismisses old Mause and Cuddie, 730; gracious reception of Bothwell and the soldiers, 741; the irrepressible royal disjune, 749; requests a commission for Bothwell, 752; entreats Claverhouse to spare Morton's life, 758; determines to defend the Tower, 778; fatal fastidiousness at Fairy-Knowe, 858 O. Mrt. I.
—— Major Miles, letter from Edith about Morton's capture, 747; entreats Claverhouse to release him, 753; and to spare his life, 758; entrusted with the defence of Tillietudlem, 778; refuses to surrender, 796; evacuates the tower, 807; his death, 834 O. Mrt. I.
Bellum Bellellum, ringing in rhyme, 360 Ht. Mid. II.
Bellum Bothwellianum, MS. of, 865 O. Mrt. I.
Bend-the-Bow, English archer, 816 Cas. D. V.
Benedict's confession, 527 R. R. I.
Benjie, angling, 347, 386; run off with, 388; spy on Darsie, 502; discovered at Crackenthorp's, 516; Campbell's letter found on him, 527 . Redg. IV.
Ben Lawers, 327 F. M. P. V.
Benval, dispute about, 384 Ant. I.
Berchtold of Offringen, a hermit, 452 A. Gei. V.
Berengaria, Queen, decoys Kenneth into her tent, 789; her agitation at the result, 792; her history, 800; intercedes with the King for Kenneth, 803; conciliatory visit from the King, 815 . . Tal. IV.
Berenger, Eveline, 548; refused in marriage to Gwenwyn, 552; sees her father fall, 559; prays for a deliverer, and vow, 565; encourages the defenders of the castle, 570; on the battlements at night, 572; hears the sounds of succour, 574; receives Damian, 577; meeting with the Constable, 582; embarrassments, 584; proceeds to Gloucester with the Constable, 586; arrival at Baldringham, 588; lodged in the haunted chamber, 592; rescued from the spectre, 594; denounced by Ermengarde, 596; her interview with Randal de Lacy, 602; betrothal to the Constable, 603; marked with his bloody finger, 606; holds to her engagement, 616; her household at Garde Doloureuse, 623; dislike of their restrictions, 625; the hawking expedition, 627; seized by the banditti, 629; in the cave, 630; insists on lodging Damian in Garde Doloureuse, 634; attends him in the sick chamber, 637; offers to lead the soldiers, 639; refuses to give up Damian, 644; her dream of Vanda, 659; the Constable relinquishes her to Damian, 663 . . . Bet. IV.
Berenger, Sir Raymond, 548; refuses Gwenwyn's suit, 552; prepares to defend his castle, 553; gives battle to the Welsh, 557; death of, 559; funeral, 578 . . . Bet. IV.
Bernard Gilpin, 889 Tap. Ch. IV.
Berserkars, old Norse champions, 368 . Pir. III.
Bertha (Agatha), timely meeting with Hereward, 676; her history, 677; goes to Godfrey's camp for assistance, 689; stays Count Robert's arm, 726; marriage, 730 C. Rt. V.
Bertha of Nuremberg, her vow whom she would marry, 400 . Ant. I.
Bertram, Andrew, of Singleside, 292 . G. Mng. I.
—— Dennis, 201 G. Mng. I.
—— Donohoe, 201 G. Mng. I.
—— Godfrey, his pedigree, 201; his wife's accouchement, 203, 205; complains about the commission of the peace, 210; made a justice, and commences his ejectments, 212; quarrel with the gipsies, 214; meets the ejected gipsies, 216; last hours of, 230, 231 G. Mng. I.
—— Harry (*see also* Brown), birth of, 205, 225; his mother hangs the charm round his neck, 211; companionship with the gipsies, 215; disappearance with Kennedy, 219; Hatteraick's account of, 280; revisits Ellangowan, 302; encounter with Glossin, 304; a prisoner before Hazelwood, 307; incarcerated in Portanferry bridewell, 310; unexpectedly joined by Dandie, 313; soliloquy at the gaol window, 323; rescued from the smugglers, 325; arrives at Woodbourne, 329; examined as to his history, 330; recognised by the Dominie, 331; introduced to his sister, 333; enters Hatteraick's cave, 341; recognised by the villagers, 345; gives evidence as to his birth, 348; produces the charm, 349 G. Mng. I.
—— Lewis, 201 G. Mng. I.
—— Lucy, birth of, 220; by her father's side, 230; leaves Ellangowan, 233; her lover, 224, 235;

received as a guest at Woodbourne, 244; Julia's opinion of, 265; recognises her lost brother, 333 G. Mng. I.
Bertram, Mrs. Godfrey, accouchement of, 203, 205; anxieties about her boy, 219; dies in giving birth to Lucy, 220 G. Mng. I.
—— Mrs. Margaret, of Singleside, disposition of her property, 282–285; funeral of, 291; expectants at, 293; hears from Meg Merrilees about Harry, 299 . . G. Mng. I.
—— Sir Allan, of Ellangowan, 201 G. Mng. I.
—— the minstrel, 812; at Hazelside, 814; questioned by De Valence, 821; his tale of Alexander III., 822; and of Thomas the Rhymer, 825; examined by Walton, 841; note of warning to Augustine, 843; busy over the prophecies, 875; seeks the Bloody Sykes, 877; in the church, 879 Cas. D. v.
Berwine, the Saxon, 589 Bet. iv.
Bessy Maclure. *See* Maclure O. Mrt. I.
Best's Wynd, Edinburgh, 165 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Betrothed, the novel, 733 Tal. iv.
—— Dryasdust's opinion of, 544 . . . Bet. iv.
Betty Barnes's ghost, 722 F. Ng. III.
Bevis, the hound, aids his master, 16; succours Alice, 90; seizes the king, 93; end of, 183; prototype, 4 . Wood. v.
Bewcastle Waste, note, 353 G. Mng. I.
Bibbet and Fibbet, 57 Wood. v.
Bible, Bletson's contempt for, 78 . Wood. v.
—— James's translation, 692 . . F. Ng. III.
—— Lady Avenel's, 696; mysterious return of, 708; snatched from the fairy fire, 724; discovered by Mary, 795 . Mon. II.
Bibles and bottles of ale, 489 B. Lm. II.
Biblical language among the Covenanters, 774, 782 O. Mrt. I.
Bibliomania, 373 . Ant. I.
Bicker of Scapa, note, 537 Pir. III.
—— of St. Magnus, note, 481 . . . Pir. III.
Bickerton, Mrs., landlady at York, 258 Ht. Mid. II.
Bide-the-Bent, Rev. Mr., at Girder's cottage, 417; called in to counsel Lucy, 474; quotes Scripture, 478 B. Lm. II.
Bidmore, Augusta, connection with Cargill, 255 St. Ron. IV.
—— Lord, 254 St. Ron. IV.
Biederman, Arnold, the Landamman, 404; receives his niece Anne, 413; stops the duel, 417; refused admittance into Bâle, 423; his respect for Philipson, 446; rescues the Philipsons, 463; shut into the dungeon, 466; at the Council, 468; before Charles the Bold, 526; death, 568 A. Gei. v.
Biederman, Ernest, reproved by his father, 424 A. Gei. v.
—— Rudiger, 409, 430; death of, 566 A. Gei. v.
—— Sigismund, the slothful, 428; sees the apparition, 444; devotion for Arthur, 461; recovers the casket, 469; meets Arthur at Aix, 546; returns the casket, 548; dances at Aix, 551; aids Arthur at Nancy, 566 A. Gei. v.
Bier-right or ordeal, 298; the trial on Proudfute's murdered corpse, 309; note on, 376 F. M. P. v.
Bimbister, Margery, of Yarlshof, 396 . Pir. III.
Bindloose, Meg's lawyer, 245 St. Ron. IV.
Binks, Lady, her position and character, 213; skirmish with Lady Penelope, 216; indignation at Lady Penelope's tea-party, 332 St. Ron. IV.
—— Sir Bingo, his marriage, 201; description of, 203; bet on the salmon, 206, 210; note to Tyrrel, 209; bet on Tyrrel's social position, 211; quarrel over the wine, 221; flung aside by Tyrrel 224; challenges him, 238; at the duel, 241; laughed at as boatswain, 277; apologises to Tyrrel, 319 . . St. Ron. IV.
Birch-trees, fragrance from, 46 . . . Wav. I.
Bird in thy bosom, 31 Abb. III.
Birds, varying effect of their song, 294 . F. M. P. v.
Birds'-nesting in the Shetlands, 369, 382 Pir. III.
Birds of omen, dark and foul, 25 . L. Mont. II.
Birds of prey, 537 Pir. III.
Birrenswork. *See* Herries. Redg. IV.
Bishop, Sir H. R., composer, 28 . . Q. Dr. IV.
Bishop of Liége. *See* Liége. Q. Dr. IV.
Bishops, Scotch, expulsion of, note, 359 Ht. Mid. II.
Bittlebrains, Lord, 431 B. Lm. II.
Black Bear Inn at Cumnor, 181; reception of Lambourne and Alasco, 266; note on, 351 Ken. III.
—— at Darlington, 539 R. R. I.
Black Book, Claverhouse's, 826 . . O. Mrt. I.
Black Chanter, note, 367 F. M. P. v.
Blackchester, Countess, 603 F. Ng. III.
Black Death, 816 Cas. D. v.
Black Douglas. *See* Douglas, Lord James. Cas. D. v.
Black Dwarf, David Ritchie the prototype of, 89; legend of, 93. *See* Elshie. B. Dw. II.
Black Forest, 472 A. Gei. v.
Black Fort, scene at, 783 Pev. III.
Black Indulgence, 722; contest over, 785; note, 866 O. Mrt. I.
Black Knight. *See* Richard. Iva. II.
Blackmail, levied by Rob Roy, 621, 689 . R. R. I.
Black Priest of St. Paul. *See* Geierstein, Count Albert. . A. Gei. v.
Black Prince, Frank's verses on, 534 . . R. R. I.
Black Watch, 694 Ch. Can. IV.
Blacquernal palace, Constantinople, 598; temple of the Muses, 602; dungeons, 656, 700; Hall of Judgment, and pit of Acheron, 719 C. Rt. v.
Bladderskate, Lord, Scottish judge, 424 Redg. IV.
Blair, Clement. *See* Clement . . F. M. P. v.
Blandeville, Lady Emily, wife of Colonel Talbot, 12, 144, 167 . . Wav. I.
Blane, Jenny, the piper's daughter, 719, 861 O. Mrt. I.
—— Neil. *See* Neil Blane. O. Mrt. I.
Blattergowl, Rev. Mr., 418; strong on the Teind Court, 427; at Steenie's funeral, 471; dines at Monkbarns with Lord Glenallan, 482 Ant. I.
Bletson, Martin Joshua, commissioner, 15, 54; his *animus mundi*, 55; scared by the ghost, 57; contempt for the Bible, 78 Wood. v.
Blew Gownis, payments to note on, 363 . Ant. I.
Blind Alice. *See* Alice. B. Lm. II.
Blind Jack of Knaresborough, 403 Redg. IV.
Blind Willie, note, 966 Pev. III.
Blinkhoolie. *See* Boniface. Abb. III.
Block, Martin, the Burgundian deputy, 523 A. Gei. v.
Blondel, the minstrel, 805, 838; song of the Bloody Vest, 838, 840 . Tal. IV.
Blood, Colonel, set on Christian's track, 905; repulsed from the Tower, 915; note, 965; notes on, 962, 963 . . Pev. III.
Bloodmire Syke, 873 Cas. D. v.
Bloody Vest, song, 840, 841 Tal. IV.
Blore's *Sepulchral Antiquities*, 806 . Cas. D. v.
Blount at Saye's Court, 240; warns Raleigh of court favour, 259; his bright colours at Kenilworth, 303; scene at his knighting, 311 . . Ken. III.
Blower, Mrs., conversation with Dr. Quackleben, 217; objections to plays, 271 St. Ron. IV.
Blue-gown. *See* Edie Ochiltree. . Ant. I.
Blue Knight of Bâle. *See* Ferrand. . A. Gei. v.
Boar-hunt, 53 Q. Dr. IV.
Boar of Ardennes. *See* Marck. . Q. Dr. IV.
Bodach Glas, or Grey Spectre, 139, 163 Wav. I.
Bodkin scene, 752 Mon. II.
Boece, quoted, 725 Ch. Can. IV.
Boethius' bead-roll, 379 Ant. I.
Bohemian. *See* Hayraddin. Q. Dr. IV.
Bohemians. *See* Gipsies. Q. Dr. IV.
Bohemond, Count, of Antioch, 587, 614; bought over by Alexius, 628; warns Count Robert against the wine, 654; offers to rescue Count Robert, 691 C. Rt. v.
Bohun, Earl of Essex, Constable of England, 668 Iva. II.
Boiardo's *Orlando*, 353 Ken. III.
Boisgelin, Lady of, 543 A. Gei. v.
Bois-Guilbert, Brian de, 509; challenged by the palmer, 521; overthrown at Ashby, 535; unhorsed a second time, 549; scene with the Jewess, 584; carries off Rebecca, 615; at Rebecca's trial, 642; last interview with her, 645; conjures her to flee with him, 666; his death, 667 Iva. II.
Bolton, Stawarth, visits Glendearg, 691; disarmed by Halbert, 817 Mon. II.
Bolts and shafts (arrows), 598 . . . Iva. II.
Bondsman and freeman, 319 Iva. II.
Boniface, Abbot, troubled, 698, 703; reconciled to Eustace, 718; visit to Sir Piercie at Glendearg, 738; at dinner, 747; alarm about the invaders, 807; resigns in favour of Eustace, 809 Mon. II.
—— Abbot (Blinkhoolie), 120, 152; at Dundrennan, 163 . . . Abb. III.
Bonnet lairds, note, 375 Ant. I.
Bonstetten, Nicholas, 420, 469 . . A. Gei. v.
Bonthron, his commission against the Smith, 273; murders Proudfute in mistake, 282; covered with blood, 284; at the bier ordeal, 310; combat with the Smith, and charges Rothsay with the crime, 311; execution, 314; but rescued from the gallows, 316; presents Rothsay with a bull's head, 350; death, 356 F. M. P. v.
Book, Lady Avenel's. *See* Bible. . . Mon. II.
Book of Common Prayer, note on, 184 Wood. v.
Books, multiplicity of, 724 F. Ng. III.
—— the Antiquary's, 373 Ant. I.
Booshalloch, Niel, the herdsman, 326 F. M. P. v.
Boot, torture of the, 830 O. Mrt. I.
Booted-Head, 148 Q. Dr. IV.
Boots, homage of, by Baron Bradwardine, 118, 122 Wav. I.

Border chivalry, 888
Tap. Ch. iv.
—— country, time of Anne, 95 . . B. Dw. ii.
—— creed of vengeance, 782; peel-towers, 688; good faith, 830 Mon. ii.
—— fairs or trystes, 864
Two Dr. iv.
—— Jacobites, 143; law as to raising the country, 111
B. Dw. ii.
—— names, 258
G. Mng. i.
Borrowing days, 257
Ht. Mid. ii.
Bosphorus, 623, 709; naval fight in, 714 C. Rt. v.
Boswell's *Clan Alpin's Vow*, 85 . . L. Mont. ii.
Bothwell, Earl of, note, 718
F. Ng. iii.
—— Lady, 873: tries to pardon Forester, 882
Mar's. M. iv.
—— Sergeant, descent of, 719; wrestles with Burley, 721; applies the test oath at Milnwood, 736: offer of a commission, 752; handcuffs Morton, 757; combat with Burley at Drumclog, and death, 768; contents of his pocket, 788; verses found on, 789: note on, 863 . . O. Mrt. i.
Bothwell Bridge, 816; the battle, 818: revisited in peace, 833: ballad on, 866 . . O. Mrt. i.
Bouillon, Duke of. *See* Godfrey.
Tal. iv.; C. Rt. v.
Bourbons, origin of, 731
C. Rt. v.
Bourdeaux, scene of Frank's youth, 532 . R. R. i.
Bourne, Geordie, the Borderer, 829 . . Mon. ii.
Bowling alley, three things thrown away in, 601
F. Ng. iii.
Bowls, dispute at the game of, 464 . . Ant. i.
Bowmen, Welsh, 724
Bet. iv.
Bow of Buttisholz, 408
A. Gei. v.
Bowyer, usher of the black rod at Elizabeth's court, 248, 249 . . Ken. iii.
Boys, best way with, 580
C. Rt. v.
Bradshaigh legend, note, 171
Wav. i.
—— 541 . . Bet. iv.
Bradwardine, Baron of, 20, 28; receives Waverley, 28; his barony in malefief, 39; praised by Flora, 61; at Holyrood, 103; conducts evening service, 114; dilemma about the service of boots, 117, 122; his hiding-place, 152; is pardoned, 157; recovers the Blessed Bear, 169
Wav. i.
—— Malcolm, of Inchgrabbit, 151 . Wav. i.
—— Rose, 27: apartment at Tully-Veolan, 36-39; described by Flora, 61; letter to Waverley, 74; at Holyrood, 108; her interest in Waverley, 126, 129; assists him at Cairnvreckan, 154
Wav. i.
Brambletye House, 6
Wood. v.
Brandanes, men of Bute, note, 245 . F. M. P. v.
Braxy mutton, 464
Redg. iv.
Breadalbane, invaded by Montrose, 64
L. Mont. ii.
Breakfast, embarrassments of, at Woodbourne, 336
G. Mng. i.
—— in the olden time, 751
O. Mrt. i.
—— the Antiquary's, 398
Ant. i.
Breck, Alison, fishwife, 472
Ant. i.
—— Angus, gillie, 644
R. R. i.
Breisach, 448. *See* La Ferette . A. Gei. v.
Brenda Troil. *See* Troil.
Pir. iii.
Brengwain, the childless bride, 548 . Bet. iv.
Brenhilda, Countess, her warlike wooing, 634; first display of feminine weakness, 638; strikes down the Scythian, 641; at Agelastes' retreat, 643; insulted by the Cæsar, 647; with him in the gardens, 670; challenges him, 672; connection with Bertha, 679; defends the faith with her dagger, 698; mounts the walls of Jerusalem, 731; note on, 733
C. Rt. v.
Brerewood Lodge, seat of Richard Waverley, 13
Wav. i.
Bretagne, Duke of, 568
A. Gei. v.
Bride of Lammermoor, dictation of, 488
B. Lm. ii.
—— Author's explanation of, 669 . Ch. Can. iv.
Bridge-end drawbridge, 828
Mon. ii.
Bridgenorth, Alice, birth of, 741; taken charge of by Lady Peveril, 744; fondled by the Countess of Derby, 763; removed to Moultrassie Hall, 768; dancing before her father, 786; visit from Julian at the Black Fort, 790; interrupted by her father, 792; meeting at the Goddard Crovan, 807; at Moultrassie, 843; begs Julian to save her father, 851; intrigue against, 857, 869, 902; placed under the charge of Madame Chiffinch. 875; meets Julian, 876; and escapes, 879; disappears during the street rencontre, 882; saved from Buckingham by Fenella, 909; happy reunion, 946 Pev. iii.
—— Major, 740; his wife's death, and birth of Alice, 741; delight at seeing his daughter in health, 744; objects to the drinking of healths, 748; meets the Countess of Derby, 755; indignation at her execution of Christian, 759; arrested by Lady Peveril, 760; escapes, 764; tries to arrest the Countess, 767; his letter about Alice, 769; refuses Peveril's challenge, 775; scene with Lady Peveril, 778; interrupts Julian and Alice, 792; tries to gain over Julian, 795; warrant against, 803; interrupts the lovers, 810; shot at by Julian, 839; takes him to the Hall, 843; interview with Christian, 866; disappears at the trial, 920; gives refuge to the Peverils, 924; places Alice under Lady Peveril's charge, 946; leaves the country, 951 Pev. iii.
Bridge of Peril, Constantinople, 598 C. Rt. v.
Bridget, the Abbess, 36
Abb. iii.
Bridlesley, Joe, the horse dealer, 824 . Pev. iii.
Bridoon, Corporal, of Nosebag's troop, 144 Wav. i.
Briennius, Nicephorus, the Cæsar, 3; absents himself from Anna's reading, 600; brings news of the Crusaders' invasion, 612; liberties with Brenhilda, 647; design on Brenhilda, 666, 670; challenged by her, 672; asks forgiveness for his treason, 703; taken to task by Anna, 705; led to execution, 720; pardoned, 721 C. Rt. v.
Bring the bowl which you boast, 101 . Wood. v.
British. *See* Welsh.
Bet. iv.
Brocken, Mt., in Germany, 497 . . A. Gei. v.
Brokenburn, 376 Redg. iv.
—— Foot, dance at, 411
Redg. iv.
Broken Lances, Our Lady of, 633, 731 C. Rt. v.
Brose, Cuddie scalded with, by Jenny, 797 O. Mrt. i.
Brouze, or wedding race, 109 . . B. Dw. ii.
Brown, General, visit to Woodville, 884; encounter with the ghost, 886
Tap. Ch. iv.
—— Jonathan, landlord of the Black Bear, Darlington, 539 R. R. i.
—— landscape gardener, 391 . . Redg. iv.
—— the smuggler, attacks Woodbourne, 269; death of, 260, 277: at the Warroch Point tragedy, 347 . . G. Mng. i.
—— Vanbeest (*see also* Bertram, Harry), acquaintance with the Manerings, 228; return to England, 236; his history and wanderings, 240, 246; his excursion over the Cumberland Border, 248; at Mump's Ha', 249; rescues Dandie, 252; at Charlies-hope, 253–258; seeks shelter in Derncleugh, 259; escapes under Meg's guidance, 263; his encounter with Hazelwood, 271; cause of it, 275; goes over to Cumberland, 299; visits Ellangowan, 302 G. Mng. i.
Brown Man of the Moors, 100 . . B. Dw. ii.
—— 689 . . Mon. ii.
Brown's Square, Edinburgh, 370 . . Redg. iv.
Bruce, King Robert, his heart, 806; his cause, 823; victories of, 885, 886
Cas. D. v.
—— burial of his heart, 2, 171 . . . Abb. iii.
—— his slaughter of the MacDougals, 700
H. Wid. iv.
—— and the spider, note, 374 . . F. M. P. v.
—— The, extracts from, 809 . . Cas. D. v.
Bryce Snailsfoot. *See* Snailsfoot . . Pir. iii.
Buchan, Mrs. of the Greenlaw inn, note, 172
Wav. i.
Buckingham, Duke of, introduction to Glenvarloch, 588; insults Dalgarno, 695; note on, 716
F. Ng. iii.
—— Duke of, levee of attendants, 861; interview with Christian, 863; encounter with Alice and the King, 876; York House, 900; breaks up Christian's scheme, 902; sets Colonel Blood on his track, 905; interview with Fenella, 909; taunts the old warder, 914; instigated to rebellion by Christian, 929; calls his followers together, 931; summoned to court, 939; explains his conduct, 945; asks forgiveness, 949 Pev. iii.
—— Duke of, 181
Wood. v.
—— Mary, Duchess of, 864, 929 . . . Pev. iii.
Bucklaw at the Tod's Den, 390; challenges Ravenswood, 393; lodges in Wolf's Crag, 396; complains of his night's lodging, 398; sets off for the chase, 403; refused admittance to the Tower, 407; Laird of Girnington, 441; despatches Craigengelt to woo Lucy for him, 442; uneasy about his suit with Lucy, 467; stabbed by his bride, 482 B. Lm. ii.
Buck-stane, the, 224
St. Ron. iv.
Building feus in Scotland, 353 . . St. Ron. iv.
Bull, Tutbury, note on, 184
Wood. v.
Bullsegg. *See* Killancureit.
Wav. i.
Bull's head presented before death, 350 F. M. P. v.
Bulmer. *See* Etherington.
St. Ron. iv.
Bunce, Jack (Altamont), meets with Cleveland, 486 presses him to turn pirate, 488; consideration for the sisters Troil, 506; plans the capture of Cleveland and Minna, 520; pardoned, 529 Pir. iii.
Buncle, assists in Bonthron's rescue, 315 F. M. P. v.
Buonaventure, Father. *See* Charles Edward.
Redg. iv.
Burbage, note on, 717
F. Ng. iii.
Burgesses, slaughter of, at Tippermuir, 57
L. Mont. ii.

Burghs, protection of, end of 14th century, 232
F. M. P. v.
—— in Shetland, 677
Iva. ii.
Burgh-upon-Sands, monument at, 504 Redg. iv.
Burgh Westra, 409, 410; banquet at, 414; the dance, 421; masquerade, 424; fortune-telling at, 446 . . . Pir. iii.
Burgundian camp, 511; Parliament, 521 A. Gei. v.
Burgundy, Duke of. *See* Charles.
Q. Dr. iv.; A. Gei. v.
Burgundy to his Grace! 743
O. Mrt. i.
Burgundy *versus* champagne, 59 Q. Dr. iv.
Burleigh, Lord, advises the Queen, 343 Ken. iii.
Burley (John Balfour), wrestle with Bothwell at Neil Blane's, 721; sheltered by Morton, 723; in the hayloft of Milnwood, 725; dreaming of the Archbishop, 725; shoots Cornet Grahame at Drumclog, 767; combat with Bothwell, 768; prevented from slaying Evandale by Morton, 772; gains over Morton, 781; defends the murder of Sharp, 784; allays Morton's scruples, 787; taunts him with affection for the 'Moabitish woman,' 798; urges the execution of Evandale, 803; and rage at his release, 811; occupies Tillietudlem, 811; defends the bridge at Bothwell, 818; wounded and flees, 820; letter to Morton on his embarking for Holland, 831; in his cave at Linklater Linn, 854; burns the document about Tillietudlem, 856; attacks Evandale, pursuit and death, 859; note on, 869
O. Mrt. i.
Burns, Robert, and the beggars, 362 . Ant. i.
Buskbody, Miss Martha, critic of Old Mortality, 860 . . O. Mrt. i.
But, a word hated by the Antiquary, 399 Ant. i.
Bute, Isle of, royal territory, note, 245 . F. M. P. v.
But follow, follow me, 150
Wav. i.
Butler, the military chaplain, 787 . . S. Dt. v.
Butler, Captain, name assumed by Waverley, 144
Wav. i.
—— Reuben, corrects Saddletree's Latin, 165; made to act chaplain to the rioters, 170; tries to save Porteous, 174; history of, 177; early intimacy with Jeanie Deans, 180; obtains his licence as a preacher, 183; meets Robertson in the King's Park, 190; visits the Deanses in affliction, 193; apprehended in the Tolbooth, 201; examined, 203; visit from Jeanie on her road to London, 252; gives her a letter to Argyle, 255; appointed to Knocktarlitie church, 313; meeting with Jeanie, 317; his ordination, 320; marriage, 327; unexpected windfall, 334; meets with Staunton, 343; refuses a rich living in the English Church, 345 Ht. Mid. ii.
Butler, Stephen, trooper in Monk's army, 177
Ht. Mid. ii.
Buttisholz, battle of, 409
A. Gei. v.
Button-holding, 229
F. M. P. v.
By pathless march, 69
Wood. v.
By Pol, Tre, and Pen, 185
Ken. iii.
Byrom, Dr., poet, 448
Redg. iv.
Byron and the authorship of Waverley, 7 . Wav. i.
By spigot and barrel, 623
F. Ng. iii.
By ties mysterious, 746
Mon. ii.
Byzantium. *See* Grecian Empire. . C. Rt. v.

Cabala, Alasco professes acquaintance with the, 263 . . Ken. iii.
Caberfae, the chief of Seaforth, 708 . H. Wid. iv.
Cabestaing, William, 530
A. Gei. v.
Cadwallon, the bard, 548; declines to play, 551; war song, 552; engages to follow De Lacy to the Holy Land, 613; songs, 612, 618, 655; brings Lacy bad tidings, 646; shaken off by Lacy, 651; song of vengeance, 655; stabs Randal, 656; execution of, 658 . . Bet. iv.
Caerlaverock, resting-place of Old Mortality, note, 863. *See also* Carlaverock.
O. Mrt. i.
Cæsar, The. *See* Briennius.
C. Rt. v.
Cæsar's Tower, Kenilworth, 294 . . Ken. iii.
Caging of prisoners, 867
Cas. D. v.
Cahba, Holy Stone of Mecca, 743 . Tal. iv.
Caird of Barullion, king of the gipsies, note, 356
G. Mng. i.
Caird's Cove, scene at, 348
Ht. Mid. ii.
Cairntable hills, 806, 812
Cas. D. v.
Caleb Balderston, reception of his master and Bucklaw, 395; collects the driblets of claret, 397; uncovers the herrings, 401; consternation at seeing Lucy and her father, 406; shuts out the flunkeys, 407; announces the spoiling of the dinner, 410; requisitions on the tenantry refused, 413; visits Girder's cottage, 415; propitiated by Girder, 418; warns his master against the Ashtons, 429; forces money on his master, 430; sets fire to the tower, 458, 461; surrounded by the Girders, 459; picks up his master's feather, 485; note on, 488
B. Lm. ii.
Caliphs, 744 . Tal. iv.
Calista, Lady, 801 Tal. iv.
Callum Beg, Fergus's footpage, 65; guides Waverley, 76; fires at Waverley, 136; his death, 142
Wav. i.
Calumniator of the fair sex, 357 . . Ht. Mid. ii.
Calvert, Glenallan's groom, 488 . . . Ant. i.
Camelopard, 645 C. Rt. v.
Cameo of Cleopatra, M'Intyre's peace-offering, 467
Ant. i.
Cameron, Clan. 198
F. M. P. v.
—— Dr. A., 360
Redg. iv.
—— Richard, mode of his execution, note, 830
O. Mrt. i.
—— Sergeant Allan, shot by MacTavish, 717
H. Wid. iv.
Cameronians, averse to William III.'s toleration, 405 . . Redg. iv.
—— scruples in law matters, 224; belief in the devil, 357; Peter Walker's memorials of, 357 . Ht. Mid. ii.
—— cruelties of, 709, 783; their gibbet, note, 803; condemn Morton, 822; dislike of toleration, 832.
O. Mrt. i.
See also Covenanters.
Camlet Moat, 707 F. Ng. iii.
Campbell, Captain of the Black Watch, 708, 719
H. Wid. iv.
—— General, interrupts the Jacobite gathering, 528
Redg. iv.
—— Lady, of Ardenvohr, 39 . . L. Mont. ii.
—— Rob Roy MacGregor. *See* Rob Roy.
R. R. i.
—— Sir Duncan, of Ardenvohr, visit to Darnlinvarach, 31; affected by the sight of Annot Lyle, 35; at his castle, 37; outrage on his family by the Children of the Mist, 46; cut down at Inverlochy, 70; learns that Annot is his child, 76 L. Mont. ii.
Campbells of Argyle, Fair-service's opinion of, 580
R. R. i.
Campo-Basso, 516, 519; defends his honour, 527; treachery of, 554; deserts the Duke, 565 A. Gei. v.
—— 145 . Q. Dr. iv.
Campsie Linn, on Tay, 371
F. M. P. v.
Candlesticks, wager about, 17, 18 . L. Mont. ii.
Cannibalism of the Cavaliers, note, 185 Wood. v.
Canning, Elizabeth, 533
Redg. iv.
Canny moment, lucky fit, 204 . . G. Mng. i.
Canongate, Edinburgh, Waverley's lodgings in, 102 . . . Wav. i.
—— 200 . F. M. P. v.
—— 673, 687 Ch. Can. iv.
Can she not speak? 804
Pev. iii.
Cantrips, Jess, 477
Redg. iv.
—— Mrs., evicted by Peter Peebles, 512
Redg. iv.
Capstern, Captain, 788
S. Dt. v.
Captain Glen was our captain's name, 507
Pir. iii.
Caraboo Princess, an adventuress, 234
St. Ron. iv.
Caradoc, the minstrel, 551
Bet. iv.
Carbuncle on Ward Hill, note, 535 . . Pir. iii.
Card-playing, note on, 180
Q. Dr. iv.
Carey, Patrick, note on, 185 . . Wood. v.
Cargill, Rev. Josiah, his history, 254; his absence of mind, 257; alarm at Clara's rumoured marriage, 261; interview with Clara, 277; with Etherington, 278, 301; interrogated by Lady Penelope, 280; his part in Clara's marriage, 296; receives the confession of Hannah Irwin, 347 St. Ron. iv.
—— at the Waverley Novel meeting, 544 . Bet. iv.
Carlaverock Castle, the prototype of Ellangowan, 208. *See also* Caerlaverock.
G. Mng. i.
Carl Eberson, 109
Q. Dr. iv.
Carmichael, Sheriff of Fife, escape of, note, 722
O. Mrt. i.
Caroline, Queen, her character, 292; interview with Jeanie, 293 Ht. Mid. ii.
Carriage, time of Charles II., 714 . O. Mrt. i.
Carrick, King of, 674
Iva. ii.
Carrol, deputy usher at Kenilworth, 294 Ken. iii.
Carspharn John, Presbyterian minister, 354
Ht. Mid. ii.
Carta, you transformer of languages! 394 Ant. i.
Carthusian monk. *See* Clement Blair.
F. M. P. v.
Casket found in St. Ruth's, 438, 443, 446, 450 Ant. i.
Caspar, the stable-master, 439 . . A. Gei. v.
Cassilis, Lord, his tyrannies, 674 . . . Iva. ii.
Castell-Coch, feast at, 549
Bet. iv.
Castle Dangerous. *See* Douglas Castle.
Cas. D. v.
—— the novel, Author's disappointment in, 579
C. Rt. v.
—— Introduction to, 805
Cas. D. v.
Castle Rushin, note, 801
Pev. iii.
Castleton, Derbyshire, 739
Pev. iii.
Castle Treddles, 682
Ch. Can. iv.
Castrametation, the Antiquary's favourite subject, 367 . . . Ant. i.
Cat and Fiddle Inn, 826
Pev. iii.
Catechism, Shorter, 834
O. Mrt. i.
Catharine Glover. *See* Glover. . F. M. P. v.
Catherine, Avenel's mistress, 768; spurned from her master, 772; found on

the battlefield, 816; her infant rescued by Halbert, 818 . . Mon. II.
Catherine, Queen, 932 Pev. III.
Catherine Seyton, 38; espied by Roland in Edinburgh, 65; supposed to be at the hostelrie, 75; at Lochleven, 87; presents Roland with a rosary, 102; delight at his offer of aid to the Queen, 129; likeness to her brother, 145; marriage, 166 . . Abb. III.
Cathleen's song of 'Colley my cow,' 61 . Wav. I.
Catholics, their horses appropriated, note, 552 R. R. I.
Catiline, Roman politician, 476 . . Redg. IV.
Cattle, Caledonian wild, 831, 833, 888 Cas. D. V.
—— 385 . B. Lm. II.
Cattle-driving, 859 Two Dr. IV.
Cattle, lifted, restored by Rob Roy, 686 R. R. I.
Cattle-lifters, respected by the Highlanders, 49 Wav. I.
Cauld is my bed, Lord Archibald, 307 Ht. Mid. II.
Cavaliers, joyous character of, 750; treatment of, after the Restoration, 762; note on, 952 . Pev. III.
—— cannibalism of, note, 185 . . Wood. V.
—— Hey for. *See* Hey for Cavaliers.
Caxon, Jacob, the barber, 378; plaint about the wigs, 379; gives the alarm about the Wardours' route by the sands, 386; exhorts Oldbuck to be careful of his life, 390; his offices declined by Lovel, 398; arranges Oldbuck's wig, 466; retails gossip about Lord Glenallan at Monkbarns, 486; mistakes the beacon, 514, 516 Ant. I.
—— Jenny, inquiring at the post-office, 411; anxiety about Taffril's gun-brig, 486, 493 . . Ant. I.
Caxton's *Game at Chess*, 363 . . . Ant. I.
Cayley, John, note on, 953 Pev. III.
Cedric the Saxon, 513; prefers Saxon to Norman, 519; at the tournament, 530; disowns his son, 555; drinks to Richard, 556; returns home, 565; his aspirations, 566; captured by De Bracy, 569; incarcerated in Torquilstone, 574; interview with Ulrica as a priest, 591; and with Front-de-Bœuf, 594; his escape, 595; rewards Wamba and Gurth, 617; refuses to kneel to Richard, 660 . . . Iva. II.
Cell of St. Dunstan's, 559; entered by Locksley, 571 Iva. II.
Celts, the Antiquary's contempt for, 468 Ant. I.
Century White, 749 Pev. III.
Ceremony as troublesome as a stumbling horse, 777 O. Mrt. I.
Cervantes' 'Open your gates, incomparable Princess,' 65 Wav. I.
Chalet, the Landamman's, 404 . . A. Gel. V.
Chalmers, James, 670 Ch. Can. IV.
Chalmers' *Life of Queen Mary*, 157 . Abb. III.
Chamberlain, Dame, 838 Pev. III.
—— Matt, 838 . Pev. III.
Chambers, Robert, his account of David Ritchie, 89 . . B. Dw. II.
Champagne *versus* burgundy, 59 Q. Dr. IV.
Champion demanded by Rebecca, 641 . Iva. II.
Champion, famed for warlike toil, 466 . . Pir. III.
Chapel of Ellieslaw, scene in, 137 . B. Dw. II.
Chapel of Engaddi, 754 Tal. IV.
Chaplet, Cleveland's, 436, 516, 528 . . Pir. III.
Chapman's drouth, note, 387 Pir. III.
Chapter, long or short one, 62 . . . Wav. I.
Character, discrimination of, 567 . . . R. R. I.
Characters of the novels, Author's explanation, 669 Ch. Can. IV.
Charegite or assassin, 814; enters the camp as a marabout, 819; attempt to stab the King, 820 Tal. IV.
Charing Cross, time of James I., 565 . F. Ng. III.
Charity, distribution of, at Glenallan House, 459 Ant. I.
—— parochial, 354 St. Ron. IV.
Charles I., Cromwell's apostrophe on, 45; betrayal of, note, 193 . Wood. IV.
—— his relations with Scotland, 8 . L. Mont. II.
Charles II., civil war, time of, 740; description of, 871; arrested by Fenella's dancing, 872; interview with Alice and Buckingham, 876; visit to the Tower, 913; favour asked for Peveril, 915; character of, 932; receives the Countess of Derby, 934; hears from the dwarf of Buckingham's treason, 936; accepts the duke's explanation, 945; Colonel Blood's attempt against, note, 966 Pev. III.
—— disguised as a gipsy woman, encounters Alice Lee, 90; drops a ring into her pitcher, 91; tries to enter the lodge by the window, 93; disguised as Louis Kerneguy, 96; waited on by Albert Lee, 102; his epicurean philosophy, 108; profligate logic, 112; encounter with Everard, 117; separated by Sir Henry, 120; receives Markham's challenge, 125; discloses himself to Alice, 126; the duel, 136; reveals himself to Markham, 138; leaves Woodstock in Albert Lee's clothes, 158; restoration, 181; last meeting with Lee, 182 Wood. V.
Charles, Prince of Wales, in the Park, 612; Nigel's prayer to, 670 F. Ng. III.
Charles Edward, Prince, at Holyrood, 100; interest in Waverley, 121; separates the combatants, 137; hunting of, note, 155; his position at Prestonpans, note, 174; defence of, by the Author, note, 175 Wav. I.
—— his subsequent life, 359; love of prerogative, 361; interview with Alan at Fairladies, 486; breaks open the letter, 488; his lady interrupts the interview, 491; meeting with the conspirators at Crackenthorp's, 520; his departure, 529 . Redg. IV.
Charles the Bold, character of, 15; meeting with Louis XI., 124; alarming manner of speaking, 126; at the banquet, 131; receives the news from Liége, 133; fury at La Marck, 145; the grand council, 155; reception of La Marck's herald, 159; raptures over his chase, 162; offers Isabelle to the slayer of La Marck, 168; at the siege of Liége, 173; note, 181 . . Q. Dr. IV.
—— his exactions on the Swiss, 419; interview with Philipson, 511; his dreams of Provence, 513; disguised as a Walloon, 517; opposed by his parliament, 521; spurns the Swiss deputies, 526; roused by Philipson, 557; summoned by the Secret Tribunal, 560; death of, 566; note on, 571 . A. Gel. V.
Charles the Simple, murder of, 136 . Q. Dr. IV.
Charlie, Fighting, of Liddesdale, note, 351 G. Mng. I.
—— 866 . Two Dr. IV.
Charlies-hope, reception of Dandie and Brown at, 253; badger-hunt at, 258 G. Mng. I.
Charlot, a messenger, 128 Q. Dr. IV.
—— the glee-maiden's spaniel, 254, 256, 350, 371 F. M. P. V.
Charteris, Sir Patrick, origin of his family, 232; character and quality of, 234; receives the burghers, 238; at the council, 296; offers to be Maud Proudfute's champion, 299; appears before the King, 303; urges the Glovers to fly, 321; takes Catharine under his protection, 324; Dwining's forged letter thereon, 346; conveys bad news to Henry, 357 F. M. P. V.
Charter of freedom, St. Paul's, 762 O. Mrt. I.
Chase, Norman language of, 520 . . . Iva. II.
—— in Douglasdale, 832 Cas. D. V.
—— of the boar, 52 Q. Dr. IV.
Chastity of the Church, rape on the, 832 O. Mrt. I.
Chatham, Earl, schemes of raising Highland regiments, 712 H. Wid. IV.
Chatham, Earl, his maladministration, 505 Redg. IV.
Chattan, Clan, historical identity of, 198; proposed combat with Clan Quhele, 262; territory of, 324; a man amissing, 340, 360; Henry Wynd engaged as a substitute, 364; the battle, 364; notes, 374, 378 . . F. M. P. V.
Chattanach, MacGillie, 362 F. M. P. V.
Chatterly, Simon, the curate, Meg's opinion of, 199; description of, 204; reception of, at the Cleikum, 207; note of invitation to Tyrrel, 208 St. Ron. IV.
Chaubert, Chiffinch's cook, 833; upset by Lance Outram, 860 . Lev. III.
Chaucer, in the Monkbarns tapestry, 396 Ant. I.
—— the well of English undefiled, 827 . Pev. III.
—— his words haunt our ears, 78 . Wood. V.
Cheese-making, Scotch, 29 Ht. Mid. II.
Chevalier, Young. *See* Charles Edward. Wav. I.
—— St. George, invasion by, 143 . B. Dw. II.
—— his army, note, 174 Wav. I.
Chief, Highland, description of, 44, 52; hospitality required from, 54 Wav. I.
Chiefs, Highland, 27 L. Mont. II
Chiffinch, Madame Kate, receives Fenella and Peveril, 873; and Alice, 875; dissension with Chiffinch, 912; cut by the King, 913 Pev. III.
—— Tom, at the hostelry, 832; lets out the secret, 857; stopped by Julian on the road, 860; dissension with his lady, 912; sent to Buckingham with the King's summons, 932; tries to encourage the duke, 940 . Pev. III.
Child-murder, the judge's charge on, in Effie's case, 241; statutes on, 357 Ht. Mid. II.
Children of the Mist, outrage on the lady of Ardvoirlich, 4; their feud with the M'Aulays, 21; outrage on Campbell of Ardenvohr, 46; connection with the MacGregors, 85 L. Mont. II.
Chillingham Castle, 888 Cas. D. V.
Chiltern Hundreds, note, 283 G. Mng. I.
Chimney (lum) cleeks, note on, 354 . G. Mng. I.
Chipping Norton, tract on apparitions, 374 Ant. I.
Chirupping Club, 194 St. Ron. IV.
Chivalry, decadence of, time of Louis XI., 1 Q. Dr. IV.
—— notions of, 606 Iva. II.
—— the Glover's opinion of, 213 . . F. M. P. V.
Chopin, note, 293 Ken. III.
Christian, Colonel William (Dhône), story of, 731; execution of, 758; portrait of, 784; note, 953; ex-

culpation of, note, 967; metrical lament over, note, 972 . . . Pev. III.
Christian, Edward (Ganlesse), portraiture of, 732; meets Julian at the horse-dealer's, 824; and at the Cat and Fiddle, 826; rides along with Julian, 829; takes him to the hostelry and meets Chiffinch there, 832; at Moultrassie Hall, 844; interview with Buckingham about Alice, 864; and with Bridgenorth, 866; character of, 867; turned off the scent by Buckingham, 903; meeting with Julian at the conventicle, 927; instigates Buckingham to rebellion, 929; stormy interview with Zarah, 941; before the King, 949; claims Zarah as his daughter, and banished, 950; note on, 960; conspiracy of, note, 966; exculpation of, note, 967 Pev. III.
—— George, note, 973 Pev. III.
—— Mrs. William, at Kirk Truagh, 786 Pev. III.
Christie, Dame Nelly, 554; elopement, 674; with Dalgarno, 705; taken back, 708 . . F. Ng. III.
—— John, altercation with Moniplies, 661; demands back his wife, 674; recovers her, 708 F. Ng. III.
Christie of the Clinthill, 711; fettered in the monastery, 716; freed by Eustace, 717; conversation with Sir Piercie, 732; conducts Halbert and Warden into Avenel Castle, 767; brings Warden prisoner to Glendearg, 795; makes terms for his master, 805; death of, 817 . . Mon. II.
Christie Steele, 683; defames Croftangry's character, 686 Ch. Can. IV.
Chronicles of the Canongate, 857; Author's plan of, 672 Ch. Can. IV.
—— introduction to second series, 200 F. M. P. V.
Church, rape on the chastity of the, 832 O. Mrt. I.
—— waxing rich and her doctrines dim, 266 F. M. P. V.
—— and State, question of, among the Covenanters, 810 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— preferment, Butler's ideas of, 345 Ht. Mid. II.
—— presentations, Deans's scruples on, 314 Ht. Mid. II.
—— vassals of, 687 Mon. II.
—— Scotch, service, 597 R. R. I.
Churches only tall houses, 147 . . Wood. V.
Ciar Mohr, Dugald, at Glenfruin, 683; his gravestone, note, 695; outrage by, note, 695 R. R. I.
—— 5 . . L. Mont. II.
Cicely Gosling. *See* Gosling, Cicely . Ken. III.
Circassian cavalry, 845 Tal. IV.
Cities, transplanting of, 585 C. Rt. V.
City Guard of Edinburgh, 160 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Civil and religious freedom, 728 . . O. Mrt. I.
Civility, Scottish, 421 Redg. IV.
Civil war, 1645, female camp-followers in the, 89 Wood. V.
—— 740 . . Pev. III.
—— guilt of, 808 O. Mrt. I.
—— like a cockatrice, 662 R. R. I.
Clachan of Aberfoil, 628 R. R. I.
Clan Alpin's Vow, a poem by Boswell, 85 L. Mont. II.
Clans, Highland, withdrawal of bounties from, 622 . . . R. R. I.
—— at the battle of Prestonpans, 110–116; helots among, 110 . Wav. I.
—— barrier battle at Perth, 198, 262, 302, 340, 360; notes, 374, 378. *See also* Quhele and Chattan. F. M. P. V.
—— surnames, note, 354 G. Mng. I.
Clara Mowbray, described by Meg, 200; joins the company at the Well, 219; warns Tyrrel, 223; meets him on her way home, 226; in her parlour, 234; rumoured marriage, 261; acts Helena, 274; addressed by Cargill, 277; tells her brother about the shawl, 282; interview with him about Etherington's proposal, 285; begs for liberty, 287; interview with Etherington, 288; connection with Tyrrel and Etherington, 292; false marriage, 296, 341; Hannah Irwin's confession about her, 325; slandered at the tea-party, 333; last interview with her brother, 335; threatened with death, 336; appears before Hannah Irwin, 346; dies in Tyrrel's room, 347 St. Ron. IV.
Classes mixed, 107 Wood. V.
Claud Halcro. *See* Halcro. Pir. III.
Claverhouse, 751; refuses to liberate Morton 753; condemns him to be shot, 758; at the battle of Drumclog, 765; his retreat, 769; sorrow over the death of his nephew, 779; repels the rebels at Glasgow, 800; gives no quarter at Bothwell Brig, 819; rescues Morton from the Cameronians, 823; conversation with Morton, 825; sees him embarked for Holland, 831; as Viscount Dundee, 832; note on, 864; proof against shot, note, 865; letter to Lord Linlithgow on the battle of Drumclog, note, 866; his black horse, 751; concern for, 823; note on, 865 . . O. Mrt. I.
Clavigeri, or club-bearers, 373 . . . Ant. I.
Clegg, Holdfast, the Puritan millwright, 751 Pev. III.
Cleikum Inn, 193 St. Ron. IV.
Cleishbotham, Jedediah, 703 O. Mrt. I.
—— 92 . L. Mont. II.
—— introductory address, 578 . . C. Rt. V.
Clement Blair, Carthusian monk, heretical opinions of, 217; confessing Catharine, 266; tells her of Rothsay's admiration of her, 267; acknowledges her rebuke, 269; taken into Conachar's protection, 270; interview with her father on the hill, 341 F. M. P. V.
Clerk, Lady Mary, of Penicuik, 829 . . Mon. II.
—— Sir John, of Penicuik, note, 519 . Ant. I.
Cleveland, Clement (Vaughan), saved from the wreck, 392; tells his story, 396; and presents Mordaunt with a fowling-piece, 397; domiciled at Burgh Westra, 399; meeting with Mordaunt there, 411; attentions to the sisters, 415; rescues Mordaunt, 432; difference with him about the chaplet, 436; his fortune told, 449; love-meeting with Minna, 451; tale of his life, 455; serenades Minna, 457; meets with Bunce, 486; stabs Mordaunt, 458, 490; arrested by the pedlar, 493; on board the Pirate, 497; negotiates with the town council, 500; meets Minna in the cathedral, 513; and with Norna, 515; again meets Minna at Stennis, 523; but surprised by the Pirate crew, 524; story of his birth, 527; his fate, 530; his songs, 457, 458 Pir. III.
Clients' complaints, 296 G. Mng. I.
Clifford, Rosamond. 127 Wood. V.
Clifford, Sir R. de, 806 Cas. D. V.
Clifton, skirmish at, 140–142; M'Pherson's account of, note, 176 . Wav. I.
Climent, cooper of Girthon, 707 . . O. Mrt. I.
Clink, Jem, the warder, 887 Pev. III.
Clinthill. *See* Christie of the . . . Mon. II.
Clippurse, Lawyer, 11, 165 Wav. I.
Clippurse and Hookem, attorneys, 436 . Wav. I.
Clock scene, Morton in the hands of the Cameronians, 822 . . O. Mrt. I.
Cloght-dearg, an evil spirit, 720 . . H. Wid. IV.
Clutterbuck, Captain, Author's letter to, 4 Abb. III.
—— introductory epistle from, 832; interview with the Benedictine respecting Melrose Abbey, 834; Author's answer to, 838 Mon. II.
—— introductory epistle, 720 . . F. Ng. III.
—— at the Waverley Novel meeting, 544; expels the reporter, 546 Bet IV.
Clyde, near Craignethan, 750; swum by Morton, 843 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— beauties of, 308, 310 Ht. Mid. II.
Clydesdale, upper ward of, 714 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— vale of, 684 Ch. Can. IV.
Cnichts, among the Saxons, 514 . . . Iva. II.
Coach, Queensferry, 365 Ant. I.
Cobb, Ephraim, the cobbler Ironside, 39 Wood. V.
Cockade scene, 69 Wav. I.
Cœur de Lion. *See* Richard. Tal. IV.
Coins of Shetland, note, 537 Plr. III.
Coldinghame churchyard, 453 . . B. Lm. II.
Coleby, Major, warder of the Tower, 914 Pev. III.
Coleman, of the Popish Plot, execution of, note, 960 Pev. III.
Colepepper, Captain, rencontre at the ordinary, 600; visit to Trapbois, 645; murders him, 654; interview with the scrivener, 701; death of, 708 F. Ng. III.
Colkitto, 19; Milton's reference to, 84 L. Mont. II.
Colley my cow, Cathleen's song, 61 . . Wav. I.
Collier and salter bondsmen, note, 534 Redg. IV.
Collins, Joe, 'the good devil of Woodstock,' 3 Wood. V.
Colmslie Tower, 682, 828 Mon. II.
Cologne, Archbishop of, 550 . . A. Gel. V.
Colquhoun's feud with the MacGregors, 682 R. R. I.
Colvin, Henry, 511; his estimate of Charles's troops, 516; brings bad news to Philipson, 554; killed at his guns, 565 A. Gel. V.
Colwyn Castle, 548 Bet. IV.
Come forth, old man—Thy daughter's side, motto, 11. . . Wood. V.
Comines, Philip des, meeting with Crèvecœur, 122; brings unpleasant news, 132; interview with Louis, 146; called 'Booted-Head,' 149; notes on, 181, 183 . Q. Dr. IV.
—— 556; quoted, 572 A. Gel. V.
Commercial travellers, Meg's dislike to, 196 St. Ron. IV.
Commissioners, Parliamentary, at Woodstock, 3; in the Lodge, 68; consternation of, 71; superseded, 80; note, 188 Wood. V.
Common Prayer, Book of, abhorred by the Covenanters, 822 . O. Mrt. I.
—— note on, 184 Wood. V.
Comnena, Anna, in her Temple of the Muses, 600; reads the Retreat of Laodicea, 605; presents Hereward with a ring,

610; affected conversation with Count Robert, 646; indignation at her husband, the Cæsar, 684; her visit to Ursel's dungeon, 700; begs Hereward's protection, 701; sharp words with the Cæsar, 705; her defence of historical partiality, 730; her Alexiad, 575, 576 . . C. Rt. v.
Comnenus, Alexius, accession to the throne, 586; reception of Hereward, 601; holds a council on the Crusaders' invasion, 620; chooses a middle course, 629; Count Robert occupies his throne, 632; his plot against Count Robert, 650; and ideas of Agelastes, 652; in secret council, 653; the banquet, 654; drugs Count Robert, 656; informed of the Cæsar's conspiracy, 683; and countermines it, 684; ominous meeting with Agelastes, 694; confession to the Patriarch, 695; visits Ursel in his dungeon, 700; forgiven by him, 712; sharp interview with Achilles, 717; pardons the Cæsar, 721; presents Ursel to the people, 724; end of, 731; biography, 576 C. Rt. v.
Compass, mariner's, 394 A. Gei. v.
Complain not of me, 746 Mon. ii.
Compliments, to ladies, 547; baiting the hook for, 585 R. R. i.
Conachar (Eachin MacIan) in attendance on his master, 207; stabs at the Smith, 212; leaves for the hills, 225; meeting with Catharine and her confessor at Kinnoul, 269; early history of, 323; his father's obsequies, 328; invested with the clan chieftainship, 333; pleads with Simon Glover for the hand of his daughter, confesses himself a coward, 337; refuses to kill the white doe, and confesses cowardice to Torquil, 339; refuses to withdraw from the combat, 363; supported by his foster-brothers, 'another for Eachin,' 366; flight, 368; his last words to Catharine, and end, 372 . F. M. P. v.
Conan the jester, note on, 173 . . . Wav. i.
Concealments for theft, 553 Redg. iv.
Conclusion, Author's, 887 Cas. D. v.
Confederacy the soul of jugglery, 306 F. M. P. v.
Coningsburgh Castle, 429, 677 . . . Iva. ii.
Conqueror, William the, 616 C. Rt. v.
Conrade of Montserrat, 735; dissuades Richard against the Hakim, 775; plots against Richard, 779; incites Leopold against him, 782; torn down by the hound, 832; defied to combat, 834; his confession interrupted, 849; overthrown in the lists, 851; stabbed by the Grand Master, 855 Tal. iv.
Conscience, different kinds of, 731 O. Mrt. i.
—— strange vagary of, 348 Ken. iii.
—— wounds of, carry their own balsam, 562 R. R. i.
—— Puritan appeals to, 26 Wood. v.
—— kings, 71 Q. Dr. iv.
—— Glossin's, 282 G. Mng. i.
Consolation from disproving the cause of distress, 555; superiority in, 703 F. Ng. iii.
—— unwelcome, 412 Pir. iii.
Constable, Archibald, 720 F. Ng. iii.
—— George, prototype of Oldbuck, note, 362 Ant. i.
Constable of Chester. *See* Lacy, Hugo de Bet. iv.
Constable St. Paul, 24 Q. Dr. iv.
Constantine, Emperor, 586; story of his remorse, 719 C. Rt. v.
Constantinople, advantages of the site, 585; Golden Gate of, 588; Bridge of Peril, 598; view from, 709; lists of, 712, 722; note on, 733 C. Rt. v.
Contay, M. de, Burgundian courtier, 490, 556 A. Gei. v.
Contempt will pierce a tortoise shell, 904 Pev. iii.
Convalescence, Scotch idea of, note, 440 . Ant. i.
Conventicle, Covenanters', 760 . . . O. Mrt. i.
Convention of Estates, Scottish, 8 . L. Mont. ii.
Convent life, Die Vernon's ideas of, 544 R. R. i.
Conventual libraries, lamentation over the destruction of, 420 Ant. i.
Conversation, with ladies, 547; art of, 567 R. R. i.
—— pith of, 9 Q. Dr. iv.
—— with inferiors, 663 F. Ng. iii.
Convivial habits of the Scottish bar, note, 255 G. Mng. i.
Cookery, French, note, 717 F. Ng. iii.
—— Meg Dods', 354 St. Ron. iv.
Cooper Climent of Girthon, 707 . . O. Mrt. i.
Cope, General Sir John, 114; note, 174 Wav. i.
Copely, Sir Thomas, chamberlain at Woodstock, 213 Ken. iii.
Copmanhurst, Clerk of. *See* Friar Tuck. Iva. ii.
Cormac, Donald, a Highland chief, 261 F. M. P. v.
Cornwall chivalry, 431 A. Gei. v.
Coronation of George III., scene at, 499; note, 534 Redg. iv.
Corporal Tims, of Waverley's troop, 112, 124 Wav. i.
Corsand, justice of the peace, 347 G. Mng. i.
Cotton, Old, 373 Redg. iii.
Couci, Ingelram de, English soldier, 409 A. Gei. v.
Council at Peronne, 155 Q. Dr. iv.
Council of the Crusaders, 812; over Conrade's treason, 833 . . Tal. iv.
Counterblast to tobacco, 554 F. Ng. iii.
Count Robert of Paris. *See* Robert. . C. Rt. v.
—— the novel, Author's disappointment with, 579 C. Rt. v.
Country gentlemen, effect of political persecution on, 61 . . . Wav. i.
County Guy, song, 28 Q. Dr. iv.
Courage, and curiosity, 94 Wav. i.
—— and presence of mind, 761 . . . Pev. iii.
—— more required to run away than to fight, 127 Wav. i.
—— of the Covenanters, 776 O. Mrt. i.
—— Quaker's, 432 Redg. iv.
Coursing the roe at Tully Veolan, 35 . Wav. i.
Court, Peebles's cause in the, 424 . Redg. iv.
Courtier, requisites for a, 211 . . . Ken. iii.
Court of Louis XI., levee at, 44 . Q. Dr. iv.
Court of Privy Council, Covenanters under examination in, 828 O. Mrt. i.
Court of the Gentiles, 772 O. Mrt. i.
Courtship, Dutch, 327 G. Mng. i.
Cousins, marriage between, 99 . . B. Dw. ii.
Covenant, Solemn League and, 7 . L. Mont. ii.
—— controversy on, 225 Ht. Mid. ii.
—— Burley's defence of, 726; the Cameronian 'Magna Charta,' 810, 833 . . O. Mrt. i.
Covenanters' (*see* also Cameronians) tombs, 708; hostility to the Government, 713; conventicle, 760; at the battle of Drumclog, 765; disunion afterwards, 774; preaching among, 775; courage of, 776; divergence of opinions of, 783; council after Drumclog, 785; disunion among, after repulse from Glasgow, 800; cruelties of, 803; feud between the moderate and extreme, 812; day of humiliation before battle of Bothwell Brig, 816; condemn Morton, 822; led to execution, 827; examined before the Privy Council under torture, 830; feuds among, note, 866; retreats and predictions of, notes on, 868 . O. Mrt. i.
— intercourse with invisible world, 357 Ht. Mid. ii.
Covenanting persecutors, note, 532 . Redg. iv.
Coventry, custom of fighting the Danes at, 338 Ken. iii.
Cowardice, Conachar's, 197, 337, 339, 363, 372 F. M. P. v.
Cowley's *Guardian*, or Cutter of Coleman Street, 400 . . Redg. iv.
Coxe, Capt., humorist of Coventry, 338 Ken. iii.
Crabtree, the seedsman, 415 Ant. i.
Crackenthorp, Doll, 481 Redg. iv.
—— Joe, 481; meeting of conspirators in his tavern, 507; the council, 517 Redg. iv.
Craigburnfoot, tragedy at, 475 . . . Ant. i.
Craigdallie, Bailie Adam, 220; at the council, 229 F. M. P. v.
Craigengelt, at the Tod's Den, 390; glad to receive Bucklaw back again, 408; refused admittance by Ravenswood, 426; carouse with Bucklaw, 441; despatched to solicit Lucy's hand, 442; reviving Bucklaw's courage, 467 B. Lm. ii.
Craignethan Castle, 750 O. Mrt. i.
Crags of Knockwinnock bay, 389 . . Ant. i.
Cramfreezer, Lady, 50 Wav. i.
Cramp, Corporal, with Capt. Thornton, 636 R. R. i.
Cranbourne, Sir Jasper, 751; brings the challenge to Bridgenorth, 774 Pev. iii.
Crane, Alison, of the Crane inn, Marlborough, 228 Ken. iii.
—— Master, of the Crane Inn, 228 Ken. iii.
Crank, Dame, the papist laundress of Marlborough, 228 . . Ken. iii.
Cratur, The. *See* Dougal Macgregor. R. R. i.
Crawford, Earl of, 'Tiger Earl,' 304 F. M. P. v.
—— Lord, 40; at the banquet of the Scotch Guard, 42; arrests Orleans and Dunois, 77; at Peronne, 127; defends the King, 134; prevails on Quentin not to resign his commission, 152; finds Balafré with La Marck's head, 176 Q. Dr. iv.
Creagh on Tully-Veolan, 40 . . . Wav. i.
Creighton's *Memoirs* quoted, 725 Ch. Can. iv.
Creswell, Mother, funeral oration, 928 Pev. iii.
Crèvecœur, the Burgundian ambassador, 48; throws down the gauntlet, 50; intrigue with Balue, 54; dines with the King, 59; falls in with Quentin and Isabelle, 116; questions Quentin, 118; his vow of vengeance on La Marck, 118; communicates to Charles the intelligence from Liége, 133; denies French bribery, 146; dislike to Quentin's meeting with Isabelle, 153 Q. Dr. iv.
—— Countess of, stands up for her sex, 157 Q. Dr. iv.

Crichope Linn, Dumfriesshire, 868 O. Mrt. I.
Crieff, kind gallows at, 173 Wav. I.
Crime, aristocratic, view of, 307 . G. Mng. I.
Criminals fond of sympathy, 685 . . F. Ng. III.
Crimping for India, 772 S. Dt. V.
Crispus, tale of, 719 C. Rt. V.
Critics as brazen serpents, 704 . . O. Mrt. I.
Crocodile, the, described, 645 . . C. Rt. V.
Croftangry, Chrystal, Author's explanation, 672; enters the sanctuary of Holyrood, 673; revisits his paralytic friend, 675; his pedigree, 677; revisits Glentanner, 682; Christie Steele defames him, 683; settles in the Canongate, 687; his mode of life, 690; proposes to publish, 691; visits Mrs. Baliol, 693; introduces another tale, 857 Ch. Can. IV.
—— his solicitude about his MS., 737, 802 S. Dt. V.
Crofts, Master, the Dwarf's antagonist, 891 Pev. III.
Cromwell, Oliver, his predominance, 34; personality, 39; and religion, 40; interview with Wildrake, 40; reflections on Charles I., 45; warrant to clear Woodstock Lodge, 46; his signature, 79; unexpected arrival at Woodstock, 147; lunged at by Wildrake, 150; interrupts the burial of Tompkins, 162; his apostrophe, 164; attack on the lodge, 165; questions Sir Henry, 166; search for the King, 168; discovers Albert Lee, 172; pardons the prisoners, 177 Wood. V.
Crookstone Castle, 162, 170 Abb. III.
Crosbie, Mrs., predominating influence of, 461 Redg. IV.
—— Provost, letter from, 426; interrogated by Alan about Darsie, 456; the dinner, 460; a plain man, 467 . . Redg. IV.
Cross, Greek and Latin forms of, 622 C. Rt. V.
Crossbite, the advocate, 581 Redg. IV.
Crossraguel, Abbot of, 674 Iva. II.
Crown of the causeway, 62 Abb. III.
Croye. *See* Hameline *and* Isabelle. Q. Dr. IV.
Cruden, Alexander, author of the *Concordance*, note, 3 . . . Wav. I.
Cruelty, effects of, on the mind, 645 . . R. R. I.
Cruickshanks, Ebenezer, 77 Wav. I.
Crusaders, unwieldy armour of, 738; dissolute licence of, 760; disunion among, 764; Templars' interests in, 778; council of, 812, 833; procession of the princes, 831 . Tal. IV.
—— suspicious children of, 539 . . . Bet. IV.
Crusaders, Alexius's terms with, 621; ceremony of acknowledging him suzerain, 630; camp at Scutari, 689; reining back their horses, 693 . C. Rt. V.
—— Tales of. *See* Tales. Bet. IV.; Tal. IV.
Crusader's return, Bradshaigh legend, note, 171 Wav. I.
—— song, 563 Iva. II.
Crusades, preaching of, 547; Welsh not favourable to, 547; Baldwin's enthusiasm for, 619; Flammock's views of, 635 Bet. IV.
—— Saladin's opinion of, 746 . . Tal. IV.
—— effect of, on the Greek Empire, 613 C. Rt. V.
Crystal Nixon. *See* Nixon, Crystal. . Redg. IV.
Crystal and hearts, their merit in fragility, 328 G. Mng. I.
Cuckoo's nest, note on, 717 F. Ng. III.
Cuddie Headrigg. *See* Headrigg . O. Mrt. I.
Culloch, Sawney, the pedlar, 250 . G. Mng. I.
Cumberland, Duke of, letter of protection to Baron Bradwardine, 156; note on, 187 . . Wav. I.
Cumberland Waste, 251 G. Mng. I.
Cuming, Walter, of Guiyock, note, 637 R. R. I.
Cumnor Hall, ballad, 178 Ken. III.
Cumnor Place, 190; the apartments, 200; the outrage at, 350; Ashmole's note on, 178 . Ken. III.
—— the village, 181 Ken. III.
Cunningham, Allan, 723 F. Ng. III.
Cunningham, Scots Guardsman, 39 . Q. Dr. IV.
Cunningham of Boquhan, duel with Rob Roy, 666 R. R. I.
Curfew bell, 514 Iva. II.
Curfew Street, Perth, rencontre in, 218; note, 375 F. M. P. V.
Curiosity, and courage, 94 Wav. I.
—— coincident with personal fear, 339 F. M. P. V.
Curling near Woodbourne, 270 . . G. Mng. I.
Custom-house of Portanferry, attack on, 324 G. Mng. I.
Cutlar MacCulloch, note on, 960 . . Pev. III.
Cutting an acquaintance, 387 . . . Ant. I.
Cuttyawar horses, 801 S. Dt. V.
Cybele, Temple of, 624 C. Rt. V.
Cyprian, Brother, 252 F. M. P. V.

D'Acunha, Teresa, waiting-maid, 478, 517 Ant. I.
Dain. *See* Oliver le Dain. Q. Dr. IV.
Dalgarno, Lord, introduction to Nigel, 590; visit to his lodgings, 594; and takes him to the ordinary, 597; struck by Nigel in the Park, 615; connection with Hermione, 632; married to her, 694; threatens vengeance on Glenvarloch, 695; rage at the scrivener, 700; with Dame Nelly, 705; death at Enfield Chase, 707 F. Ng. III.
Dalgetty, Captain, of Prestonpans, 83 L. Mont. II.
Dalgetty, Dugald, Author's apology, 5; description and account of his exploits, 10; scruples about the mass, 12; at Darnlinvarach, 16; his voracity, 19; engages himself to Montrose's service, 24; appointed major of the Irish recruits, 31; ambassador to Argyle, 33; arrives at Ardenvohr, 37; reception at Inverary Castle, 42; thrown into the dungeon, 45; seizes Argyle, 49; escape through the chapel, 51; wounded in his flight, 55; appears before Montrose, 60; knighted, 70; conveys Ranald into the presence of Campbell and Menteith, 76; at Menteith's wedding, 80; regains his patrimonial estate, 82; *Edinburgh Review* on, 83 . . L. Mont. II.
Dalgleish, Jock, hangman, 211 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Dalmally, 700 H. Wid. IV.
Dalrymple, Janet. *See* Janet Dalrymple. B. Lam. II.
Dalrymple family, connection with the novel, 365; note on, 487 B. Lm. II.
Dalton, Mrs., Staunton's housekeeper, 276 Ht. Mid. II.
Dalzell, or Dalziel, General Thomas, 810, 814; encouraging the carnage at Bothwell Bridge, 311; his conduct in court, 819; note on, 867 O. Mrt. I.
—— General Thomas, 404 Redg. IV.
Damahoy, Miss, lament over the Union with England, 164; on the result of Effie's trial, 243 Ht. Mid. II.
Dam-dike, attack on Graham's, 533 Redg. IV.
Dame Martin, dances with Darsie, 415 Redg. IV.
Dame Nelly. *See* Christie. F. Ng. III.
Dame Ursley. *See* Suddlechop . . F. Ng. III.
Damian Lacy. *See* Lacy, Damian . . Bet. IV.
Damn your brandy! 629 R. R. I.
Dancing, horror of, by the Covenanters, 713 O. Mrt. I.
—— Davie Deans' horror of, 187 . Ht. Mid. II.
—— Peter Walker's denunciation of, 356 Ht. Mid. II.
Dancing-girl, sale of, note, 959 . . . Pev. III.
Dandie Dinmont. *See* Dinmont. G. Mng. I.
—— his terriers, note, 353 G. Mng. I.
Dandie Dinmont, his son at the Waverley Novel meeting, 543 . . Bet. IV.
Dangerfield, Captain, 824, 840, 920 . . Pev. III.
Dannischemend, the Persian, 440, 499 A. Gei. V.
Dan of the Howlet-hirst, 786 . . . Mon. II.
—— 54 . . Abb. III.
Daring youth, 746 Mon. II.
Dark Ahriman, whom Irak still, 749 . Tal. IV.
Dark Grey Man (Douglas), 119 . . Abb. III.
Dark Ladye of Coleridge, 353 St. Ron. IV.
Dark shall be light, 327 G. Mng. I.
Darlington, Black Bear inn at, 539 . . R. R. I.
Darnley's murder, 131 Abb. III.
Darnlinvarach Castle, 15; meeting of Highland chiefs at, 27 L. Mont. II.
Darsie Latimer, lonely position in life, 365; prohibited from visiting England, 373; angling with Benjie, 374; rescued from the Solway, 375; lodged by Herries, 376; taken home by the Quaker, 386; warning from Green Mantle, 396; meets with Wandering Willie, 401; at the dance at Brokenburn, 412; warned by Green Mantle, 414; dance with Dame Martin, 415; journal of his adventures, 429; accompanies the Quaker to protect his fishery, 431; carried off by the assailants, 433; rescued a second time by Herries, 436; finds himself in a house in Cumberland, 437; taken by Herries before the justice, 440; recognised by Peebles, 445; delivered over to Herries' keeping, 447; resemblance to him, 449; history of his family, 450; hears Wandering Willie in the courtyard, 454; verses from Green Mantle, 456; his father, 464; rides in a lady's habit, 492; introduced to his sister, 493; hears an account of his family, 496; questioned by Nixon, 503; urged by his uncle to join the insurgents, 504; meeting with Alan at Crackenthorp's, 507; taken into the council of the conspirators, 517; kisses the Prince's hand, 520; presented to George III., 531; notes on, 399, 532 . . . Redg. IV.
Daughter of the arch, 598 C. Rt. V.
D'Avenant, Sir William, 122 . . Wood. V.
David I. of Scotland, 725 Ch. Can. IV.
David, Prince of Scotland, 734 . . . Tal. IV.
Davidson, James, original of Dandie Dinmont, note, 351 . . G. Mng. I.
David Wilson, book-collector, 373 . Ant. I.

Davie Mailsetter, 413 ANT. I.
Davies, John, the salmon-fisher, 432 REDG. IV.
Dawfyd, the one-eyed robber, 634 . BET. IV.
Dawn in Newgate, London, 893 . . . PEV. III.
—— on the Alps, 415 A. GEI. V.
Dawston Cleugh, Jock o', 288, 296 . G. MAN. I.
Daylight, effect on watchers, 240 . . KEN. III.
Deacon Bearcliff. *See* Bearcliff, . G. MNG. I.
Deacon, Tom, Chiffinch's groom, 833, 859 PEV. III.
Dead Sea, 737 . TAL. IV.
Dead to the living, letter from, note, 961 PEV. III.
Deaf and dumb vassal, note on, 966 . . PEV. III.
Deans, David, 179; his opinions of the clergy, 183; removes to St. Leonard's Crags, 184; horror of dancing, 187; visit from the officers of justice, 189; his reception of Butler in his affliction, 193; his ideas of law-courts, 197; refuses to retain counsel, 198; repudiates his daughter, 224; bids Jeanie act according to her conscience, 227; attends Effie's trial, 232; swoons in court, 240; taken home by Mrs. Saddletree, 245; letter of thanks to Jeanie, 302; receives Jeanie back again, 310; his doubts on churches, 314; his first-born joke, 314; death of, 333 . . HT. MID. II.
—— Effie, pitied by Mrs. Saddletree, 167; urged to flee from gaol, 174; description of, 186; her misfortune, 189; interrogated by the procurator, 214; visited by Jeanie in the gaol, 229; placed in the dock, 233; her declaration, 237; found guilty, 242; estranged from Jeanie, 245; connection with young Staunton (Robertson), 278; her pardon, 299; elopement with Staunton, 318; short visit to Jeanie, 325; letter to Jeanie, 329; arrival at Roseneath, 336; rescued by her own son, 339; end of, 351 . HT. MID. II.
—— Jeanie, early intimacy with Butler, 180; visits from Dumbiedikes, 181, 185; rates her sister for staying out late, 187; bids Butler break off their intimacy, 195; meets Robertson at Muschat's Cairn, 204; refuses to swear against the truth, 209; rude treatment of, by Ratcliffe, 218; found reading the *subpœna*, 226; visit to her sister in the gaol, 228; attends Effie's trial, 232; in the witness-box, 239; starts for London, 247; asks assistance from Dumbiedikes, 249; visits Butler, 252; her journey, 256; stopped by the highwaymen, 261; terrible situation in their hut, 263; led into church by Madge Wildfire, 271; protected by the Rector, 274; brought before Rev. Mr. Staunton, 275; discovers young Staunton (Robertson), 277; the interview interrupted by Mr. Staunton, senior, 281; arrival in London, 286; interview with Argyle, 287; with Queen Caroline, 295; her letters home, 299; presented to the Duchess of Argyle, 303; returns home, 304; attends the deathbed of Madge Wildfire, 306; meets her father at Roseneath, 310; and Butler, 312; delight in seeing her old cows, 322; meeting with Effie, 325; marriage, 327; letter from Effie, 329; another meeting with Effie, 337; liberates Effie's son, 350 HT. MID. II.
Deans, Jeanie, Mrs. Goldie's notes on, 669 CH. CAN. IV.
Deasil, superstitious custom, note, 64 . . WAV. I.
—— 329 . F. M. P. V.
Death, Highlanders' idea of, 332 . F. M. P. V.
—— Claverhouse's reflections on, 824 O. MRT. I.
—— chant, 308 F. M. P. V.
Death-bed rites, gipsy, 260 G. MNG. I.
Death for Hector! 366 F. M. P. V.
Death of the Laird's Jock, sketch, 889 L. JOCK IV.
Debauchery, time of James I., note, 714 F. NG. III.
Deborah Debbitch, Alice's governante, 754; carries her off from the castle, 768; visit from Julian at the Black Fort, 784; her reflections, 787; blamed by Bridgenorth, 794; visit to Dame Ellesmere and Lance, 847; discharged, 853 . PEV. III.
De Bracy, his intended raid on Rowena, 558; scene with her, 580; discovers Ivanhoe, 603; made prisoner by Richard, 613; asks forgiveness from Rowena, 617; refuses to injure Richard, 627 . IVA. II.
Debt and the feudal system, 497 . . . ANT. I.
De Craon, 556 A. GEI. V.
Deeds are done on earth, motto, 65 . WOOD. V.
Deer, charge of, 63 WAV. I.
Defoe's *History of Apparitions*, 867 O. MRT. I.
Degial's Ass, 785 S. DT. V.
Deities, ancient classic, 698 C. RT. V.
Delaserre, Captain, 246, 352 G. MNG. I.
Demetrius, the politician, 714 . . C. RT. V.
Dempster, Isle of Man, note on, 968 . . PEV. III.
Dempster of court, 358 HT. MID. II.
—— office of, 830 O. MRT. I.
Denmark, Shetland's allegiance to, 435 . PIR. III.
Dennet, an old peasant, 664 IVA. II.
Dennison, Jenny. *See* Jenny. . O. MRT. I.
Deputies, Swiss, 420; go to the rescue of Philipson, 463; council of, in Ferette, 468; before Charles the Bold, 524 A. GEI. V.
Derby, Charlotte, Countess of, 732; sudden appearance of, at Martindale Castle, 755; attempted arrest, 759; flight to Vale Royal, 766; uses her son's signet, 801; entrusts Julian with her mission to London, 817; appearance at Court, 934; recognises Fenella, 948; arranges Julian's marriage, 951; concealment of, note, 952; notes on, 967, 970, 973 PEV. III.
—— James, 7th Earl, note, 967 . . . PEV. III.
—— Philip, Earl of, King of Man, 782; levity of, 802 PEV. III.
Derncleugh, Kaim of, gipsy village, 214; deathbed scene at, 260; ghostly associations of the place, 317; revisited, 340 . . G. MNG. I.
Derrick, Tom, the pirate quarter-master, 498; before the provost, 501; irritation at love-making, 520; Cleveland is shot by him, 524 . PIR. III.
Desborough, Colonel, Sir Henry Lee's opinion of, 37; description of, 136; his bed overturned, 149 WOOD. V.
Desertion, military punishment of, 708 H. WID. IV.
Desk, Author's old, 5 WAV. I.
De Valence, Aymer, 819; questions Bertram, 821; respect for Edward I., 822; disagreement with De Walton, 831, 836; letter from Pembroke, 837; defends Bertram, 838; challenged by Douglas, 846; interrogates the sexton, 848; interview with Augustine, 853; makes known her real name to De Walton, 862; encounter with Fleming, 883 CAS. D. V.
De Vere (Earl of Oxford). *See* Philipson. A. GEI. V.
Devil, different characters of, 1 . . Q. DR. IV.
—— a ridiculous creation, 698 . . C. RT. V.
Devil of Woodstock, note, 188, 3 . WOOD. V.
Devil's advocate, 531 REDG. IV.
Devil's Cavern, Derbyshire, 739 . . . PEV. III.
Devil's Dick of Hellgarth, 236 . . F. M. P. V.
Devorgoil, Lady Jean, 230 G. MNG. I.
Dhône, William. *See* Christian, Col. William. PEV. III.
Dhu, Ghlune, note on, 698 R. R. I.
Diamond, Saladin's, 845 TAL. IV.
—— of Sanci, 511 A. GEI. V.
—— of the Desert, 741, 745; Kenneth's second visit, 826; the lists at, 843 . . . TAL. IV.
Dibble, Davie, gardener at Monkbarns, 382 ANT. I.
Dice, a leveller of society, 617 . . F. NG. III.
Dick, Devil's (Johnstone), of Hellgarth. *See* Devil's Dick. . F. M. P. V.
Dick, Sir William, of Broid, 358 . . HT. MID. II.
Dickie Sludge. *See* Flibbertigibbet. KEN. III.
Dick Ostler, of the Seven Stars, York, 259 HT. MID. II.
Dick Tinto, 195, 201 ST. RON. IV.
—— 370 . B. LM. II.
Dickson, Charles, reproved by his father, 815; gallant death of, 883; note on, 889 . . CAS. D. V.
—— Thomas, 808; receives Bertram and Augustine, 815; his curiosity, 860 CAS. D. V.
Dickson, Half-hanged Maggie, 359 HT. MID. II.
Die Vernon, in the hunting-field, 543; at dinner, 547; accompanies Frank to the Justice's, 552; meets Rashleigh there, 554; threatened by Clerk Jobson, 561; refuses to answer Frank's questions, 562; introduces him to her sanctum, 563; admonishes Frank for his misconduct, 573; and demands a recital of Rashleigh's conversation, 574; her studies, 577; intercourse with Father Vaughan, 584; urges Frank to leave the Hall, 585; glove scene, 588; unexpected meeting in the Highlands, 652; Rob Roy's account of, 655; at Aberfoil, 662; information about, from Justice Inglewood, 670; enters the library with her father, 673; made prisoner by Rashleigh, and rescued by Rob Roy, 677; marriage, 679 . . . R. R. I.
Digges, Maria, 205; thinks Tyrrel's nose too big, 216; acts Queen of the Elves, 275 . . ST. RON. IV.
Dignity, offended, difficulties of, 102 . . ABB. III.
Dijon, 521 . A. GEI. V.
Diligence, Queensferry, 368 ANT. I.
Dim burns the once bright star, 746 . . MON. II.
Dingwall, Davie, attorney, 413 . . B. LM. II.
Dinmont, Ailie, and her family, 253, 258 G. MNG. I.
—— Dandie, meeting with, at Mump's Ha', 249; encounter with the ruffians, 251; arrival at Charlieshope, 253; at the lawyer's, 287; his law cause of the Langtaehead, 288; at Miss Bertram's funeral, 292, 295; joins Bertram in the Portanferry bridewell, 313; awakes to his danger, 324; at Woodbourne, 329; accompanies Bertram into Hatteraick's cave, 341; notes on, 353 G. MNG. I.

Dinner, effect of a good, 414 PIR. III.
——locking the door during, note, 864 O. MRT. I.
—— at the Antiquary's, 382 ANT. I.
—— to the Jacobites at Ellieslaw Castle, 126 B. DW. II.
—— at Heriot's, 570 F. NG. III.
—— at Provost Crosbie's, 460 . . REDG. IV.
—— French, 10 Q. DR. IV.
Dinner-table, Scotch, note on, 173 . . WAV. I.
Diogenes, the negro slave, 623 . . C. RT. V.
Dire was his thought, motto, 573 . . . R. R. I.
Dirge at Athelstane's funeral, 660 . . IVA. II.
Dirk, oath upon, 177 WAV. I.
Dirk Hatteraick, first interview with, 208; brought to Glossin an unwelcome prisoner, 276; escape from the old castle, 278; in his cave with Glossin, 279; cave entered by Bertram and Dandie, 341; seized by Bertram, 343; examination of, 347; his pocket-book opened, 348; visit by Glossin in his cell, and death, 350, 351; note on, 356 G. MNG. I.
Discipline among the Highlanders, note, 173 WAV. I.
Disconsolate lovers, French relief for, 328 G. MNG. I.
Discrimination of character, 567 . . . R. R. I.
Disease, superstitions on, 744 . . . PEV. III.
Disinherited Knight. *See* Ivanhoe. . . IVA. II.
Dissenter, true end of a, 771 PEV. III.
Distillation, illicit, at Wallace Inn, 704 . O. MRT. I.
Ditchley, Gaffer, the miner, 849 . . . PEV. III.
Doboobie, Dr. Demetrius. *See* Alasco. KEN. III.
Dobson's Linn, 868 O. MRT. I.
Doch-an-dorroch, 369 REDG. IV.
Docharty, Father, 588 R. R. I.
Doctor, village, duties of, 745 . . . S. DT. V.
—— fees of, 109 ABB. III.
Dods, Meg. *See* Meg Dods. . ST. RON. IV.
Dogget, the warder, 661 BET. IV.
Dogs, deference paid to highbred, 716 C. RT. V.
—— dexterity of, 353 ST. RON. IV.
—— fidelity of, 24 WOOD. V.
—— foibles, 8 . ABB. III.
—— quarrels of, 221 ST. RON. IV.
Dole at Glenallan House, 459 . . . ANT. I.
Dom-Daniel, 497 A. GEI. V.
Domestics, manners of, in olden times, 725; at table, 734 . . O. MRT. I.
Dominicans' garden, Perth, note, 378 . F. M. P. V.
Dominie Sampson, description of, 198, 202: becomes tutor to young Bertram, 211; in search of young Bertram, 219; confronts the attorney, 231; appointed guardian to Lucy, 232; his longest speech, 234; in his new suit of clothes, 243; arranges the bishop's library, 245; Julia's description of, 265; extracting bullets from the mutilated tomes, 270; journey to Edinburgh, acts as literary dumb waiter, 285; difficulty in meeting the advocate's sallies, 297; falls in with Meg at Derncleugh, 317; his suspicious meal with her, 318; recognises Harry Bertram, 331; breaks the news to Lucy, 333; scalds Plato at breakfast, 336; his joy in returning to Ellangowan, 351 . . G. MNG. I.
Don, River, Yorkshire, 505, 657 . . . IVA. II.
Donacha Dhu, the robber, 333; his hold, 339; surprised by Staunton, death of, 348 HT. MID. II.
Donald, M'Aulay's servant, 15 . . L. MONT. II.
Donald Bane Lane. *See* Bane Lane. . WAV. I.
Donald Cormac, a Highland chief, 261 F. M. P. V.
Doncaster, Matthew of, bowyer, 408 A. GEI. V.
Donner and blitzen! you *will* have it then, 350 G. MNG. I.
Donnerhugel, Rudolph, 405; chagrin at Arthur's success, 409; duel with him, 415; acts guard at Graffslust, 427; asks Arthur to join the league, 434; his tale of the Geiersteins, 436; goes to the rescue of the Philipsons, 461; throws down his challenge to Burgundy, 524; encounter with Arthur, and death, 561 A. GEI. V.
—— Theodore, 444 A. GEI. V.
Donn's poems, note on, 894 MAR.'S M. IV.
Don Quixote, the first bibliomaniac, 373 ANT. I.
Doomster of court, 358 HT. MID. II.
—— office of, 830 O. MRT. I.
Dorcas, Old, of Cumnor Place, 268 KEN. III.
Dorcas, the milkmaid, 438; dances with Jan, 455 REDG. IV.
Dorothy, Glover's housekeeper, her ill tidings, 290 . . F. M. P. V.
Douban, the physician, 706; submits the Emperor's conditions to Ursel, 710 C. RT. V.
Double walkers, 445 A. GEI. V.
Dougal MacCallum, the butler, 406; in hell, 408 REDG. IV.
Dougal MacGregor (the Cratur), turnkey of the gaol, 607; makes off with the keys, 611; at Aberfoil Inn, 629; brought in as prisoner, 636; leads the soldiers into ambush, 638; intercedes for the Bailie and Osbaldistone, 643; equipped as the Bailie's man-servant, 661; offered a porter's place by the Bailie, 665 . R. R. I.
Douglas, family of, 808, 811, 823, 849 . CAS. D. V.
—— genealogy, 831 MON. II.
——Archibald, Earl of, insulted by Rothsay, 250; exhibits Ramorny's hand, 259; recommends strong measures against the Highlanders, 262; warns the Prior against heretic-burning, 264; arrests Ramorny, 354; tells Albany of Rothsay's murder, 360 F. M. P. V.
—— Earl, murder of, note, 180 . . Q. DR. IV.
—— George, at Lochleven, 101; failure to effect the Queen's escape, 125; witnesses Dryfesdale's death, 141; protects Mary, 151; unwilling to mingle with the nobles, 154; death of, 162; his part in Mary's escape, 170 ABB. III.
—— Lord James, 805, 808, 823; challenges Aymer, 846; takes Augusta as a hostage, 866; encounter with Walton at Bloody Sykes, 873; and in the church, 883; Walton surrenders, 885 CAS. D. V.
—— Marjory, Duchess of Rothesay, 241, 324, 371 F. M. P. V.
—— Burn, 811 CAS. D. V.
—— Castle, 806, 811; entered by Aymer and Bertram, 827; Lady Berkely's vow, 855; dungeon of, 861; surrendered to Douglas, 885; note on, 888 CAS. D. V.
—— Church, 827, 878; visit to the sexton, 848; Douglas graves in, 849; scene in, on Palm Sunday, 879 CAS. D. V.
—— Larder, 824 CAS. D. V.
—— village, 827; scene in, 846 . . CAS. D. V.
Douglasdale, 812; Author's journey to, 806 CAS. D. V.
Douglas! Douglas! tender and true, 148 ABB. III.
Doune Castle, 96; note on, 174 . . . WAV. I.
Dousterswivel, Herman, 361; his mining schemes, 405; at the picnic, 417; his little secret, 421; in St. Ruth's with Sir Arthur, 436; conjures for the treasure, 438; interrogated by Oldbuck, 444; confers with Edie about the treasure, 448; meets the beggar at midnight, 451; unpleasant result, 452, 493; the last of him, 502, 507; his machinery set fire to, 516 . ANT. I.
—— his proposal to write the Waverley Novels by steam, 543 . BET. IV.
Dowlas, Dame, Buckingham's housekeeper, 907 PEV. III.
Down with all warrants, 515 . . REDG. IV.
Dowrah, the village guide in India, 794 S. DT. V.
Dragon, the, in the masque, 49 . . . ABB. III.
Drama, opinions regarding the, 257 . KEN. III.
Dream, Glossin's, 278 G. MNG. I.
——Lovel's, in the Green Room, 397; Oldbuck's opinion of, 408; note on, 519 . . . ANT. I.
Dress, time of Richard I., 554 . . . IVA. II.
—— coquetry in, 784; ominous formality of, 790 PEV. III.
—— change in modern, 10 WAV. I.
Drink, how to learn to, 573 R. R. I.
Drinks, Saxon, 515 IVA. II.
Driver, the advocate's clerk, 298 . . G. MNG. I.
Dronsdaughter, Tronda, Yellowley's old servant, 381, 382 . . PIR. III.
Drovers, Highland, 859 TWO DR. IV.
Drowning men, reluctance to save, 533 . PIR. III.
Drows, or Trows, the, note, 533 . . . PIR. III.
Drudgeit, Peter, law clerk, 418 . . REDG. IV.
Drumclog, battle of, 764, 773; note, 865 O. MRT. I.
Drummelzier Castle, 117 B. DW. II.
Drumming the 119th Psalm, 891 . . . WAV. I.
Drummond, James Mohr MacGregor, his exploits, 691, 692 . . R. R. I.
Drummonds, feud with Murrays, 4 L. MONT. II.
Drumthwacket, Dalgetty's patrimonial estate, 11; evil accounts of, 24; regained, 82 L. MONT. II.
Drunk as David's sow, 479 REDG. IV.
Drusas, St., 731 C. RT. V.
Dryasdust, Dr., introductory letter to, 500 IVA. II.
—— prefatory letter from, 734 . . . PEV. III.
—— at the Waverley Novel meeting, 544 . BET. IV.
Dryden, John, Halcro's enthusiasm for, 411, 419 PIR. III.
Dryfesdale, the steward, 121; angry interview with Roland, 127; attempt to poison the Queen, 132; his fatalism, 140; slain by Seyton, 141 . . . ABB. III.
Dubourg, of Bourdeaux, 532 R. R. I.
—— Clement, his son, 532 R. R. I.
Ducange, the historian, 576, 731, 733 . C. RT. V.
Duchran, 151; happy meeting at, 159 . WAV. I.
—— Laird of, 157, 159 WAV. I.
Dudley, the artist, 246, 248 G. MNG. I.
Duel, at St. Ruth's, 432 ANT. I.
—— at St. Ronan's, 240; the statement, 243; cause of its failure, 268; the placard torn down, 307 ST. RON. IV.
Duelling, pretext for, 135 WAV. I.
—— Puritan sentiments on, 775 . . . PEV. III.

Duelling, Varangian's ideas of, 596 . C. Rt. v.
—— Edie's ideas, of, 435 Ant. i.
Duels, on Arthur's Seat, 190 Ht. Mid. ii.
Duergar, Northern, 93 B. Dw. ii.
Duff, Davie, the Thane of Fife, 743 . S. Dt. v.
Duff, Jamie, the funereal idiot, 292 . G. Mng. i.
Dugald Ciar Mohr. *See* Ciar Mohr. . R. R. i.
Duke of Exeter's daughter, 704 . . F. Ng. iii.
Duke's Walk, Holyrood, 483 B. Lm. ii.
Dumbiedikes, old Laird of, 178; death-bed scene, 179 Ht. Mid. ii.
—— young Laird, visits to the Deanses, 181, 185; offers to help Effie, 190, 199; visit from Jeanie, 250; married, 313 Ht. Mid. ii.
—— mansion-house, 178 Ht. Mid. ii.
Dumb Lizzie, 733 Pev. iii.
Dumfries, 373 Redg. iv.
Dummerar, Rev. Dr., 749; restored to his vicarage, 772 . . . Pev. iii.
Dumple, Dandie's pony, 252 G. Mng. i.
Dumtoustie, the runaway counsel, 418 Redg. iv.
Dun, the hangman, 835 Pev. iii.
Dun, effects of a, 564 F. Ng. iii.
Dunbar, David, of Baldoon, 366 . . B. Lm. ii.
Dunbar, Elizabeth of, 241 F. M. P. v.
Duncan Duroch, leader of rescue party, 96 Wav. i.
Dundas of Arniston, note, 355 . . G. Mng. i.
Dundee, Viscount. *See* Claverhouse. O. Mrt. i.
Dun-Dornadilla, ancient castle, 677 . . Iva. ii.
Dundrennan Abbey, Mary at, 163 . . Abb. iii.
Dungeon, German, 457, 569 A. Gei. v.
Dunnottar Castle, prison of the Covenanters, 706 O. Mrt. i.
Dunois, Count of, 44; attempted rescue of the ladies De Croye, 76; supports Louis before Charles, 133; bravery at the siege of Liége, 174 Q. Dr. iv.
Duntarkin, made a public-house, 683, 684 Ch. Can. iv.
Durazzo, battle of, 620 C. Rt. v.
Durham Garland, note on, 195 . . G. Mng. i.
Duroch, Duncan, leader of rescue party, 96 Wav. i.
Durward, Quentin. *See* Quentin . Q. Dr. iv.
Dust unto dust, 660 Iva. ii.
Dutch courtship, described, 327 . . G. Mng. i.
Dutch military service, 13 L. Mont. ii.
Dutton, Dolly, dairy-woman, 307 Ht. Mid. ii.
D..ty, path of, 408 Ant. i.
—— excluding love of the fine arts, 790 O. Mrt. i.
Dwarf. *See* Elshie. B. Dw. ii.
Dwarf. *See* Nectabanus. Tal. iv.
—— Norna's. *See* Strumpfer. . . . Pir. iii.
Dwarfie Stone, note, 535 Pir. iii.
Dwellers of the mountain, rise, 441 . . Pir. iii.
Dwining, Henbane, the pottingar, 230; meets Henry and the glee-maiden, 256; attends Ramorny, 271; plots against the Smith, 273; gloats over Ramorny's mutilated stump, 274; mistakes Proudfute for the Smith, 305; contrives to cheat the gibbet, 306; gazes on his gold, 307; Proudfute's corpse oozes blood as he passes, cures his child of croup, 308; but refuses the beads, 309; rescues Bonthron from the gallows, 316; writes a letter for Rothesay to the King, 343; forges a letter from the Duchess of Rothsay, 346; disguised as the nurse, receives Catharine at Falkland, 347; drugs the prince, 348; makes Catharine his confessor, 354; suicide, 356; his hoard, 373 F. M. P. v.
Dyer's Weekly Letter, note, 11 . . . Wav. i.

Eachin MacIan. *See* Conachar. F. M. P. v.
Eagle, shot at Bally-Brough, 45 . . . Wav. i.
Earl Herbert's Tower at Peronne, 127 Q. Dr. iv.
Earl's palace, Kirkwall, 485 Pir. iii.
Earnscliff, joins Hobbie on Mucklestane Moor, 96; asks the Dwarf to accompany him home, 98; conversation with him on humanity, 103; the murder of his father, 107; rescues Isabella Vere from Westburnflat, 116; brings her back to her father, 124; marriage, 142 B. Dw. ii.
East India Company, 764, 772 . . . S. Dt. v.
Eberson, Carl. *See* Carl Eberson. . Q. Dr. iv.
Ebrius and ebriosus, 33 Wav. i.
Echo, daughter of the arch, 598 . . C. Rt. v.
—— in St. Ruth's, 438 Ant. i.
Edgar. *See* Ravenswood, Master of. B. Lm. ii.
Edgeworth, Miss, influence of her novels, 5 Wav. i.
Edie Ochiltree, 362; appears at the prætorium, 376; joins the Wardours on the sands, 387; noble assistance of, 388; description of, 402; speaks to Miss Wardour in favour of Lovel, 404; stops the runaway express, 413; interrupts the duellists, 433; conceals Lovel in his cave, 435; the sneeze in St. Ruth's abbey, 438; refuses Lovel's bounty, 440; recognises the ram's horn, 446; strikes the treasure in St. Ruth's, 447; induces Dousterswivel to renew the search, 448; meets him at midnight, 450; threatened by the German, 452; flight with Steenie, pursued by the mute, 457; sent to Lord Glenallan by old Elspeth, 458; rejected by his brother beggars, 459; interview with the Earl, 462; seized by the constables, 465; in prison, 480; his declaration, 490; Oldbuck comes to his assistance, 491; tells about the treasure, 493; bailed out, 495; accompanies Oldbuck to Elspeth Mucklebackit's, 496; questions Elspeth, 499; sets off for the needful letter, 505; returns with good news, 508; explains to Oldbuck about Search No. I., 512; left in comfort, 517 Ant. i.
Edinburgh, *circ.* 1775, 286 G. Mng. i.
—— houses of, 370 Redg. iv.
—— approach to, 61 Abb. iii.
—— Canongate, 200; newest new town, note, 200 F. M. P. v.
—— 673, 687 Ch. Can. iv.
—— approached by Balmawhapple and Waverley, 99; Waverley's lodgings in, 102 . . Wav. i.
—— fierce character of mob, 163; execute Porteous, 170; magistrates at time of Porteous Riots, 223 Ht. Mid. ii.
—— scene on Claverhouse's return from Bothwell Brig, 827 . . O. Mrt. i.
Edith, Lady, mother of Athelstane, 659 Iva. ii.
Edith Bellenden. *See* Bellenden. . O. Mrt. i.
Edith Plantagenet, meets Kenneth in the chapel, 756; in the Queen's tent, 792; proposed espousal to Saladin, 795; in history, 800; intercedes with the King for Kenneth, 803; conciliatory visit from Richard, 816; interview with Kenneth as a mute, 837; tramples on the Soldan's proposal, 838; rejects Richard's inquiry, 842; unarms Kenneth, and hears of his royal rank, 852 . . Tal. iv.
Editors' peculiarities, 839 Mon. ii.
Edmonston of Newton, 686 . . . R. R. i.
Edric, the forester, 677, 691 C. Rt. v.
Edris of the Goblets, cave of, 633 . . Bet. iv.
Edward I., monument to, 504 . . Redg. iv.
—— meeting with Friar Tuck, 497 . . Iva. ii.
Edward IV., 415, 419; invades France, 512; makes peace with Louis, 528 A. Gei. v.
—— the jolly King, 103 Wood. v.
Edward the Varangian, 608 C. Rt. v.
Effie Deans. *See* Deans, Effie. . Ht. Mid. ii.
Eglinton, Countess, note on, 696 . . Ch. Can. iv.
Egotism, mortifying results of, 537 . . R. R. i.
Egotistical gallantry, in society, 427 . Ant. i.
Einion, Father, Gwenwyn's chaplain, 549 Bet. iv.
Einsiedlen, our Lady of, 395, 400 . A. Gei. v.
Ejection of Presbyterian clergy, note, 953 Pev. iii.
Elcho, Lord, Jacobite leader, note, 176, 177 Wav. i.
Elephant, the, 601, 615; the imperial, 643. *See also* Agelastes. . C. Rt. v.
Elizabeth, Queen, prejudice against, 177; her mode of governing, 238; visit to Saye's Court, 242; presents Raleigh with a jewel, 244; holds court at Greenwich, 247; hears Tresilian's petition, 251; replies to Raleigh's rhyme, 258; masculine character of, 272; entry into Kenilworth, 305; love passage with Leicester, 318; meets Amy in the garden, 319; discovers Leicester's marriage, 342, 343 Ken. iii.
Elizabeth of Dunbar, 241 F. M. P. v.
Ellangowan Castle, entered by Mannering, 207; revisited by Brown (Bertram), 302 G. Mng. i.
Ellangowan Place, first visit to, 201; view from, 204; sale of, 230; bought up by Glossin, 233; restored to Bertram, 351 G. Mng. i.
Ellesmere, Mrs., the Martindale housekeeper, 754; her account of Deborah, 768; visit to the keeper's lodge, 847 . Pev. iii.
Ellieslaw Castle, meeting of Jacobite gentlemen at, 126; marriage scene in chapel, 137 B. Dw. ii.
Elliot, Hobbie. *See* Hobbie Elliot. . B. Dw. ii.
Eloquence among the Covenanters, 774 O. Mrt. i.
Elphinstone, Lady, her reply to Claverhouse, note, 864 O. Mrt. i.
Elshie, the Dwarf, 98; labouring at his wall, 101; presents Miss Vere with a rose, 105; his favourite goat worried by Hobbie's deerhound, 108; orders Westburnflat to give up Grace Armstrong, 110; gives Hobbie a bag of gold, 113; found conversing with a taller figure, 120; story of his life, 134; interview with Isabella, 135; forbids the marriage in the chapel, 139; disappearance of, 143 . . B. Dw. ii.
Elspat MacTavish. *See* MacTavish. H. Wid. iv.
Elspeth, Old, of Craigburnfoot, her account of Lady Glenallan, 456; sends Edie for the Earl, 458; visited by Lord Glenallan, 473; her tragic communication, 474; visited by the Antiquary, 498; her death, 500; note on, 520 Ant. i.
Elspeth, the bedral's widow, 254, 346 . G. Mng. i.
Embarrassments, effect on the mind . 480 Pir. iii.

Emblem of England's ancient faith, 78 WAV. I.
Emma, the surgeon's daughter, 742 S. DT. V.
Empson, the King's flute-player, 872; entertained by Madam Chiffinch, 874 PEV. III.
Enfield Chase, scene in, 705 F. NG. III.
Engaddi Wilderness, 747; chapel of, 754. TAL. IV.
—— Hermit of. *See* Theodoric. . . TAL. IV.
Engagement-ring, in Germany, 400 . ANT. I.
Engelbrecht, Varangian sentinel, 687 . C. RT. V.
Engelred, the Saxon, 678, 691 . C. RT. V.
England, state of, under Richard I., 505, 527 IVA. II.
—— during Richard's absence, 818 . TAL. IV.
—— in 11th century, 616, 617, 677 . C. RT. V.
English, French dislike to, 6 . . Q. DR. IV.
—— composite characteristics of, 333 KEN. III.
—— and their meat, 628 R. R. I.
—— merchants, 450 A. GEI. V.
English Channel, legend of Procopius, 615 C. RT. V.
Ennerdale, Lord, fragment of a letter, 475 . WAV. I.
Entertainments, at Kenilworth, 353 KEN. III.
Enthusiasm and ridicule, 653 . . C. RT. V.
Enthusiasts, dangerous society, 728 O. MRT. I.
Envoy, Author's, 351 HT. MID. II.
Envy dogs merit, 703 O. MRT. I.
Ephraim Macbriar. *See* Macbriar. O. MRT. I.
Epicurean philosophy, 108 WOOD. V.
Episcopalians, Scotch, after the accession of William III., 833 . O. MRT. I.
—— persecuted, note, 172 WAV. I.
Epistolary style of writing, 421 . . REDG. IV.
Epitaph, John o' ye Girnell's, 401 . . ANT. I.
Epithets, quaint, 829 MON. II.
Erasmus Holiday. *See* Holiday. . KEN. III.
Ercildoun, Thomas of. *See* Thomas the Rhymer. CAS. D. V.
Eresburgh, ancient Saxon camp, 386 A. GEI. V.
Erickson, Sweyn, dispute with Swertha, 366 PIR. III.
Erland, Norna's father, 440 PIR. III.
Ermengarde of Baldringham, 588; denounces Eveline, 596 BET. IV.
Ernest of Apulia, a page, 689, 716 . C RT. V.
Errol, Earl of, receives Rothsay in charge, 312; his lodgings, Perth, note, 378 . . F. M. P. V.
Error of *my* ways! 731 O. MRT. I.
Errors, Author's, 579 C. RT. V.
Erse, trying the ghost with, 394 . . . ANT. I.
Erskine, Rev. John, D.D., 81 . . . WAV. I.
—— his sermon, 290 G. MNG. I.
Erskine, W., of Kinedder, note, 532 . . PIR. III.
—— 670 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Esdale, Mr., of Madras 787, 793 . S. DT. V.
Estates, forfeited, in 1715, note, 173 . . WAV. I.
Etherington, Lord, 237; accident to, 231, 268; arrival at the Well, 261; proposes for Clara, 264; account of his family, 265; letter to Jekyl, 268; acts Bottom at Shaws Castle, 275; addressed by Cargill, 278; interview with Clara, 288; explains Tyrrel's relationship to Mowbray, 290; his connection with him and Clara, 292, 297; employs Solmes to abstract the packet, 317; cool meeting with Tyrrel, 319; sees the packet in the post-office, 322; at Hannah Irwin's confession, 325; opens Tyrrel's packet, 327; wins heavily from Mowbray, 330; revelation by Touchwood, 339; foiled by Touchwood, 341, 347; shot dead by Mowbray, 351 . . ST. RON. IV.
Eudorchawg chains, of the Welsh, 724 . BET. IV.
Eulen, Jan von, Journal of, 181 . . . WAV. I.
Euphane Fea. *See* Fea, Euphane. . . PIR. III.
Euphuism, Author's explanation, 684; criticism on, 828, 829 . . MON. II.
Eustace, Father, declines the cup, 704; visit to Glendearg, 708; carries off the Book, 713; and encounter with the White Lady, 714; confesses to the Abbot, 718; reasons for keeping Sir Piercie at Glendearg, 743; scruples about the venison, 747; return to the tower, 776; meeting with Henry Warden, 797; liberates him, 804; elected abbot, 809; refuses the intercession of Warden, 820; meeting with Murray and Morton, 824 . . . MON. II.
Evandale, Lord, unsuccessful at the popinjay, 716; Edith begs him to intercede for Morton, 755; his intimacy with her, 756; obtains Morton's reprieve, 759; counsels a treaty at Drumclog, 766; charges the Covenanters, 767; his life saved by Morton, 772; his portmanteau found by Cuddie, 788; reaches Tillietudlem badly wounded, 790; captured by Burley, and condemned to death, 802; released by Morton, 806; escorts the Bellendens to Edinburgh, 809; his betrothal, 835; urges his suit on Edith, 838; conspiracy against, 857; death, 859 O. MRT. I.
Evan Dhu Maccombich. *See* Maccombich. WAV. I.
Eveline Neville. *See* Neville, Eveline . . ANT. I.
Evelyn, John, of Saye's Court, 237 . KEN. III.
Everard, Markham, interview with Sir Henry Lee in the hut, 25; passes the night in the Lodge with Wildrake, 32; writes to Cromwell, 34; and sends the letter by Wildrake, 37; welcome from the Mayor and Holdenough, 48; proceeds with them to the Lodge, 51; encounter with the spirit, 59; and visit to the keeper's hut, 62; interview with Alice, 64; hears of Cromwell's trap, 66; fires his pistol at the apparition, 74; encounter with Kerneguy, 117; separated by Sir Henry Lee, 119; Sir Henry incensed at him, 124; the duel at the King's Oak, 136; kisses Charles's hand, 139; arrested by Cromwell, 147; happy espousal, 179 . . WOOD. V.
—— Master, Markham's father, 13 . WOOD. V.
Everett, the spy, 824, 840, 920 . . . PEV. III.
Evil, principle of, 698 C. RT. V.
Evils, accumulation of, sometimes advantageous, 590 . . . R. R. I.
Evil spirits, 169 . ABB. III.
Eviot, Ramorny's page, 275; tries to protect his master from intrusion, 283; undergoes the bier ordeal, 310; helps to rescue Bonthron from the gallows, 316; declines to support his master, 353 F. M. P. V.
Ewan of Brigglands, a trooper, 650 . R. R. I.
Ewart, Nanty, the smuggler, 474; reads out of Alan's Sallust, 476; history of his life, 477; opinion of the Stuart cause, 480; carries Alan to Fairladies, 482; at Crackenthorp's, 510; castigates Peter Peebles, 512; disarmed by Herries, 515; sent to prepare his brig for the Prince's escape, 523; and shot by Nixon, 523 . . REDG. IV.
Example better than precept, 742 . O. MRT. I.
Excessive lamentation, note on, 532 . REDG. IV.
Excise laws, time of tale, 472 . . REDG. IV.
Executioner, public, 452, 569 . . A. GEI. V.
Exeter's daughter, Duke of, 704 . . F. NG. III.

FAA, Gabriel. *See* Gabriel Faa. . . G. MNG. I.
Fabian Harbothel, the squire, 827; overhears Greenleaf and Sir John de Walton, 829; takes charge of Powheid, 850 CAS. D. V.
Fable in love's world, 206 G. MNG. I.
Faggot, Nicholas. *See* Nicholas Faggot. REDG. IV.
Faggot votes on Ellangowan, 211 G. MNG. I.
Fain would I climb, 258 KEN. III.
Fairbrother, Effie's counsel, 234; his address, 241 HT. MID. II.
Fairfax, Thomas, Lord, 864; in the Isle of Man, note, 969 . . . PEV. III.
Fairford, Alan. *See* Alan Fairford . REDG. IV.
—— Mr., senior, rates his son, 368; interview with Herries, 381; letter to Darsie about Herries, 398; gets his son to take up Peter Peebles's cause, 418; business habits, 421; misery at the flight of Alan, 426 . REDG. IV.
Fairies, or 'good neighbours,' 101 B. DW. II.
—— belief in, 207, 357 HT. MID. II.
—— Scotch, 683, 689; note on, 828 . . MON. II.
—— note on, 681 R. R. I.
Fair Isle, Shetland, wreck of Spanish Armada on, note, 535 . . PIR. III.
Fairladies, 483 REDG. IV.
Fair Maid of Perth. *See* Glover, Catharine. F. M. P. V.
—— criticism on the novel, 199 . . F. M. P. V.
Fairport, 370; gossip in, about Lovel, 378; post office at, 411; scene at, on alarm of French invasion, 515 . . . ANT. I.
Fairscribe, Katie, 737, 802; tells the history of Menie Gray, 741 S. DT. V.
—— Mr., Mr. Croftangry's business man, 677, 680 CH. CAN. IV.
—— Mr., 737 . S. DT. V.
Fairscrieve, magistrate's clerk, 210 HT. MID. II.
Fairservice, Andrew, 549; conversation about Morris's robbery, 579; on Anglicans and Papists, 588; in his dwelling, 591; leaves the Hall with Frank, 593; gets into trouble with Thorncliff's mare, 594; overheard describing his master, 601; threatened with dismissal, 612; his spavined horse, 625; reproved by the Bailie, 625, 626; entreats his master not to go farther, 632; conduct during the skirmish at Loch Ard, 640, 641; refuses to carry back a message to Helen MacGregor, 648; invests in mourning for his master, 666; calls on Syddall to give up the keys, 672; ill-timed entrance into the library, 673; meets the Highland drovers, 677 R. R. I.
Fair sex, calumniator of, 357 . . HT. MID. II.
Fairy, Julian's Manx pony, 799 . . . PEV. III.
Fairy boy of Leith, note, 357 HT. MID. II.
Fairy Knowe cottage, 857 O. MRT. I.
Falconer, Major, 875 MAR.'s M. IV
—— Miss Jemima, 873; as Lady Forester, sees her

husband in the mirror, 879 . MAR.'s M. IV.
Falconer, Mr. *See* Balmawhapple. . . WAV. I.
Falkland Palace, Fifeshire, 347 . . F. M. P. V.
Falsehood, beginners in, 676 . . C. RT. V.
False love, and hast thou played me thus? 26 WAV. I.
Familists, 185 WOOD. V.
Fanaticism, different kinds, 41 . . . ABB. III.
—— of the Covenanters, 756 . . O. MRT. I.
Fanatics, Burley and Claverhouse both examples of, 825 . . O. MRT. I.
Fancy, ear of, very sensitive, 323 G. MNG. I.
Fangs, the dog, 507; wounded by Cedric, 566 IVA. II.
Fanshaw, Lady, her story of the Bahr-geist, 724 BET. IV.
Fare thee well, thou holly green! 827 MON. II.
Farewell! farewell! the voice you hear, 458 PIR. III.
Farewell, merry maidens, to song and to laugh, 451 PIR. III.
Farewell to Northmaven, 414 . . . PIR. III.
Farewell to the land where the clouds love to rest, motto, 664 . R. R. I.
Farmers in South of Scotland, 353 . G. MNG. I.
Fast Castle, identity of, 368, 394 . B. LM. II.
Fastern's Even, celebration of, 276 . F. M. P. V.
Fatalism of Dryfesdale, 140 ABB. III.
Father Francis of Namur, 88 . . Q. DR. IV.
Fathoms deep beneath the wave, 425 . PIR. III.
Fat man, look of an ill-natured, 886 PEV. III.
Fea, Euphane, the Udaller's housekeeper, 443; superseded as fortune-teller, 446 . . . PIR. III.
—— James, his capture of the pirate, 361 PIR. III.
Fearest thou to go with me? 724 . . MON. II.
Featherhead, John, 211 G. MNG. I.
Feckless Fannie, original of Madge Wildfire, 359 HT. MID. II.
Female beauty, importance of, in feudal times, 206 F. M. P. V.
Female vassals, 344 F. M. P. V.
Female virtues and vices, 704 . . C. RT. V.
Fencing, art of, 760 MON. II.
Fenella (Zarah), 805; tries to prevent Julian going to meet Alice, 806; interest in Peveril, 814; jumps on board with Julian, 821; her former master, 823; dances before the King, 872; taken to Madam Chiffinch's, 873; tries to restrain Julian from rescuing Alice, 881; substitutes herself for Alice, 909; baulks the Duke, 911; declares her love for Julian, and contempt for Buckingham, 942; Christian's reasons for placing her with the Countess of Derby, 943, 950; before the King, 948; betrays her powers of hearing and speech, 950; banished with her father, 950; notes on, 959, 966; prototype of, 732 PEV. III.
Fenelon's description of Louis XI., 3 Q. DR. IV.
Ferguson, Colonel James (Mackerris), 742, 803 S. DT. V.
Fergus Mac-Ivor. *See* Mac-Ivor. . WAV. I.
Fergusson the Scotch poet, 160 . . HT. MID. II.
Ferquhard Day, the absentee, 340 F. M. P. V.
Ferrand de Vaudemont, the Blue Knight of Bâle, 467; arrival at Aix, 545; frees Arthur, 561 A. GEI. V.
Ferry, chapel of the, on the Rhine, 473 A. GEI. V.
Fête-Dieu, in Provence, 536 A. GEI. V.
Feuars, 688. *See also* Feurights, Feus. MON. II.
Feudal authority, extent of, 4 . . Q. DR. IV.
Feudal institutions, attempt to revive, 713 O MRT. I.
Feudal privileges, 344 F. M. P. V.
Feuds among the Covenanters, 866 O. MRT. I.
Feu-rights, 412 B. LM. II.
Feus, 353. *See also* Feuars. ST. RON. IV.
Fibbet and Bibbet, 57 WOOD. V.
Fiction, plot in, 315 F. M. P. V.
—— Author's appetite for, 4 . . . WAV. I.
—— the Antiquary's opinion of, 426 . . ANT. I.
Fides et fiducia sunt relativa, 83 . L. MONT. II.
Fielding, Sir John, 397 REDG. IV.
Field-piece in the Highland army, 174 . . WAV. I.
Fiery Cross, 67 L. MONT. II.
Fife, smuggling in, 158 HT. MID. II.
—— Thane of, Davie Duff, 745 . . S. DT. V.
—— undertakers, in Lewis, 34, 83 . L. MONT. II.
Fifteen, the, Scotch judges, 98 . . WAV. I.
Fifth Monarchy, Harrison's views of, 70 WOOD. V.
—— conventicle, 926 PEV. III.
Fighting Charlie of Liddesdale, 353 G. MNG. I.
—— 866 . TWO DR. IV.
Fighting with beasts at Ephesus, 549 R. R. I.
—— 502 . . PIR. III.
Fine arts, affected by imagination, 398 ANT. I.
—— love of, excluded by duty, 790 O. MRT. I.
Finlay, Alexander, chamberlain to Lord Douglas, 806 CAS. D. V.
Finlayson, Lucky, of the Cowgate, 290 G. MNG. I.
Finniston, Lucky, Bertram's tenant, 209 G. MNG. I.
Fire ordeal, note on, 376 F. M. P. V.
Fire, sacred, of Zoroastrians, 440 . . A. GEI. V.
Firearms, James I.'s fear of, 683 . . F. NG. III.
Fish, kettle of, note on, 353 ST. RON. IV.
—— bargaining for, 401, 410 ANT. I.
Fisher, Ralph, encounter with Roland, 26 ABB. III.
Fishermen of Shetland, note, 536 . . . PIR. III.
Fisher's cottage, Mucklebackit's, 455; funeral in, 470 . . . ANT. I.
Fisherwives and their husbands, 455, 520 ANT. I.
Fishery, white, in Shetland, 450 . . . PIR. III.
Fishing tackle, search for, and the production of 'Waverley,' 5 WAV. I.
Fitful Head, Norna of. *See* Norna. . PIR. III.
Fitzurse, at the tournament, 532; repairs the meshes of his web, 557; agrees to waylay Richard, 628; is recognised, 654 IVA. II.
Flammock, Rose, defends her father's character, 566; on the battlements, 573; rejects the Constable's chain, 583; protects her mistress at Baldringham, 592; dissuades Eveline from lodging Damian in the castle, 634 BET. IV.
—— Wilkin, 553; appointed to the command of the castle, 556; treats with Jorworth for the castle, 562; charged with treachery, 566; asks Aldrovand's advice, 568; works the mangonel, 571; asleep on the battlement, 573; refuses to take charge of Eveline, 620; rescue of Eveline, 632; on the Crusades, 635; conference with King Henry, 649; receives special privileges, 651 . . BET. IV.
Flanigan, 319 ST. RON. IV.
Flattery, a lover's, 785 PEV. III.
Fleecebumpkin, the bailiff, 862 . . TWO. DR. IV.
Fleming, Dame Mary, 97 ABB. III.
—— Malcolm, of Biggar, 857; encounter with Aymer, 883; weds Margaret, 887 . CAS. D. V.
Fleming the. *See* Flammock. . . BET. IV.
Flemings, their annoyances, 635; privileges granted to, by Henry II., 651 BET. IV.
Fletcher, Dick, pirate, 506, 520 . . . PIR. III.
Fletcher, Rob Roy's lieutenant, 686 . R. R. I.
Fletcher of Saltoun, description of the gipsies, 213 . . G. MNG. I.
Flibbertigibbet, 221; interview with Wayland, 224; blows up the smithy, 227; meets Wayland with Amy, 287; prompts the porter, 293; his inquisitiveness, 296; delivers Amy's letter, 340, 341; comes to distinction, 351 KEN. III.
Flockhart, Widow, and her lodgers, 104, 148 WAV. I.
Flora Mac-Ivor. *See* Mac-Ivor, Flora. WAV. I.
Florise, Berengaria's attendant, 805 . . TAL. IV.
Flying Stag Inn, Strassburg, 505 A. GEI. V.
Flyter, Mrs., Frank Osbaldistone's landlady, 612 R. R. I.
Follower, the. *See* Achilles Tatius. C. RT. V.
Follow, follow me, 150 WAV. I.
Fool, Duke Leopold's, 782 TAL. IV.
Fools or jesters, 507 IVA. II.
—— note on, 172 WAV. I.
Foot-page of a Welsh prince, 550, 724 . . BET. IV.
Foppery of the sixteenth century, 829 . MON. II.
Fops past and present, 731 MON. II.
For a con-sid-er-a-tion, 643 F. NG. III.
For all our men were very very merry, 400 REDG. IV.
Fordun, on the battle of the clans, 374 F. M. P. V.
Forest cantons, Switzerland, 392 . . A. GEI. V.
Forester, Sir Philip, 873; leaves his wife, 875; seen in the mirror, 879; end of, 882 . MAR.'s M. V.
Foresters, Saxon outlaws, 678, 691 . C. RT. V.
Forest of Rotherwood, 506 IVA. II.
Forest ranger, 673 IVA. II.
For fable is love's world, 206 . . G. MNG. I.
Forfarshire scenery of, 418 ANT. I.
Forfeit! a forfeit! 288 G. MNG. I.
Forfeited estates in 1715, 173 . . . WAV. I.
Forgiveness and revenge, 866 . . . PEV. III.
For leagues along the watery way, 439 PIR. III.
Forth, river, 627; upper valley of, 647; Fords of Frew, Rob Roy's escape at, 650 . . R. R. I.
For time will rust the brightest blade, 777 O. MRT. I.
Fort St. George, Madras, 783 . . S. DT. V.
Fortune's Favourite, the, Pirate sloop 433, 488; the crew, 497, 505; blown up, 525 . . PIR. III.
Fortunes of Martin Waldeck, Miss Wardour's tale, 422–426 . ANT. I.
Fortunes of Nigel, composition of novel, note, 714 . . F. NG. III.
Fortune-telling by Norna, 447; rhymes, note, 536 PIR. III.
Fortune Theatre, London, 602 . . F. NG. III.
Fortune, you say, flies from us, motto, 508 . ANT. I.
Forty-five, rebellion of, 462 REDG. IV.
Foster, the English champion, 890 . L. JOCK. IV.
Foster, Captain, at Tully Veolan, 157 WAV. I.
Foster, Janet, Amy's attendant, 197; her demure behaviour, 207; warned by the pedlar, 270; intercepts the poison, 278;

aids Amy's escape, 281; weds Wayland, 350 KEN. III.
Foster, Sir John, 808; meeting with Murray and Morton, 817 . MON. II.
Foster, Tony, 186, 189; interview with Lambourne, 191; quotes Scripture to Amy, 277; tries to administer the poison, 278; prays in his sleep, 346; arranges the trap, 350; his end, 351; note, 351 KEN. III.
Fouqué's, Baron, *Sintram*, 196 . . G. MNG. I.
Fowd of Shetland, note on, 533 . . . PIR. III.
Fox Hotel, St. Ronan's, dinner at, 205; quarrel after, 221 ST. RON. IV.
Fox-hunting, at Charlieshope, 255 . G. MNG. I.
—— Fairservice's contempt for, 579 . . R. R. I.
Foxley, Justice, 441; embarrassment about Herries, 446 . REDG. IV.
France, influence of Louis XI. on, 14 Q. DR. IV.
Francie Macraw. *See* Macraw. . . ANT. I.
Francis Osbaldistone. *See* Osbaldistone. . R. R. I.
Franklins, in time of Richard I., 506 IVA. II.
Franks, Eastern invasion of, 614; Alexius's terms with, 621; haughtiness of, 631; origin of, 647 C. RT. V.
Freebooters, useful to the monks, 718 . MON. II.
Freedom, civil and religious, 728 . . O. MRT. I.
—— is for man alone, 114 Q. DR. IV.
—— St. Paul's charter of, 762 . . O. MRT. I.
Free will and destiny, 451 REDG. IV.
French dinner, 10; French wines, 5 . Q. DR. IV.
—— cookery, 717 F. NG. III.
—— Guards, Scotch regiment of, 740 O. MRT. I.
—— invasion, news of, at Knockwinnock, 511; note on, 520 . . ANT. I.
—— invasion, Peden's terror of, 868 . O. MRT. I.
—— Revolution, the Antiquary on, 483 . ANT. I.
Frew, Fords of, Rob Roy's escape at, 650 . R. R. I.
Friar Tuck, meeting with King Edward, 6; in his cell, 497; his song, the Barefooted Friar, 564; dons the green cassock, 571; in Front-de-Bœuf's cellar, 616; rescued from the ruins, 619; exchanges buffets with Richard, 620; quarrel with the Prior, 624; helps to rescue Richard, 654; strikes at Athelstane's supposed ghost, 664. . IVA. II.
Friend, Sir John, Jacobite brewer, 451 REDG. IV.
Friendships dry up in course of life, 416 . ANT. I.
Froissart, inspiring beauties of, 825 . O. MRT. I.
Front-de-Bœuf and his property, 555; threatens the Jew with torture, 577; summoned to surrender his prisoners, 587; interview with Cedric, 594; struck down by Richard, 605; death, 608 IVA. II.
Fugie warrants in Scotland, 444 . . REDG. IV.
Fugitive poetry, 469 ANT. I.
Fuller's Rents, club-house in, note, 931 . PEV. III.
Funeral, Scotch, description of, 291 . G. MNG. I.
—— of the Highland chief, 328; note, 378 F. M. P. V.
—— of Countess Glenallan, 453 . . . ANT. I.
—— of Steenie Mucklebackit, 470 . ANT. I.
—— charges of Old Mortality, 863 O. MRT. I.
Furnishing, difficulties of, 229 . . ST. RON. IV.
Furniture at Kenilworth, note, 353 . . KEN. III.
—— wreckage of, Shetland, 410 . . . PIR. III.

GABRIEL FAA, the gipsy huntsman, 256, 257; his history, 280; warns Dandie of Harry Bertram's danger, 314; gives evidence as to young Bertram, 349 . . G. MNG. I.
Gaelic, impassioned character of, 663. . R. R. I.
Gaffer Tramp, at Meg Murdockson's execution, 305 HT. MID. II.
Gaita, amazon, note on, 733 C. RT. V.
Galbraith, Major, of Garschattachin, 629; intercedes for Rob Roy, 648 R. R. I.
Galeasso, Duke of Milan, 508 . . A. GEI. V.
Galeotti Marti, the astrologer, interview with Louis and Quentin, 70; despises the King's fee, 72; summoned for execution, 142; told to 'go in peace,' 143; passes the night with the executioners, 144; note on, 180; death of, note, 182 . . Q. DR. IV.
Galilee of a cathedral, note, 243 . . F. M. P. V.
Gallantry, egotistical, in society, 427 . ANT. I.
—— in time of war, 828 MON. II.
Galloway, scene of Old Mortality's wanderings, 862 O. MRT. I.
—— localities and personages connected with, 357 G. MNG. I.
Gallows, rhyme on, 274 G. MNG. I.
—— kind, at Crieff, 173 WAV. I.
Gambling, Croftangry on, 677 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Gamelyn de Guardover, Sir, 508 . . . ANT. I.
Gamester, a true, 611 F. NG. III.
Gammer Sludge, an old dame, 218 KEN. III.
Gander, river, at Gandercleugh, 579 C. RT. V.
Gandercleugh, situation of, 703 . . O. MRT. I.
Ganlesse. *See* Christian, Edward. . . PEV. III.
Gaol captain, of Newgate, 886 . . . PEV. III.
Garagoule, Lou, oracle of, 539 . . A. GEI. V.
Garde Doloureuse, Castle, 548; defence of, 560; arrival of the cattle, 568; the assault, 571; the relief, 574; Eveline's household at, 623; Montfermer summons it to surrender, 643; mutiny in, 648; taken by the King, 650 . . BET. IV.
—— Our Lady of, Eveline's prayer to, 565; appeal to, 617 . . . BET. IV.
Gardener, Dick, porter at Fairladies, 483 REDG. IV.
Gardens, taste for simplicity in, 7 . . Q. DR. IV.
Gardiner, Colonel, 22; first letter to Waverley, 103; orders him to return, 175; fall of, at Preston, 116; notes, 171, 174 . WAV. I.
Garschattachin. *See* Galbraith. . . R. R. I.
Garth, Stewart of, quoted, 726 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Gaze not upon the stars, 27 . . L. MONT. II.
Geddes, Joshua, the Quaker, rencontre with Herries, 384; his ancestry, 389; the assault on his fisheries, 431; challenges the assailants, 433; esteem for Darsie, 460; at Crackenthorp's, 509; arrested by Herries, 515; takes off Peter Peebles from Alan and Green Mantle, 525; note on, 533 REDG. IV.
—— Philip, Joshua's grandfather, 389 REDG. IV.
—— Rachel, Joshua's sister, 390, 431; visited by Alan, 459 . . REDG. IV.
Geierstein, Anne of. *See* Anne. . A. GEI. V.
—— family of, 411 A. GEI. V.
—— Castle of, 395, 402, 411 . . A. GEI. V.
—— Count Albert of, 411; asks back his daughter, 414; marriage of, 438; warns Hagenbach, 451; rescues Arthur from the dungeon, 458; meets Philipson on the road, 477; at the inn, 484; in the Vehme-gericht, 487; speaks for the Burgundian estates, 521; brings the letter to Queen Margaret, 541; interview with Arthur about his daughter, 561; appointed to kill the duke, 563; death of, 566 A. GEI. V.
—— Count Williewald, 411 A. GEI. V.
—— Heinrich of, 411 A. GEI. V.
Geislaer, Peterkin, 104 Q. DR. IV.
Gellatley, David, reception of Waverley, 26; described by Rose, 34; arrival at Glennaquoich, 73; shows himself among the ruins at Tully-Veolan, 148; his mother's character of him, 151 . . . WAV. I.
—— Janet, the witch, 37, 151; her explanations, 153 . . . WAV. I.
Gemmells, Andrew, prototype of Edie, 363 ANT. I.
Genealogical stories told to Waverley, 15 WAV. I.
Geneva print, *Book of Discipline*, 748 O. MRT. I.
Genii and the Saracens, 748 TAL. IV.
Genvil, Ralph, reluctance to serve under the page, 639; advice to the mutineers, 649 . . . BET. IV.
Geoffrey, Sir. *See* Peveril. PEV. III.
Geoffrey Hudson. *See* Hudson. . PEV. III.
George III.'s coronation, 499; note, 534 REDG. IV.
George IV.'s visit to Scotland, 200 F. M. P. V.
George Inn at Melrose, 833 MON. II.
Georgian cavalry, 845 TAL. IV.
Geraldin, Lord. *See* Lovel and Neville. . ANT. I.
—— Sir Aymer de, 488 ANT. I.
German chivalry, 781 TAL. IV.
German inn, character of, 479, 505 . A. GEI. V.
German Jews, 673 IVA. II.
Gertrude, Pavillon. *See* Trudchen. Q. DR. IV.
Gerunto—'Where is Gerunto now?' 287; note on, 354 . . G. MNG. I.
Gessler, Austrian bailiff, 467 A. GEI. V.
Ghauts of Mysore, 794 S. DT. V.
Ghlune Dhu, note on, 698 R. R. I.
Ghost, at Monkbarns, 394 ANT. I.
—— of Avenel, 696 MON. II.
Giamshid, or Jamshid, note, 892 . . . TAL. IV.
Giant-killing, 894 PEV. III.
Gibbet, at Inverary, 42 L. MONT. II.
Gibbet, Bletson's secretary, 57 . . WOOD. V.
Gibbie, Goose. *See* Goose Gibbie. . O. MRT. I.
Gibbies-Knowe, Ellangowan, 338 G. MNG. I.
Gibbon's *History* quoted, 576 . . C. RT. V.
Gibson, Jenny, 292, 293; and the Singleside property, 295 G. MNG. I.
Gideon Pike, 748 O. MRT. I.
Gilbertscleugh, Lady Bellenden's cousin, 717 O. MRT. I.
Giles Gosling. *See* Gosling, Giles. . . KEN. III.
Gilfillan, Gifted, 89; surprised by the Highlanders, 92 . WAV. I.
Gillian, Dame, 576; conversation with the pedlar, 579; her matrimonial relations, 603; ideas of husbands and wives, 625; informs Lacy of Eveline's faithfulness, 652 BET. IV.
Gilliewhackit carried off by Donald Bane, 50 WAV. I.
Gill's *Commentary on the Bible*, 565 F. NG. III.
Gilpin, Bernard, pastor, 889 L. JOCK IV.
Gilsland, Lord Thomas of, 761; dislike to the Scotch, 764; grants Kenneth's dog protection, 768; sorrow over Kenneth, 799; prohibited by the hermit from

obeying the King, 807; note on, 892 . TAL. IV.
Gilsland Spa, Cumberland, 187 . . ST. RON. IV.
—— Mrs. Bertram's interview with Meg Merrilies at, 299 G. MNG. I.
Gin in pailfuls, wine in rivers! 280 G. MNG. I.
Gipsies, Author's acquaintance with, 196; in Scotland, 213; ejectment from Ellangowan, 216; in the Kaim of Derncleugh 261; superstitions, note on, 433; cookery, note on, 436 . . G. MNG. I.
—— in France, time of Louis IX., 35; religion of, 81; notes, 179, 180 Q. DR. IV.
Gipsy robber, death of, 260, 264 . . G. MNG. I.
Giraldus de Barri, preacher of Crusades, 547 BET. IV.
Girder the cooper, indignation at his wife and Caleb, 417; sends a rundlet of brandy to Caleb, 418; entertains Marquis A——, 462 . . B. LM. II.
Girnel, John o', his tomb, 401; more to do with births than burials, 466: the irrepressible story of, 481 . . . ANT. I.
Girnington, Lady, Bucklaw's grand-aunt, 390 B. LM. II.
Gladsmoor, Glenallan's almoner, 461 . ANT. I.
Gladsmuir battlefield, 113. *See also* Prestonpans. WAV. I.
Glamis, Master of, James's reminiscence of, 569 F. NG. III.
Glammis Castle, note on, 172 . . . WAV. I.
—— 459 . . ANT. I.
Glasgow, Covenanters' attack on, 800 O. MRT. I.
—— in 1715, 595; Cathedral, 596; College, scene of duel, 614 . . R. R. I.
—— Bishop of, at Douglas Church, 880 CAS. D. V.
Glasgow's a ceety, man! 591 R. R. I.
Glass, Mrs., of the Thistle in the Strand, 289; interrogates Jeanie, 298; visit from the Duke, 301 HT. MID. II.
Glee for King Charles, song, 101 . . WOOD. V.
Glee-maiden. *See* Louise. F. M. P. V.
Gleichen, lay of the Count of, 625. *See also* Noble Moringer. . BET. IV.
Glenaladale, where Prince Charles landed, note, 60 WAV. I.
Glenallan, Countess, funeral of, 453; old Elspeth's explanations of, 456; tragic story of, 475 . ANT. I.
—— Earl, his lineage, 459; description of, and interview with Edie, 462; visits old Elspeth, 473; interview with Oldbuck, 480; spends the night at Monkbarns, 482; light thrown on his tragic story, 484; turns out to resist the invasion, 515; meets his son, 516 . ANT. I.
Glenallan House, 459–461 ANT. I.
Glendale, Sir Richard, at the Jacobite council, 517; interview with the Prince, 521 . . REDG. IV.
Glendearg, Author's explanation, 681; description, 689 . . MON. II.
Glendinning, Dame. *See* Avenel, Lady. ABB. III.
—— Edward, and the English captain, 691; his studies, 721; expostulates with his brother, 757; wants to avenge his brother, 777; his confession, 801; becomes an inmate of the Monastery, 807 . . MON. II.
—— Edward. *See* Ambrosius, Abbot. . ABB. III.
—— Elspeth, 690; visited by Fathers Philip and Eustace, 699; sorrow for her son, 709 . MON. II.
—— Halbert, reception of the English captain, 691; flies from his books, 721; raises the White Lady, 723; introduced to Sir Piercie, 733; objects to his addresses to Mary, 736; seeks advice from the White Lady, 745; description of him, 750; refuses to be the Abbot's bowbearer, 750; presents Sir Piercie with the bodkin, 752; challenged by him, 754; troubled thoughts, 756; the duel, 759; fall of his antagonist, 761; conducts Warden to Avenel Castle, 764; escape, 775; falls in with the pedlar, 811; interview with Murray, 812; meets the English at Kennaquhair, 817; picks up Catharine's infant, 818; marries Mary Avenel, 823 MON. II.
—— Sir Halbert, return to Avenel Castle, 13; arrival at the Abbey, 53; meeting with his brother, 56; pursues Roland and the Queen at Langside, 161; lineage of, 169 . ABB. III.
—— Simon, 690; ghost of, 697 . . . MON. II.
Glendonwyne lineage, 167 ABB. III.
Glenfruin, conflict at, 682 R. R. I.
Glengarry, M'Donnell of, 24 . . L. MONT. II.
Glengyle, Ghlune Dhu, note on, 698 . . R. R. I.
Glennaquoich House, MacIvor's, 53 . . WAV. I.
Glenprosing, Mrs., a gossip, 375 . . PIR. III.
Glenstrae, MacGregor of, 697, 726 . CH. CAN. IV.
Glentanner, Croftangry's estate, 679; advertisement of sale, 680; revisited, 682 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Glenvarloch, Lord. *See* Nigel. . F. NG. III.
—— Randal, services to the king, 569 . F. NG. III.
Glorieux, Duke Charles's fool, 123, 126; description of, 132; fetches the astrologer from the wine-cup, 141 . . Q. DR. IV.
Glossaries, I. 189, 358, 523, 699, 870. II. 144, 361, 491, 679, 846. III. 173, 355, 538, 725, 974. IV. 185, 355, 535, 730, 895. V. 194, 381, 573, 735, 890.
Glossin, Gilbert, assists old Bertram in electioneering, 211; at the sale of Ellangowan, 231; buys up the estate, 233; unpleasant position in society, 272; interview with Mrs. M'Candlish about Brown, 273; Dirk Hatteraick in his hands, 276; complicity with the tragedy at Warroch Point, 278; joins Hatteraick in the cave, 279; arranges his plot against Brown, 281; rebuff at Woodbourne, 283; encounters young Bertram at Ellangowan, 304; has him imprisoned, 310; at Hatteraick's examination, 347; committed to the county gaol, 349; murder of, in Hatteraick's cell, 350 . . G. MNG. I.
Glover, Catharine, 206; spoken to by the Prince, 208; finds fault with Henry's quarrelsomeness, 212; rescued by him, 219; makes him her Valentine, 223; but refuses his addresses, 227; at confessional with Father Clement, 266; rebukes him, 268; meeting with Conachar, chief of his clan, 269; runs to the Smith's house to inquire after him, 291; informs her father of the Church's indictment against them, 319; her confession about Henry, 320; taken under Charteris's protection, 324; conveyed to Falkland, 347; finds the Prince in the dungeon, 351; threatened by Ramorny, 353; last meeting with Conachar, 372; marriage, 373 F. M. P. V.
—— Simon, 207; his opinion of chivalry, 213; encourages Henry, 215, 224; recognises Rothsay, 219; at the council, 230; hears about Henry and the gleemaiden, 277; presses Henry to avenge Proudfute's murder, 295; urges Catharine to accept the Smith, 318; indicted as a heretic, 319; takes refuge among the Clan Quhele, 325; interview with Father Clement, 329; at the Highland feast, 332; Conachar pleads for his daughter's hand, 334; and confesses his cowardice, 337 . . F. M. P. V.
Glover, Hans, Trudchen's lover, 113. Q. DR. IV.
Glovers of Perth, note, 375 F. M. P. V.
Gloves *versus* shoes, 226 F. M. P. V.
Glowrowrum, Lady, 417, 448, 521 . . PIR. III.
Glumms and Gawreys, note on, 399 . . ANT. I.
Glune-amie, note, 375 F. M. P. V.
Goat, death of the Dwarf's, 108 . . B. DW. II.
Go call a coach, 365 ANT. I.
God bless the King, Dr. Byrom's lines, 448 REDG. IV.
Goddard Crovan, meeting at, 807 . . PEV. III.
Godfrey, Duke of Bouillon, 2, 614; induces the Crusaders to acknowledge Alexius, 630; in council, 690 . . C. RT. V.
—— Duke of Bouillon, 778 TAL. IV.
Godfrey, Sir Edmondsbury, murder of, 960 PEV. III.
Gods, ancient classic, 698 C. RT. V.
God's revenge against murder, 653 . F. NG. III.
Godscroft, Hume of, historian, 805, 808 CAS. D. V.
Goethe's *Goetz of Berlichingen*, 472 A. GEI. V.
Goffe, Captain, the pirate, 497, 520 . . PIR. III.
Gold—yellow dross, 650 C. RT. V.
Golden Candlestick Inn, 77 WAV. I.
Golden Fleece, order of, 522 A. GEI. V.
—— 206 . KEN. III.
—— 48 . Q. DR. IV.
—— Inn, 479 A. GEI. V.
Golden Gate of Constantinople, 588 C. RT. V.
Golden Horn, Constantinople, 709 . C. RT. V.
Goldie, Mrs., of Craigmuie, 149 . . HT. MID. II.
—— assistance to the Author, 669 CH. CAN. IV.
Goldiebirds, Messrs., creditors of Sir Arthur Wardour's, 503 . ANT. I.
Goldthred, the mercer of Cumnor, 184; carousal with Lambourne, 267; his horse seized by Wayland, 285 . . . KEN. III.
Golf, game, 738 S. DT. V.
Golightly, Gibbie, the groom, 416 . ANT. I.
Gomez de Medina, his shipwreck on Fair Isle, note, 535 . . . PIR. III.
Good breeding and ceremony, 525. REDG. IV.
Good devil of Woodstock, 3, 188 . WOOD. V.
Good even, good fair moon, 217 . . HT. MID. II.
Good evening, Sir Priest, 714 . . . MON. II.
Good Hope of Bristol, the wreck of, 391 . PIR. III.
Good people all, I pray give ear, 555 . . R. R. I.
Goodriche, Mr., Catholic priest, 748 S. DT. V.
Good Sir James Douglas. *See* Douglas, Lord James. CAS. D. V.
Goody Jellycot, 28, 104 WOOD. V.
Goose Gibbie, armed for the popinjay, 715; discomfiture of, 718; entrusted with Edith's letter to Major Bellenden, 748; again proves an unreliable messenger, 858; end of, 861 . . O. MRT. I.
Go out, conventional phrase for the Highland rebellion, note, 98 WAV. I.
Gordon, Francis, death of, 360 . . HT. MID. II.

Gordon, Jean, prototype of Meg Merrilies, 196 . G. Mng. I.
—— Madge, Queen of the Yetholm gipsies, 198 G. Mng. I.
Gordon Arms Inn, Kippletringan, 293 G. Mng. I.
Gordon's *Itinerarium, note*, 519 . . . Ant. I.
Gosling, Cicely, of the 'Black Bear,' Cumnor, 189, 212 Ken. III.
—— Giles, landlord of the 'Black Bear,' 181; recognises his nephew Lambourne, 183; guards his daughter, 189, 212; urges Tressilian to flee, 215; objects to Alasco's coins, 266; helps Wayland, 268 Ken. III.
Goss-hawk, 167 Abb. III.
Goukthrapple, Cameronian preacher, 76 . Wav. I.
Gourlay, Ailsie. *See* Ailsie. B. Lm. II.
Gourlay, Ailshie, last professional fool, 510 Ant. I.
Gourmands, imperial Greek, 646 . . C. Rt. V.
Gow, John, the pirate, 361 Pir. III.
Gow, Neil, fiddler, 454 Redg. IV.
—— 273 . St. Ron. IV.
Gow Chrom. *See* Henry Wynd. . F. M. P. V.
Grace, Herries's repugnance to, 378, 382 Redg. IV.
—— Mrs. Blower's anxiety for, 216, 218 St. Ron. IV.
Grace Armstrong, 99; capture and return of, 113 B. Dw. II.
Græme. *See* Roland and Magdalen. Abb. III.
Graffs-lust, 425 A. Gei. V.
Graham, Sir James, riotous attack on his property, note, 533 Redg. IV.
Grahame, Cornet Richard, searches for Burley at the Howff, 721; carries the flag of truce at Drumclog, 766; is shot, 767; note on, 864 . O. Mrt. I.
—— John, of Claverhouse. *See* Claverhouse. O. Mrt. I.
Grahame of Killearn, plundered by Rob Roy, 679, 688, 695 . . R. R. I.
Grand climacteric, 673 Ch. Can. IV.
Grand Cyrus, Mdlle. Scudéry's romance, 748 O. Mrt. I.
Grand Domestic, Alexius's, 620 . . C. Rt. I.
Grand Master of the Templars. *See* Beaumanoir. Iva. II.
—— 763; dissuades Richard against the Hakim, 775; plots against Richard, 779; charges him with arrogance, 813; interrupts Conrade's confession, 849; stabs him, 855; beheaded by Saladin, 855; note on, 892 . . . Tal. IV.
Grand Secret, Alasco's, 279 . . Ken. III.
Grandson, battle of. *See* Granson. A. Gei. V.
Graneangowl, the Rev., reproves Dalgetty at Ardenvohr, 40; preaches at Inverary, 51 L. Mont. II.
Grange, Lady, in St. Kilda, 533 . . Redg. IV.
Granson, Switzerland, battle of, 389, 546 A. Gei. V.
Grant of Glenmoriston, anecdote of, 176 Wav. I.
Grassmarket, Edinburgh, place of public execution, 157 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Gratian, Father, the begging friar, 481 A. Gei. V.
Gray, Gideon, 745; his avocation, 746; delivers Zilia of a son, 748; receives him in charge, 752; his wife bears Menie and dies, 753; separates the disputants, 761; his parting with Richard, 768; death, 7 . . S. Dt. V.
—— Menie, prototype of, 743; birth of, 753; youthful attachment to Middlemas, 754; attentions to, at the ball, 759; affections given to Middlemas, 762; renounced by him, 783; follows him to Madras, 786; interview with Hartley, 788; plot against her, 792; begs aid from Hartley, 793; rescued at Bangalore, 800; return to Scotland, 801 S. Dt. V.
—— Mrs., 746; gives birth to Menie and dies, 753 S. Dt. V.
Grecian Empire, 586; policy of, 594; real weakness of, 629 . . C. Rt. V.
Greek fire, 714 C. Rt. V.
Green, Captain, hanged as a pirate, 143 B. Dw. II.
Green-breeks, 185 Wav. I.
Greenhorn, Gilbert, the attorney, 509 . Ant. I.
Greenleaf, Gilbert, the old archer, 827; hints against Aymer, 830; sent to Pembroke, 837, 839; with Bertram at his studies, 875; seeks the Bloody Sykes, 877; in the church, 879, 883 Cas. D. V.
Green Mantle (Lilias Redgauntlet), says grace, 378; interview with Alan, 395; letter from, about Darsie, 396; meets Darsie at the dance, 413; verses from, 456; introduced to her brother, 493; gives Darsie their family history, 496; at George III.'s coronation, 499; at Crackenthorp's, 508; interview with Alan there, 525; marriage of, 531; note on, 532 . Redg. IV.
Green Ribbon Club, London, 931 . . Pev. III.
Green-room at Monkbarns, 395 . . . Ant. I.
Greenwich, Elizabeth's court at, 247 . Ken. III.
—— Park, scene in, 668 F. Ng. III.
Gregory, Dr., Anecdote of, note, 180 Q. Dr. IV.
—— Dr. James, and Rob Roy, 687 . . R. R. I.
Gregson, Gilbert, the messenger, 494 Redg. IV.
Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, 290 G. Mng. I.
Grey geese of Mucklestane Moor, 96 . B. Dw. I.
Grey spectre, the Bodach Glas, 139, 163 Wav. I.
Grey stone of MacGregor, note, 695 . . R. R. I.
Grief, that cannot be communicated, 468 Pir. III.
Grierson of Lagg, Sir Robert, 532 . . Redg. IV.
Grievances, conning of, 5 Q. Dr. IV.
Griffin, Allan, finds Proudfute's body, 288 F. M. P. V.
Griffiths, Samuel, 367, 373, 497 . . Redg. IV.
Grimesby, Gaffer, of Marlborough, 228 Ken. III.
Grinderson, Gabriel, the attorney, 503 . Ant. I.
Griselda Oldbuck. *See* Oldbuck. . . Ant. I.
Grizzel the chambermaid, 224 . . G. Mng. I.
Groaning malt, note on, 351 G. Mng. I.
Grubbet, Jonathan, the bookseller, 66 Wav. I.
Grumach, Gillespie, 28. *See also* Argyle, Marquis of. L. Mont. II.
Grumball, Dr., the Oxford Jacobite, 518 Redg. IV.
Grumbling, by the Antiquary, 383 . Ant. I.
Gryffyth ap Edwin's wars, 542 . . . Bet. IV.
Guardover, Sir Gamelyn de, 508 . . . Ant. I.
Guards, French, Scotch regiment of, 740 O. Mrt. I.
Guarine, the squire, 599; draws the arrow from the dead Saxon, 645 Bet. IV.
Gude folk, as ye come, 160 Ht. Mid. II.
Gudyill, John, the butler, his 'approaches' to the table with the Burgundy, 743; reading Geneva print, 748; works the falcon, 794, 796; reinstated, 860 . . O. Mrt. I.
Gueldres, Duke of, 66; note, 179 . Q. Dr. IV.
Guenevra, the female dwarf, 758 . . . Tal. IV.
Guiscard, Duke of Apulia, 601 . . C. Rt. V.
Guiyock's curse, popular proverb, 637 . R. R. I.
Gunnerby Hill, near Grantham, highwaymen on, 261 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Gunpowder. white, *pulvis fulminans*, 3 Wood. V.
Gurth, in the forest, 506; recognises Ivanhoe, 525; at the Jew's, 541; falls among the outlaws, 543; defeats the miller at quarterstaff, 545; bound with a halter, 565; escapes in the forest, 569; declared free, 617 . . Iva. II.
Gustavus, Dalgetty's charger, 15; his capabilities, 34; at Inverary, 53; death of, at Inverlochy, 70 L. Mont. II.
Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, 11 L. Mont. II.
Guy Mannering. *See* Mannering, Colonel. G. Mng. I.
—— origin of the novel, 193; author's connection with the scene of, note, 355; note on localities and personages, 456 G. Mng. I.
Guy, king of Jerusalem, 759 Tal. IV.
Gwenwyn of Powys-Land, 547; sues for Eveline's hand, 548; receives the refusal, 552; battle with Berenger, 558; fall of, 577 . . . Bet. IV.
Gwyn, Nell, 912 Pev. III.
Gyneocracy, among Scottish fisher-folk, 520 Ant. I.

Habakkuk Mucklewrath. *See* Mucklewrath. . O. Mrt. I.
Habits with old men and young, 590 . F. Ng. III.
Hackburn, Simon of, Hobbie's friend, 111 B. Dw. II.
Hackston of Rathillet, cruel punishment of, 827, note, 863 O. Mrt. I.
Hadaway, Jack, Nanty Ewart's friend, 478 Redg. IV.
Haddon Hall, Derbyshire, 761 . . Pev. III.
Haddow, Thomas, 806 Cas. D. V.
Hadoway, Mrs., Lovel's lodging-house keeper, 415 . . . Ant. I.
Hagenbach, Archibald, 419; consults with Kilian, 449; warned by the Priest, 451; robs and imprisons the Philipsons, 454; insults the deputies, 464; execution of, 466; note on, 569 . A. Gei. V.
Hagenslaapen, Yungfrauw, Hatteraick's lugger, 209, 218, 222 . G. Mng. I.
Hail to thee, thou holy herb! 64 . . Wav. I.
Hairiebie or Harraby Hill, 445. *See also* Harabeebrow Hill. Redg. IV.
Hakim. *See* Saladin. Tal. IV.
Halcro, Claud, 410; his history, 413; story of the London tailor, 413, 419; song of Mary, 414; story of John Dryden, 419; song of Harold Harfager, 422; attempt to save Mordaunt, 432; his fortune told, 448; sings at night, 459; in the hut, 481; accompanies the Troils to Kirkwall, 505; falls into the hands of the pirates, 506; recognised by Bunce and released, 509; cheers the declining years of the Udaller, 530 Pir. III.
Halcro's and Norna's song, 447; verses, 459 Pir. III.
Halcyon frigate, action with the Pirate, 525 Pir. III.
Haldimund, Sir Ewes, 614 F. Ng. III.
Half-hanged Maggie Dickson, 359 . Ht. Mid. II.
Halket Head, 387 Ant. I.
Halkit, Mr., lawyer, 152 Ht. Mid. II.
Hall, Christopher, royalist officer, 17 . L. Mont. II.
Halliday, Tom, the dragoon, at Neil Blane's, 721; allows Edith and Jenny access to Morton, 744; supports Evandale, 859 O. Mrt. I.
Hamako. *See* Theodoric of Engaddi. . Tal. IV.
Hameline, Countess, 62; journey to Liége, 73; her billet to Quentin, 99;

escape from the castle, 101; note to Isabelle on her marriage to La Marck, 169 . . Q. Dr. IV.
Hamet, the Templar's squire, 509 . Iva. II.
Hamilton, Lanarkshire, Covenanters' council at, 180 . . O. Mrt. I.
Hamilton, Lady Emily, Evandale's sister, 837 O. Mrt. I.
Hamilton, Robert, of Preston, at Drumclog, 865 O. Mrt. I.
Hamilton of Wishaw, quoted, 888 . Cas. D. V.
Hamish Baen. *See* Mac-Tavish. . H. Wid. IV.
Hamish Macgregor. *See* Macgregor. . R. R. I.
Hammer, throwing the, 359 F. M. P. V.
Hammorgaw, Fairservice's friend, 601 . R. R. I.
Handfasting, 772 Mon. II.
Hangman, or lockman, note on, 357 Ht. Mid. II.
Hannah Irwin. *See* Irwin, Hannah. St. Ron. IV.
Hanover, House of, Mac-Ivor's declamation against, 68 . . . Wav. I.
Hans, the hermit boatman, 475 . . A. Gei. V.
Hansen, Neil, a Flemish soldier, 561 . Bet. IV.
Hanse towns, 387 A. Gei. V.
Harabee-brow Hill, near Carlisle, 304. *See also* Hairiebie Hill. Ht. Mid. II.
Harbothel, Fabian. *See* Fabian.
Hardie, Mr., lawyer, 152 Ht. Mid. II.
Harfra. *See* Stourburgh. Pir. III.
Harlaw, battle, note on, 520 Ant. I.
Harlequin, history of, 668 Ch. Can. IV.
Harold, King of England, 616 . . C. Rt. V.
—— battle at Stamford, 672; Cedric's tale of, 574 Iva. II.
Harold Harfager, song, 422 Pir. III.
Harpax, the centurion, 591; at the lists, 713, 728 C. Rt. V.
Harrington's, Sir John, character of Queen Elizabeth, 272, 309, 353 Ken. III.
Harrington's Rota Club, note, 15 . Wood. V.
Harrison, Lady Bellenden's steward, 714; carouse with Bothwell, 743 O. Mrt. I.
Harrison, General, Sir Henry Lee's opinion of, 15; description of, 53; defies the fiends in Woodstock, 58; at the battle of Armageddon, 67; attacked by Wildrake, 69 Wood. V.
Harry Wakefield. *See* Wakefield. Two Dr. IV.
Harthill Walk, trysting-tree in, 616 . . Iva. II.
Hartley, Adam, 758: quarrels with Middlemas about Menie, 760: discovers her affection for Middlemas, 762; rescues him from the Hospital, 771; cures Witherington's children, 774; shows the ring to Mrs. W., 776; refuses Middlemas the document, 783; treats Barak el Hadgi at Madras, 784; sees Menie, 786; interview with her, 788; sets off to rescue Menie, 794; seeks Barak at Seringapatam, 796; meets Hadgi and Hyder Ali, 797; arrival at Bangalore, 798; death, 801 S. Dt. V.
Hartley-Nick, a narrow pass, 766 . . Pev. III.
Harz Mountains, scene of the Fortunes of Martin Waldeck, 422 . Ant. I.
Hassan, the story-teller, 824 Tal. IV
Hastie, Robin, the innkeeper, 472 Redg. IV.
Hastings, battle of, 616 C. Rt. V.
Hattely, or Hautlieu, Maurice de, 856 Cas. D. V.
Hatteraick, Dirk. *See* Dirk. . G. Mng. I.
Haunted islets, note, 455 Pir. III.
Haunted room, at Monkbarns, 393. . Ant. I.
Hautlieu, Margaret. *See* Ursula, Sister. Cas. D. V.
Hautlieu, Marquis of, 6 Q. Dr. IV.
Hautlieu, or Hattely, Maurice de, 856 Cas. D. V.
Hawes Fly, 365; Inn at Queensferry, 367 Ant. I.
Hawking party of Garde Doloureuse, 627 Bet. IV.
Hawkins, the pirate boatswain, 498. . Pir. III.
Hayraddin Maugrabin, acts as guide to the Ladies de Croye, 80; tricks on the monks, 84; his conspiracy against the escort, 86; tells Quentin's fortune, 91; receives his hire, 93; seen leaving the castle, 97; leads Quentin to the Ladies de Croye, 100; sent as herald from La Marck, 159; chased by the hounds, 162; his execution, 164; gives his secret to Quentin, makes him his heir, 165 Q. Dr. IV.
Hayston, Frank. *See* Bucklaw. . . B. Lm. II.
Hazeldine, Philip. *See* Tomkins. . Wood. V.
Hazelside, Dickson's farm, 814, 818 . Cas. D. V.
Hazlewood, Charles, 230; reads with Dominie Sampson for Lucy's sake, 234; his visits to Woodbourne, 245; attentions to Lucy, 266; accidentally wounded by Brown, 271; misconstrued, 275, 300; is warned by Meg, 321; in Hatteraick's cave, 341 G. Mng. I.
—— Sir Robert, 305; receives Harry Bertram as a prisoner, 307; his sententious reasons for not parting with the dragoons, 321; averse to discharge young Bertram, 337; visits him in state, 352 G. Mng. I.
Headrigg, Cuddie, deplores his mother's whiggery, 732; enters Morton's service, 733; expelled from Milnwood, 739; recommended to Claverhouse's 'attention,' 752; a captive with Morton, 760; recounts his sorrows, 760; becomes his wally-de-shamble, 762; pillages after the battle, 788; attempt to enter Tillietudlem, 797; affectionate adieu to Jenny, 809; brings a rescue to his master, 823; will 'testify' nothing, 828; his prevarications in court, 829; questioned by Morton, 834; his wife's recognition of Morton, 836; shoots Basil Olifant, 859; reinstated, 860 O. Mrt. I.
Headrigg, Mause, expelled from Tillietudlem, 730; lifts up her testimony, 737; as a sparrow on the housetop, 763; at Drumclog, chides Kettledrummle, 771; begs her son not to sully the 'bridal garment,' 828 O. Mrt. I.
Healths, drinking of, puritanic objections to, 748 Pev. III.
Heart of Midlothian, puns upon, 154. *See also* Tolbooth. . Ht. Mid. II.
—— 669 . Ch. Can. IV.
Hearts and crystal, their fragility, 328 G. Mng. I.
Heatherblutter, John, the gamekeeper, 151 Wav. I.
Heaven first, in its mercy, taught mortals their letters, 237 G. Mng. I.
Heaven knows its time; the bullet has its billet, motto, 697 . . C. Rt. V.
Heavysterne, Rev. Dr., sits down upon the calthrops, 372; in the Green-room, 395 . . . Ant. I.
Hector M'Intyre. *See* M'Intyre. . . Ant. I.
Hedge priests, 677 Iva. II.
Heggie, Anne. *See* Irwin, Hannah. St. Ron. IV.
Helen Macgregor. *See* Macgregor. . R. R. I.
Helen Walker. *See* Walker, Helen. . Ht. Mid. II.
Helots among the Highlanders, 110 . Wav. I.
Helter Skelter Club, 195 St. Ron. IV.
Helyer of Swartaster, a cavern, 451 . Pir. III.
Henderson, Elias, the chaplain, 98; interview with Roland, 104; admonishes the Queen, 106 . . . Abb. III.
Henpecked husbands, 836 O. Mrt. I.
Henry II., before Garde Doloureuse Castle, 649; his domestic quarrels, 650 Bet. IV.
Henry Ashton. *See* Ashton, Henry. . B. Lm. II.
Henry Morton. *See* Morton. . O. Mrt. I.
Henry Seyton. *See* Seyton, Henry. . . Abb. III.
Henry Warden. *See* Warden. Mon. II.; Abb. III.
Henry Wynd (Gow Chrom), 209, 217; stabbed at by Conachar, 211; his quarrelsomeness found fault with by Catharine, 2 rescues her on St. Val tine's morn, 218; kis by Catharine, 223; his addresses discourag 227; takes home glee-maiden, 255; abode, 257, 358; exp tulates with his hou keeper, 257; Fat Clement's ill opinion him, 267; Dwining's sign against him, 2 slandered, 277; gi refuge to Proudfute, 2 visit from Catharine, 2 his tears, 295; becon Maud Proudfute's cha pion, 300; takes Bonthron's glove, 3 combat, 311; cold n of Catharine, 357; gi his best hauberk Eachin's use, 359; jo the combat on the In 364; slays the Hamn man, 366; and Torq 368; marriage, 373; n 375 . . F. M. P.
Henry Wynd, note on, 6 R. R
Henshaw, Kitt. *See* Henshaw. F. M. P.
Herald, the false, 159; n on, 183 . Q. Dr.
Heraldry, 675 . Iva.
—— ideas of, 564 R. R
—— questions in, 161 Q. Dr.
Herasmus Holiday. Holiday. . . Ken.
Here has been such stormy encounter, mo 426 . . . Ant.
Here lies ane saint prelates surly, 869 O. Mrt.
Heresy, Father Phil admonition, 699 Mon.
—— in Scotland, 264, 3 indictment against Glovers, 319; penalties 329 . . F. M. P.
Hereward the Varang 588; attempted assass tion of, 593; in duced to the impe court, 600; agita at Anna's recital of battle, 609; informs court about Engla 616; sounded by Achi to join the conspira 619; dogged by D enes, 623; interview Agelastes, 625; who minds him of Bertha, 679; challenges Co Robert, 632, 648; counter with him in dungeon, 662; watch in the philosopher's dens, 669; tells Ach of Count Robert's esc 675; meets with Ber 676; smashes the deity, 677; Bertha's his parentage, 677; forms Alexius of the 683; sends Bertha to Crusaders for assista 689; supports Anna the dungeon, 701; bat with Count Ro 726; repairs with hi Palestine, 727; marri 730; and return to land, 732 C. Rt
Here we have one h motto, 48 Woo

Herezeld in feudal tenures, note, 345 . G. Mng. I.
Heriot, George, introductory remarks on, 541; interview with Ramsay and Moniplies, 557; visit to Nigel, 559; visit to the King with the plate, 566; presents Nigel's petition, 568; visit to the Tower, 677; hints at the disposal of his property, 679; discovers Margaret 680; interview with the King about the rubies, 689; note on, 715 F. Ng. III.
Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh, 541; building of, note, 714 F. Ng. III.
Hermione, the fair Persian, 441 . . A. Gei. V.
Hermione, Lady, appearance at Heriot's, 574; Moniplies' account of, 577; her apartments, 625; connection with Dalgarno, 631; her case before the King, 692; married to Dalgarno, 695 . . F. Ng. III.
Heron, Sir George, of Chip-chase, 818 Mon. II.
Herries of Birrenswork, rescues Darsie on the Solway, 375; at Brokenburn House, 377; interview with Mr. Fairford, senior, 381; threatens the Quaker, 384; Rachel's account of, 392; share in the rebellion, 398; rescues Darsie a second time, 436; brings him before the justice, 440; the mark on his forehead, 443; recognised by Peebles, 445; burns the warrant, 446; narrates his history to Darsie, 449; connivance at his outlawry, 458; at the coronation, 499; his intrigues, 501; implores Darsie to join the insurrection, 504; meeting with Alan at Crackenthorp's, 513; in the council of the conspirators, 517; unpleasant interview with the Prince, 521; departure with him, 529; and enters the cloister, 531 Redg. IV.
Heskett, Ralph, the innkeeper, 863 Two Dr. IV.
He that is down, 269 Ht. Mid. II.
Hettly, May, Deans's cotter, 247 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Heugh-foot, reception of Hobbie and Earnscliff, 99; burnt by Westburnflat, 111 . B. Dw. II.
Heukbane. Mrs., at the post office, 411 . Ant. I.
He was the flower of Stoke's red field, 215 Ken. III.
Hewit, Godfrey Bertram's natural son, 337, 348 G. Mng. I.
Hey for Cavaliers, 213 Ht. Mid. II.
—— 743 . . Pev. III.
—— 29 . Wood. V.
Hie away, over bank, over brae, 34 . . Wav. I.
Higg the cripple, at Rebecca's trial, 639; carries her message for a champion, 643 . . Iva. II.
High Commissioner to Scotch Kirk Assembly, 341 . . Ht. Mid. II.
High deeds achieved, 563 Iva. II.
Highgate, the last of London, 537 . R. R. I.
High jinks, played by Pleydell, 287; note on, 354 G. Mng. I.
Highland, Highlands, village in 1745, 23; chiefs and 'tail,' 44; patriarchal power of, 52; hospitality of, 54; minstrelsy, 57; surgery, 64; fling and reel at Glennaquoich, 74; politeness, 76; Helots, 110; discipline, note on, 173; policy, note on, 173 Wav. I.
—— army, Dalgetty's ideas of. 14; inconvenience of, 57 . . L. Mont. II.
—— good manners of, 697 Ch. Can. IV.
—— meeting of, at Darnlinvarach, 27; patriarchal power of, 45 L. Mont. II.
—— clans opposed to the Presbyterians, 7 L. Mont. II.
—— hospitality, 700 H. Wid. IV.
—— hunting, note on, 64 Wav. I.
—— manners, end of 14th century, 107; travelling in, 325; feast, 332; clans, barrier battle of, 361; funeral, 328; note, 378. *See also* Clans. F. M. P. V.
—— regiments, when first raised, 712 H. Wid. IV.
—— Bailie Jarvie's description of, 620, 622 R. R. I.
—— superstitions, 69, 84 L. Mont. II.
Highlander throwing his purse, 740 O. Mrt. I.
Highlanders, Talbot's dislike to, 133; march into England, 133; three things useless to, 58 . Wav. I.
—— at Bothwell Brig, 810, 818 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— ravages of, in a hostile country, 65 L. Mont. II.
—— fidelity of, 726 Ch. Can. IV.
—— good cattle-drivers, 859 . . Two Dr. IV.
—— in the Jacobite Rebellion, 359 Redg. IV.
—— moral code of, 706 H. Wid. IV.
Highlandmen are pretty men, ballad, 174 Wav. I.
Highland Widow, tale of, 672. *See* also MacTavish Ch. Can. IV.
High o'er the eastern steep the sun is beaming, motto, 342 . . . Ken. III.
Highwaymen, time of Rob Roy, 538 . . R. R. I.
—— on Gunnerby Hill, 261 Ht. Mid. II.
Hilarius, Brother, the refectioner, 739 . Mon. II.
Hildebrod, Duke, in council. 621; visit to Nigel, 648; acts the sheriff, 656 F. Ng. III.
Hillary, Tom, the attorney's apprentice, 756, 757; recruiting agent at Middlemas, 764; induces Middlemas to go to India, 767 S. Dt. V.
Hillslap Tower, and Glendearg, 828 Mon. II.
His bairns! 80 . Wav. I.
Historian, the impartial, 696 . . C. Rt. V.
History, drawn on by the Author, 737 . Pev. III.
—— picturesque period of, 542 . . F. Ng. III.
Hobbie Elliot, benighted on Mucklestane Moor, 96; discovers Elshie the Dwarf, 98; his dog worries the Dwarf's goat, 108; finds his house burnt and bride carried off, 111; asks advice of Elshie, 113; attacks Westburnflat Tower, 116; receives back his bride, 118; enters Ellieslaw Castle, 139 . . B. Dw. II.
Hobby-horse revel, 168 Abb. III.
Hob Miller, of Twyford, 164 . . . Bet. IV.
Hob Miller, visit to Glendearg, 725 . Mon. II.
Hochspringen, Duke of, 442 A. Gei. V.
Hodges, Joe, Westmoreland landlord, 247 G. Mng. I.
Hodges, John, Waverley's servant, 124 . Wav. I.
Hodgson, Captain, the Puritan, 953 Pev. III.
Hodnet Library, Shropshire, 736 . . Pev. III.
Hoff-narr. *See* Schwanker. Tal. IV.
Hog in har'st at Glennaquoich, 54 . Wav. I.
Holdenough, Rev. Nehemiah, 8; pulled down from the pulpit, 9; welcomes Markham, 48; defies the Woodstock ghost, 58; his story of the civil war, 82; dispute with Cromwell, 147; recognises Rochecliffe, 175 Wood. V.
Holiday, Erasmus, the schoolmaster, 218; composes the addresses to the queen, 296 . Ken. III.
Holland, Morton's experiences in, 846 O. Mrt. I.
Holland, Sir Richard, 148 Abb. III.
Holm Peel. *See* Peel Castle. Pev. III.
Holms, plains, 811 Cas. D. V.
Holy Land, Author's nonacquaintance with, 733 Tal. IV.
Holyrood Abbey, legend of its foundation, 725 Ch. Can. IV.
Holyrood Palace, 725; as an asylum for debt, 673, 725 . . Ch. Can. IV.
—— time of tale, 66 Abb. III.
—— Waverley at, 100; ball at, 106 . . Wav. I.
—— showing the apartments of, 200 . F. M. P. V.
Home, Author of 'Douglas,' escape from Doune, note, 174 . . . Wav. I.
Hone's *Every-Day Book*, 1 Wood. V.
Honeymoons, ancient and modern, 177 Q. Dr. IV.
Honeywood, Colonel, at Clifton, 177 . Wav. I.
Honour among the Borderers, 830 . Mon. II.
Hood, Robin. *See* Robin Hood *and* Locksley. Iva. II.; Ht. Mid. II.; Abb. III.
Hookem, Lawyer, 165 Wav. I.
Horse, Cardinal Balue's runaway, 53 Q. Dr. IV.
—— attention to, 480 A. Gei. V.
—— Cuttyawar breed, 801 S. Dt. V.
—— Eastern respect for, 745; Arab, 826 Tal. IV.
—— Highlanders' superstitious fear of, 69 L. Mont. II.
—— Claverhouse's black, 751, 823; note on, 865 O. Mrt. I.
Horse-dealing, 824 Pev. III.
Horsemanship, estimation of, 551 R. R. I.
Horse-shoe, mark of the Redgauntlets, 406, 450 Redg. IV.
Horse-shoeing contract, for the Hawes Fly, 367 Ant. I.
Hospital at Ryde, scenes in, 769 . . S. Dt. V.
Hospitality, ancient, 489 B. Lm. II.
—— husbands' tyrannical, 946 . . . Pev. III.
—— in Shetland, 464 Pir. III.
See also Highland chiefs, *and* Highland hospitality.
Hospitium, Oldbuck's, 374 Ant. I.
Hostelrie of St. Michael, 74 Abb. III.
Hostler, Jack, of the Crane Inn, Marlborough, 228 Ken. III.
Houghmanstares, Perthshire, 378 F. M. P. V.
Houghton, Job, 166 Wav. I.
—— Sergeant, 82; found dying, 112; incited to mutiny by Ruffin, 124 Wav. I.
Hour's come, and the man, 343 . . G. Mng. I.
Howard, Lord Henry, note, 717 . . F. Ng. III.
Howatson, Lucky, the midwife, 203 . G. Mng. I.
Howden, Mrs., disappointed at Porteous's reprieve, 164; indignant at verdict on Effie, 243 Ht. Mid. II.
Howff, Piper's Inn, 719; revisited by Morton, 848 O. Mrt. I.
Howgate Inn, on Peebles road, 194 St. Ron. IV.
Howie, James, the new factor, 151 . Wav. I.
Howlet poem, 148 Abb. III.
How long, O Lord, holy and true! 824 O. Mrt. I.
Hoy Island, 537 Pir. III.
Hubert, St., 179 Q. Dr. IV.
Hubert the archer, his match with Locksley, 552 Iva. II.
Hudson, Dr. Michael, note on, 184 . Wood. V.
Hudson, Sir Geoffrey, the dwarf, in Newgate, 887; confined in a pie, 889; contempt for giants, 894; acts

cook in the cell, 897; before the Chief Justice, 917; defends himself against the mob, 922; brought before the King inside a violoncello, 936; impeaches Buckingham, 936, 945; note on, 962 . PEV. III.
Hudson, Tam, gamekeeper, 249 . . G. MNG. I.
Hughes' *Journey through France*, 10 Q. DR. IV.
Hugo de Lacy. *See* Lacy, Hugo de . . BET. IV.
Hugonet, Hugo, the minstrel, 825, 826 CAS. D. V.
Hume of Godscroft, historian, 805, 808 CAS. D. V.
Humgudgeon, Corporal, 161, 167; thrown down by Albert, 171 . WOOD. V.
Hunsdon, Lord, bears off Amy, 321 . . KEN. III.
Hunt at Charlies-hope, 255 G. MNG. I.
—— in Douglasdale, 832 CAS. D. V.
—— at Glennaquoich, 62–64 . . . WAV. I.
—— at Osbaldistone Hall, 551 . . . R. R. I.
Hunting, Highland, 64 WAV. I.
Huntingdon, Earl of, at Elizabeth's court, 309 KEN. III.
Huntingdon, Earl of. *See* Kenneth, Sir. TAL. IV.
Huntinglen, Lord, asks his boon from the King, 586; and succeeds with Nigel's petition, 587; indignation at his son, 692; note on, 716 . . F. NG. III.
Hunting mass, 48 ABB. III.
Huntsman, image of, appears to Lovel, 397 ANT. I.
Husband, better to have a wife-beater than a coward, 74 . . Q. DR. IV.
—— henpecked, 836 O. MRT. I.
—— tyrannical hospitality of, 946 . . PEV. III.
Hutcheon, the serving-man, 406 . REDG. IV.
Hyder Ali, 772; as a fakir, 784; orders Menie to be given up, 800; interrupts his son, 800 S. DT. V.
Hymbercourt, Baron de, 122; brings bad news, 132 . . Q. DR. IV.
Hyndman, usher at Holyrood, 69 . . ABB. III.
Hypocrisy like sincerity in form, 830 . . PEV. III.
Hysterica passio, 653 R. R. I.

I ARRAIGN not thy character, 366 . . ANT. I.
I asked of my harp, 655 BET. IV.
I fear the devil worst when gown and cassock, motto, 875 . . . PEV. III.
If I hit mast, and line, and bird, 410 . A. GEI. V.
If you fail honour here, motto, 430 . ANT. I.
I glance like the wild fire, 213 . . HT. MID. II.
I knew Anselmo, motto, 359 ANT. I.
Ilderim. *See* Saladin. TAL. IV.
Ilderton, Miss, has her fortune told by the Dwarf, 105 . . B. DW. II.
I'll give thee, good fellow, 564 . . . IVA. II.
Imagination, pleasure of, in penetrating into obscurity, 599 . R. R. I.
—— affecting the fine arts, 398; vagaries of, 396 ANT. I.
—— strains on, 578 C. RT. V.
—— of the Author, 722 F. NG. III.
—— of Waverley, 16 WAV. I.
I'm Madge of the country, 269 . . HT. MID. II.
Immortal Guard, Greek, 607; mutiny of, 723 C. RT. V.
Imprisonment for debt, note, 497 . . . ANT. I.
Incantations, 520 . ANT. I.
Inch-Cailleach, Loch Lomond, 610 . . R. R. I.
Inch-Grabbit. Bradwardine of, 151 . . WAV. I.
Inch of Perth, scene of the combat, 197, 362; note on, 378 . . F. M. P. V.
Independence, youthful, 537 R. R. I.
Independents and Presbyterians, 9 L. MONT. II.
—— 763 . . PEV. III.
—— 12 . WOOD. V.
India, true place for a Scot, 740; the British El Dorado, 764; recruits for, 772; Author's non-acquaintance with, 802 S. DT. V.
Indians of New England, tale of, 797 . PEV. III.
Indulgence, Black, 722; contest over, 785; note, 866 . . O. MRT. I.
Indulgences to the monks, 830 . . . MON. II.
Ingelram de Couci, English soldier, 409 A. GEI. V.
Inglewood, Justice, 553; burns the declarations against Frank, 559; hears of Jacobite doings about the Hall, 670 R. R. I.
Inglis, Corporal, mutinies in Tillietudlem, 807; plotting against Evandale, 857; death of, 859; note on, 868 . O. MRT. I.
In Judah's land God is well known, 765 O. MRT. I.
Inn, good opening for a tale, 181 . . . KEN. III.
—— old English, 539 R. R. I.
—— German, 479, 505 A. GEI. V.
—— Scottish, 171 WAV. I.
—— charges in Scotland, 353 . . ST. RON. IV.
Innocence, conscious, support from, 822 O. MRT. I.
Innocents, idiots, 27 WAV. I.
Inscription of the mitre at Monkbarns, 371 ANT. I.
In so shifting a scene, who would confidence place? 972 . . . PEV. III.
In the bonnie cells of Bedlam, 263 HT. MID. II.
In the wide pile, by others heeded not, 563 R. R. I.
Intolerance, Covenanters', 727 . . O. MRT. I.
Invasion, alarm of, note, 520 ANT. I.
—— 143 . B. DW. II.
Inverary, 42 L. MONT. II.
Inverlochy, battle of, 67 L. MONT. II.
Invernahyle, Stewart of, 186 WAV. I.
—— 669 . CH. CAN. IV.
Invershalloch, at Aberfoil inn, 630 . . R. R. I.
Inversnaid fort, captured by Rob Roy, 689 R. R. I.
Io d'Elicona nienta, 61 WAV. I.
Ireby, the squire, 862 TWO DR. IV.
Irene, Empress, 602; quarrel with her husband, 685; counsels Anna to forgive the Cæsar, 702 C. RT. V.
Irish, Dalgetty's opinion of, 14 . . L. MONT. II.
—— officers, 174 WAV. I.
Irmen Pillars, of Germany, 386 . . A. GEI. V.
Irongray, resting-place of Helen Walker, 150 HT. MID. II.
Irritation, effects on youth and old age, 401 PIR. III.
Irving, John, Author's friend, 3 . . WAV. I.
Irwin, Hannah, 325, 347 ST. RON. IV.
Isaac, king of Cyprus, 839 TAL. IV.
Isaac the Jew, at Rotherwood, 519; warned of his danger by Ivanhoe, 524; at the tournament, 529; opposed by Wamba, 531; his concern for Ivanhoe's armour and horse, 537; reception of Gurth, 541; counts the zecchins, 542; falls in with Cedric, 568, 602; incarcerated in Torquilstone, 573; implores Front-de-Bœuf for his daughter, 579; reasons for attending to Ivanhoe, 600; rescued from the dungeon, 619; names the Prior's ransom, 622; before the Grand Master, 632; his sorrow over his daughter, 643 . . . IVA. II.
Isabella Vere. *See* Vere, Isabella. . B. DW. II.
Isabella Wardour. *See* Wardour. . ANT. I.
Isabelle de Croye, in the inn, 25; her song of County Guy, 28; reason of her journey, 42; demanded back by Crèvecœur, 49; in the gallery with Joan and Orleans, 62; attentions from the Duke, 64; conspiracy against her by the king, 65; journey to Liége, 73; dresses Quentin's wound, 79; her trust in him, 90; rescued from La Marck, 104; escape to Pavillon's house, 110; flight from Liége, 113; falls in with Crèvecœur and separated from Quentin, 116; proposed alliance with Orleans, 150; meeting with Quentin at the grating, 153; before the Council, 156; renounces Orleans, 167; offered as a prize to the slayer of La Marck, 168 Q. DR. IV.
Isle of Man. *See* Man. PEV. III.
Isle of Wight, 769 S. DT. V.
Isles, Lord of the, 360 PIR. III.
Ismail, the infidel, 592 C. RT. V.
Israel, Nathan ben, physician, 629, 643 IVA. II.
Is't here they sell the fugie warrants? 444 REDG. IV.
Ital Schreckenwald. *See* Schreckenwald. A. GEI. V.
Italian rhymer, note on, 353 KEN. III.
Itinerarium Septentrionale, 519 . . ANT. I.
It is not the lucre, 234 G. MNG. I.
It is the bonnie butcher lad, 217 . . HT. MID. II.
It's a far cry to Lochow, 633 R. R. I.
It's up Glenbarchan's braes I gaed, 31 . . WAV. I.
It was a ship, and a ship of fame, 507 . . PIR. III.
It was the noble Moringer, 540 . . . BET. IV.
Ivanhoe, as a palmer, 512, 516; summoned to Rowena's apartment, 522; guides Isaac from Rotherwood, 524; receives harness and horse from him, 526; enters the lists at Ashby, 534; chooses Rowena his Queen of Beauty, 538; receives ransoms from the vanquished, 540; succoured by the Black Knight, 549; wounded and discovered, 550; nursed by Rebecca, 599; at Torquilstone, 603; rescued from the flames, 613; joins Richard, 656; acknowledged by his father, 661; rescues Rebecca, 667; nuptials with Rowena, 670 IVA. II.
—— the novel, Author's explanations, 495 IVA. II.
Iverach, Stewart of, 629, 630 . . . R. R. I.

JABOS, Jock. *See* Jock Jabos. . G. MNG. I.
Jackanape. *See* Major Weir. REDG. IV.
Jackmen, 711 MON. II.
Jacobite—Jacobites, rising, 1715, of the MacGregors, 686, 687; in Northumberland, 594; among the clans, 622; premonitions of, 662; the rupture, 667; account of, 674 R. R. I.
—— of the Borders, 143 B. DW. II.
—— enthusiasm in 1745, 359, 448, 462; conspirators at Crackenthorp's, 517; dispersed by General Campbell, 528 . REDG. IV.
—— meeting at Ellieslaw Castle, 126 B. DW. II.
—— sentiments in England, 174; sympathizers, Author's acquaintance with, 170 . . WAV. I.
Jacqueline. *See* Isabelle de Croye. . Q. DR. IV.
Jail captain, Newgate, 886 PEV. III.
James I., 542; description of, 566; surprised by Heriot with the petition, 568; questions Nigel in Latin, 585; grants the petition, 587; accosted by Nigel in Greenwich Park, 668; fear of firearms, 683; delight over the recovered rubies, 688; hides Monilies behind the arras, 690;

concern for Huntinglen's health, 692; orders Dalgarno to wed Hermione, 694; exculpates Nigel in council, 696; the royal *ear* in the Tower, 697; finds a pedigree for Margaret Ramsay, 709; gives her away, 711; reception of Martha Trapbois, 712; debauchery in his reign, 714; proclamation against the Scotch emigrants, 715; notes on, 716, 718, 719 F. Ng. III.
James I. of Scotland, murder of, 686 . F. Ng. III.
James of the Needle, tailor, 104 . . . Wav. I.
James of Thirlwall, 824 Cas. D. IV.
Jamieson, the nurse, 748; devotion to Middlemas, 753, 757; tells him of his parents, 755 S. Dt. V.
Jamshid, legend of, 892 Tal. IV.
Jan, dances with Dorcas, 455 Redg. IV.
Janet, Old. *See* Gellatley, Janet. . . Wav. I.
Janet Dalrymple, prototype of the Bride of Lammermoor, 366 . B. Lm. II.
Janet Foster. *See* Foster, Janet. . Ken. III.
Janet Lightoheel, 348 G. Man. I
Janet MacEvoy. *See* MacEvoy. . Ch. Can. IV.
Janet of Tomahourich, 860 Two Dr. IV.
Jan von Eulen, Journal of, 181 . . . Wav. I.
Jarvie, Nicol, visits Owen in gaol, 606; scene with Rob Roy, 608; has Frank and Owen to breakfast, 613; his one o'clock dinner, 618; his opinion of Rob Roy, 620; sets out for the Highlands, 624; reproves Andrew, 625, 626; fights the Highlander at Aberfoil, 630; hanging in mid-air, 640, 641; brought before Helen MacGregor, 642; protests against Morris' death, 645; his message to Rob Roy's captors, 646; advice about Rob Roy's sons, 657; departure home, 661; embraced by Helen MacGregor, 663; his assurance of financial aid to Rob Roy, 664; rewarded by Osbaldistone, senior, 666; makes Mattie Mrs. Jarvie, 667 . R. R. I.
Jasper, the ploughman at Glendearg, 731 Mon. II.
Jaup, Alison, 746, 748 S. Dt. V.
Jaup, Saunders, a farmer, 302 . . St. Ron. IV.
Jealousy, and crossed love, 757 . . O. Mrt. II.
—— a cure for, 204 Ken. III.
Jeanie Deans. *See* Deans, Jeanie. Ht. Mid. II.
Jeddart Staff, 18 . Abb. III.
—— 696 . F. Ng. III.
Jedediah Cleisbotham, 703 O. Mrt. I.
—— introductory address of, 578 . C. Rt. V.
Jekyl, Captain, letter from Etherington, 268, 292; letter to Etherington, 299; mediates between him and Tyrrel, 306; bored by Touchwood, 313 St. Ron. IV.
Jellycot, Goody, 28; Rochecliffe's *pis aller*, 104 Wood. V.
Jem, Reginald Lowestoffe's boy, 618 . F. Ng. III.
Jenkins, Buckingham's bully, 882 . Pev. III.
Jenny, the Scots laundress, 579 . . F. Ng. III.
Jenny Caxon. *See* Caxon. Ant. I.
Jenny Dennison, Edith's maid, enumerates her sweethearts, 743; overcomes Halliday's scruples, 744; offers Morton her plaid to escape, 746; estimation of her mistress's suitors, 756; indignation at Morton and Cuddie's joining the Covenanters, 792; scalds Cuddie with the brose, 797; sent out from the famished garrison, 804; facetious adieu to Cuddie, 809; kissed by Halliday before Cuddie's face, 761; tries to console her mistress, 776; accosted by Morton, 833; altercation with her husband, 836 O. Mrt. I.
Jenny Gibson. *See* Gibson, Jenny. . G. Mng. I.
Jenny Rintherout. *See* Rintherout. . . Ant. I.
Jerningham, Tom, Buckingham's valet, 862; made to give back the purse, 902; note on the name, 961 . . . Pev. III.
Jerome, Father. *See* Abbot of St. Bride. Cas. D. V.
Jerusalem, Assize of, 778 Tal. IV.
Jess Cantrips, Nanty's sweetheart, 477 Redg. IV.
Jesters, kept by the nobility, 27 . . . Wav. I.
Jew, the. *See* Isaac the Jew. . . Iva. II.
Jews, persecution of, time of Richard I., 525 Iva. II.
—— older than Christians, 57 . . Wood. V.
—— disunited, 817 O. Mrt. I.
—— German, 673; surgeons, 599 . Iva. II.
Jezdegerd, the Arab, 605, 608 . . C. Rt. V.
Jinker, Jamie, lieutenant of Balmawhapple's troop, 98 Wav. I.
Jinks, High. *See* High Jinks. . G. Mng. I.
Jin Vin, 546; recontre with Colepepper at the ordinary, 600; interview with Dame Ursley, 637; asked to assist Nigel, 639; acts waterman to Nigel, 664; arrangement with Moniplies, 702 F. Ng. III.
Joan, Princess, 46; intended marriage with Orleans, 52; in the gallery with Isabelle and Orleans, 61 Q. Dr. IV.
Jobson, Joseph, Inglewood's clerk, 553; called out of court, 587; stops Die and Frank, 560; enters the Hall with the constables, 676 . . . R. R. I.
Joceline Joliffe. *See* Joliffe, Joceline. . Wood. V.
Jockies or beggars, note on, 362 . . . Ant. I.
Jock Jabos, guides Mannering to Ellangowan, 200; corrects the precentor, 225; interrogated by Glossin, 274; drives off Brown and Dandie from the prison, 325 G. Mng. I.
Jock o' Dawston Cleugh, litigant with Dinmont, 288, 296 . G. Mng. I.
John, Queensferry coach driver, 367 . Ant. I.
John, Somerville's servant 675 . . Ch. Can. IV.
John, Duke of Burgundy, 528 . . A. Gel. IV.
John, Prince, at the tournament, 529; suspicion of Ivanhoe, 536; receives intelligence of his brother, 551; his rude conduct, 554; hears of Richard's arrival, 626; inquires about the plot, 628 Iva. II.
—— his boon, 650 Bet. IV.
John o' Girnel. *See* Girnel, John o'. . . Ant. I.
John's Coffee-House, note, 533 . . Redg. IV.
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 690 Ch. Can. IV.
—— his admiration of a post-chaise, 248 G. Mng. I.
Johnstone. *See* Devil's Dick. . F. M. P. V.
Johnstone, Chevalier, his *Memoirs of Prince Charles*, note, 175 Wav. I.
Johnstone, Peggy. *See* Peggy. . G. Mng. I.
—— Willie, fisherman, 300 G. Mng. I.
—— young Willie, 301 G. Mng. I.
Johnstones of Annandale, 767 . . . Mon. II.
—— 236 . F. M. P. V.
John Tamson's man, 836
Jokes, ill-natured, 236 F. M. P. V.
Joliffe, Joceline, interrupts the preacher, 11; arrives to aid his master, 16; and conducts Tomkins to the Lodge, 18; his hut, 25; relieves Alice of the importunities of the gipsy, 91; strikes down Tomkins, 145; receives the dead man's glove, 153; the burial scene, seized by Cromwell, 162 Wood. V.
Jolly Roger, pirate flag, 488 Pir. III.
Jonathan Oldbuck. *See* Oldbuck. . . Ant. I.
Jones, Lady Penfeather's maid, 333 St. Ron. IV.
Jones, Paul, in Firth of Forth, 187 . Wav. I.
Jonson, Ben, 15 Wood. V.
Jopson, Cicely, surprised by Waverley, 141; remunerated, 147 Wav. I.
—— Jacob, shelters Waverley, 141; remunerated, 147 . . . Wav. I.
Jorvaulx Abbey, Yorkshire, 677 . . . Iva. II.
Jorworth, the envoy, 551; treats with Flammock, 562; outdone, 569 Bet. IV.
Joy of joys! it was she, 103 Q. Dr. IV.
Judge, at Robin Oig's trial, 867 . . Two Dr. IV.
—— sentences Effie Deans, 242 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Judges, Scottish, note, 429 Redg. IV.
Judgment that detects faults only, 799 . . Mon. II.
Julia Mannering. *See* Mannering, Julia. G. Man. II.
Julian Avenel, 68; in his tower, 767; throws Warden into the dungeon, 279; death of, 816; note on, 829 . . . Mon. II.
Julian Peveril. *See* Peveril, Julian. . . Pev. III.
Juliet, Romeo and, discussion on, 130 . Wav. I.
Julio, Dr., 352 Ken. III.
Jumping Jenny, the smuggling brig, 475 Redg. IV.
Juno, Hector's dog, 466; offences of, 495 Ant. I.
Just devil of Woodstock, note, 188 . Wood. V.
Justice, Mackitchinson's opinion of, 368 Ant. I.
Justice Foxley, 441 Redg. IV.
Justice Inglewood. *See* Inglewood, Justice. R. R. I.
Justice of the peace, Bertram's commission, 210 G. Mng. I.

Kaimes, Lord, Scottish judge, 426 Redg. IV.
Kaim of Derncleugh. *See* Derncleugh. G. Mng. I.
Kaim of Kinprunes, 375, 409 Ant. I.
Keepsake Annual, 869 Mar.'s M. IV.
Keith, Mrs. Murray, 672, 858 . . Ch. Can. IV.
Keith of Dunottar, anecdote by, 254 . G. Mng. I.
Keiths of Craig, 672 Ch. Can. IV.
Kelpie's Flow, Caleb's warning, 429; comes true, 485 B. Lm. II.
Kelso convoy, 466 Ant. I.
Kenelm, the Saxon, 626 C. Rt. V.
Kenilworth, title of the novel, 351 . Ken. III.
Kenilworth Castle, 291; Amy Robsart's arrival at, 293; royal entry into, 305; masquerades at, 332, 338; Amy's departure from, 347; entertainments at, note, 353; furniture of, note, 353 . . Ken. III.
Kennaquhair (Melrose), description, 687; battle at, 817; Clutterbuck's amusements at, 833 Mon. II.
—— 45 . . Abb. III.
Kennedy, Frank, excise officer, 216, 217; found dead at Warroch Point, 220, 221; Hatteraick's dreams of, 282; death of, described by witnesses, 347 . . G. Mng. I.
Kennedy, Susannah, 696 Ch. Can. IV.
Kennedys of Bargany, 674 Iva. II.
Kenneth, Sir, encounter with the Saracen, 737; with him at the fountain, 741; journey to Engaddi,

747; received into Theodoric's cell, 751; led into the chapel, 754; where he sees Edith, 756; and the dwarfs, 758; brings a physician to Richard, 765; interview with the King, 774; deputed to watch the banner, 787; decoyed to the Queen's tent, 789; interview with Edith, 792; finds the banner gone, 793; refuses to flee, 795; before the King, 797; condemned to death, 799; as a Nubian slave, 817; saves the King's life, 820; promises to discover the thief of the banner, 822; reprieved, but exiled, 823; carried off by the Hakim, 823; a drug administered to him, 827; awakes in the camp of Ilderim (Saladin), 828; hears him talk of Edith, 829; he and his dog disguised by Saladin, 830; his hound tears down Conrade, 832; mute interview with Edith, 837; overthrows Conrade, 851; his royal rank disclosed, 852 . . . TAL. IV.
Kenneth M'Eagh. *See* M'Eagh. L. MONT. II.
Kennington Common, 445 REDG. IV.
Ken-no cheese, note on, 351 G. MNG. I.
Kerneguy, Louis. *See* Charles II. WOOD. V.
Ker of Faldonside, Andrew, 202 . . F. M. P. V.
Kettledrummle, Gabriel, uplifting his voice, 762, 763; behind the cairn during the battle, 770; his sermon to the victors, 774 O. MRT. I.
Kettle of fish, note on, 353 ST. RON. IV.
Key, Jean, carried off by Rob Roy's sons, 692; ballad on, 697 . R. R. I.
Kiery Craigs, 170 ABB. III.
Kilderkin, Ned, eating-house keeper, 665 F. NG. III.
Kilian, the Bavarian, 449 A. GEI. V.
Killancureit described by Bradwardine, 29; captures Bane Lane, 145 WAV. I.
Killearn, Grahame of. *See* Grahame. . . R. R. I.
Killnakelty Hunt, 195 ST. RON. IV.
Kilpont, Lord, assassination of, 8, 85 . L. MONT. II.
Kind gallows of Crieff, note on, 173 . . WAV. I.
Kinedder, Lord, (W. Erskine), 670 CH. CAN. IV.
Kinfauns Castle, Perthshire, 238 . . F. M. P. V.
King Charles, glee for, 101 WOOD. V.
Kings' consciences, 71 Q. DR. IV.
King's keys, 435 ANT. I.
King's *Memoirs*, quoted, 361 . . REDG. IV.
King's Oak, Woodstock Park, 18; rencontre at, 134 . . WOOD. V.
Kinnoul Hill, near Perth, 266 . . F. M. P. V.
Kinprunes, Kaim of, 375, 409 . . . ANT. I.
Kinross, revels at, 111 ABB. III.
Kippletringan, 199; Gordon Arms Inn, 293 G. MNG. I.
Kirch-hoff, on the Rhine, 476 . . A. GEI. V.
Kirk, Rev. Mr., of Aberfoil, on second sight, 84 L. MONT. II.
—— carried off by the fairies, 681 . R. R. I.
Kirk of Field, 61 ABB. III.
Kirkwall Fair, 487, 491; town council, 500 PIR. III.
Kist-vaen, a British burial mound, 645 . BET. IV.
Kitchener of St. Mary's Convent, 739 . MON. II.
Kitt Henshaw, the boatman, 324, 343, 357 F. M. P. V.
Kittlecourt, Sir Thomas, 210, 211 . G. MNG. I.
Kittle nine-steps, Castle rock, Edinburgh, 366 REDG. IV.
Klepper, the Bohemian's pony, 166 . Q. DR. IV.
Knight, Disinherited. *See* Ivanhoe. . . IVA. II.
Knighthood honours, time of Elizabeth, 311 KEN. III.
Knight of the Leopard. *See* Kenneth, Sir. TAL. IV.
Knight of the Tomb, 866 CAS. D. V.
Knights, robber, 419 A. GEI. V.
Knights Templars, and Knights of St. John, 529. IVA. II.
See also Beaumanoir *and* Grand Master of the Templars.
Knockdunder, Captain, 319; smoking in church, 323; his boat run down, 326; objects to the witch-burning, 331; sets off to arrest Donacha Dhu, 348 HT MID. II.
Knocktarlitie Manse, 321 HT. MID. II.
Knockwinnock, Sybil, 450 ANT. I.
—— Bay, 386; Castle, 406; in charge of the sheriff officers, 505 ANT. I.
—— family, Edie's story of, 449 . . . ANT. I.
Knox, John, Morton's opinion of, 81 . . ABB. III.
Kraken, marine monster, 369 PIR. III.
Krames of the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, 169 HT. MID. II.
Kunst macht gunst, 400 ANT. I.
Kurds, the, 748 . TAL. IV.

LABARUM, note on, 733 C. RT. V.
Lachrymatory upset by Juno, 466 . . ANT. I.
Lacy, Damian, arrives to the relief of Garde Doloureuse, 576; rescues Eveline from the spectre, 594; at the espousals, 604; illness of, 611; entrusted with the charge of Eveline, 621; rescues her from the cave, 631; attended by her in Garde Doloureuse, 637; offers his head to the mutineers, 649; interview with his uncle in the dungeon, 660; who relinquishes Eveline to him, 663 . BET. IV.
Lacy, Hugo de, Constable of Chester, 548; delivers Garde Doloureuse, 575; interview with Eveline, 582; proceeds to Gloucester with her, 586; betrothal with Eveline, 603; summoned by the Archbishop, 607; promises to proceed to the Holy Land, 611; accepts Vidal's services, 613; offers to resign Eveline's hand, 615; asks Flammock to take charge of Eveline, 619; gives Damian charge of her in his absence, 621; his parting paction with his betrothed, 622; return from the Holy Land, 645; hears bad tidings, 646; not shaken by adversity, 651; receives the true news from Gillian, 652; intercedes for Vidal, 657; interview with Damian in the dungeon, 660; relinquishes Eveline to him, 663 . . . BET. IV.
—— Randal de, as a pedlar at Berenger's funeral, 579; begs Eveline's reconciliation, 602; as a hawk merchant, 626; attempt on Eveline, 630; assumes the chieftainship of the family, 648; stabbed by Vidal, 656. . BET. IV.
Ladies, compliments to, 547 R. R. I.
—— at tournaments, 537, 548 . . . IVA. II.
—— riding habits of, 492 REDG. IV.
Ladies, and knights, and arms, and love's fair flame, 585 . . R. R. I.
Lady Grange in St. Kilda, 533 . . REDG. IV.
Lady in the Sacque, tale of, 882 . . MAR.'S M. IV.
Lady's maids, lying instinct, 800 . O. MRT. I.
La Ferette, Castle of (Breisach), 419; dungeon of, 457, 569; stormed by the Balese, 465 A. GEI. V.
Laider, Donald, sheep-stealer, 311, 312 G. MNG. I.
Laigh shop, Mrs. Macleuchar's, 365 ANT. I.
Laing, Malcolm, 361 PIR. III.
Laird of the Lakes. *See* Herries. REDG. IV.
Lake, Lady, 719 F. NG. III.
Lake Islands, note, 378 F. M. P. V.
Lalain, Chronicle of, 733 C. RT. V.
La Marck, William de. *See* Marck. . Q. DR. IV.
Lambert, Parliamentary general, 164 WOOD. V.
Lambourne, Michael, at the Black Bear Inn, 182; interview with Foster, 192; interrupts the combat, 196; enters Varney's service, 212; sent down to Cumnor with Alasco, 265; carousal with Goldthred, 267; drunken apostrophe on Foster, 270; spurned by Tressilian at Kenilworth, 299; meets and expels Wayland, 301; drinks with the gaoler, 302; his welcome to the Queen, 306; enters Amy's apartment, 316; shot by Varney, 348; dies without his shoes, 345; note on, 351 KEN. III.
Lambskin, Mrs. Alice, 695 CH. CAN. IV.
Lammergeier, Alpine eagle, 399 . . A. GEI. V.
Lancaster and York parties, 509, 512 . A. GEI. V.
Lance Outram, discovers Bridgenorth and Deborah, 766; calls out the miners to the rescue, 849; afraid of his first love, 854; accompanies Julian to London, 855; upsets the French cook, 860 PEV. III.
Landais, Peter, minister of Bretagne, 568 A. GEI. V.
Landamman. *See* Biederman, Arnold. A. GEI. V.
Landlord, Tales of my. *See* Tales. O. MRT. I.; C. RT. V.
Laneham, Robert, at Elizabeth's court, 254, 287; note on, 352 KEN. III.
—— Sibyl, a masquer at Kenilworth, 287 KEN. III.
Langcale, Laird of, 795 O. MRT. I.
Langley, Sir Frederick, the ladies' opinion of, 106; demands the hand of Miss Vere, 129; end of, 142 B. DW. II.
Langside, battle at, 159, 171 ABB. III.
Lantern, MacFarlane's, 173 WAV. I.
Lanzknecht, interview with Hayraddin, 86; note, 181 Q. DR. IV.
Laodicea, retreat of, 596; Anna's narrative of, 605 C. RT. V.
Lapraik, Laurie, 405, 407 REDG. IV.
La Rivière Castle, in Burgundy, 556 A. GEI. V.
Lascaris, Constantinopolitan citizen, 714 C. RT. V.
Late, when the autumn evening fell, 19 WAV. I.
Latimer, Darsie. *See* Darsie Latimer. REDG. IV.
Latin pronunciation, 586 F. NG. III.
Lauderdale, Duke of, examining the Covenanters, 829 . . O. MRT. I.
Laughter, internal, 124 WOOD. V.
Laupen, battle of, 392 A. GEI. V.
Laurence Staples. *See* Staples. . . KEN. III.
Laurence Templeton. *See* Templeton. IVA. II.; BET. IV.
Laurenz Neipperg. *See* Ferrand. A. GEI. V.
Law, evils of, 386 REDG. IV.
—— and money, 199 HT. MID. II.
—— the chimney of civilised society, 296; stratagems of, 338; like laudanum, 349 . . G. MNG. I.
—— peddling, worse than military violence, 746, 747 O. MRT. I.

Lawford, town-clerk of Middlemas, 750, 753 S. Dt. v.
Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, the road to the gallows, note, 274 . G. Mng. i.
Law of arms, 596 C. Rt. v.
Lawson, Miss Helen, of Girthhead, 149
Ht. Mid. ii.
Lawyers, of Old Edinburgh, 286; convivial habits, 287, 354; their tools of trade, 291; anxiety of, 327; sleepless nights, note on, 356 . . G. Mng. i.
—— Latin of, 165
Ht. Mid. ii.
Lay of Last Minstrel, Author's reason for quoting, 259 . . G. Mng. i.
Lay of Poor Louise, 247
F. M. P. v.
Lazaretto at Ryde, 769
S. Dt. v.
League and Covenant, Burley's defence of, 726; the Cameronian 'Magna Charta,' 810, 833. *See* Covenant. O. Mrt. i.
Leaguer lasses, 40
L. Mont. ii.
Leasowes, in Worcestershire, 391 . Redg. iv.
Ledeard waterfall, 173
Wav. i.
Lee, Albert, enters Woodstock by the window, 93; waits on Kerneguy, 101; interview with Rochecliffe, 105; exchanges clothes with the King, 158; springs from Rosamond's Tower, 171; before Cromwell, 172; death, 180 . . Wood. v.
—— Alice, with her father, 12; at the interview between him and Markham, 26; at evening service in the keeper's hut, 62; interview with Markham, 64; encounter with the gipsy at the well, 90; surprised by her brother, 93; her ideal conception of the King, 110; companionship with him as Kerneguy, 115; and his advances, 116, 126; implores Markham to leave the Lodge, 125; the King discloses himself to her, 126; interview with Rochecliffe, 132; stops the duel, 136; receives the woodcock's feather, 155; guides the King to the keeper's hut, 158; happy espousal, 179; resemblance to Anne Scott, 4 . . Wood. v.
—— Sir Henry, 12; encounter with Tomkins, 15; interview with Markham in the keeper's hut, 25; at evening service, 62; refuses to submit to the government, 64; reoccupies the Lodge, 87; fences with Tomkins, 88; runs his sword at his own son, 93; pleasure in Kerneguy's company, 108; separates the combatants, 119; abhorrence of Milton, 124; recognises the King, 156; prepares to defend the Lodge, 157; O Absalom, my son! 159; defies Cromwell, 164; questioned by him, 166; pardoned, 177; death, 182 Wood. v.
Lee, Victor, mysterious picture of, 76 Wood. v.
Lee Penny, 734 Tal. iv.
Legal practice, 417
Redg. iv.
Legend of Montrose, novel, 670 . . Ch. Can. iv.
—— Author's account of, 4
L. Mont. ii.
Leicester, Earl, slanders against, 177; visit to Amy at Cumnor, 205; ideas of his position, 207; dislike to Tressilian, 209; at Greenwich Palace, 248; success with Elizabeth, 251, 260; consults Alasco, 261; thoughts of marriage with Elizabeth, 272; asks Amy to bear the name of Varney, 274; entry into Kenilworth, 305; his grace and splendour of mien, 308; meditates on his prospects, 313; love passage with Elizabeth, 318; bid to stand forth, 320; confronted with Amy, 321; last interview with her, 324; turns against her, 328; his fell decision, 331; tries to delay Varney, 335; encounter with Tressilian, 336; interrupted by Flibbertigibbet, 340; confession to the Queen, 342; death, 354 Ken. iii.
Leicester's Commonwealth, by Parsons, 178 Ken. iii.
Leith, dreadful day at, 857
Ch. Can. iv.
—— Fairy Boy of, 357
Ht. Mid. ii.
Lelies of Moslems, 763
Tal. iv.
Lenthal, confession of, note, 193 . . Wood. v.
Leny, pass of, near Callander, 9 L. Mont. ii.
Leopard, Knight of. *See* Kenneth, Sir. Tal. iv.
Leopold, Archduke of Austria, 763; description of, 781; seizes on the English banner, 783; acts as Conrade's godfather, 834 . Tal. iv.
Lesley, M'Intyre's second in the duel, 430 Ant. i.
Lesly, Ludovic. *See* Balafré. . Q. Dr. iv.
Leslys, feud with Ogilvies, 30 . . Q. Dr. iv.
Let Glasgow flourish! 654
R. R. i.
Let God arise, and then his foes, 751 . Pev. iii.
Letter from the dead to the living, 961 . Pev. iii.
Letters, female inquisitiveness over, 412 . Ant. i.
—— franking of, 368
Redg. iv.
—— use of, by authors, 421
Redg. iv.
Let those go see who will, motto, 505 . Ant. i.
Levitt, Frank, the highwayman, 261 Ht. Mid. ii.
Lewis, island of, attempt to colonise, 34, 83
L. Mont. ii.
Leyden, Dr. John, patriotic excitation of, 521 Ant. i.
L'Hermite, Tristan. *See* Tristan . Q. Dr. iv.
Liberton Tower, near Edinburgh, 252 Ht. Mid. ii.
Liberty, civil and religious, 728 . . O. Mrt. i.
Libraries, conventual, 420
Ant. i.
Lichfield, Swan of (Miss Seward), 883
Tap. Ch. iv.
Lickitup, Laird of, 719
O. Mrt. i.
Lidcote Hall, 229 Ken. iii.
Liddesdale, men of, note, 521 . . . Ant. i.
—— roads of, note, 296
G. Mng. i.
—— Fighting Charlie of. *See* Charlie of Liddesdale. G. Mng. i.; Two Dr. iv.
Liége, city of, turbulence of its people, 83; scene in, 95; siege of, 170; the sally, 172; notes, 182, 183
Q. Dr. iv.
—— and Charles of Burgundy, 449 A. Gei. v.
—— Bishop of, 92; the murder, 109; note, 181
Q. Dr. iv.
Lieutenant of the Tower, 672, 682 . F. Ng. iii.
Life ebbs from such old age, motto, 498 . Ant. i.
Life Guards, Claverhouse's, 719; visit to Milnwood, 734; march to Tillietudlem, 750 . O. Mrt. i.
Life, with you, glows in the brain, 482 . Ant. i.
Lightbody, Luckie, the cooper's mother-in-law, 415 . . B. Lm. ii.
Lighthouse, Northern, voyage, 359 . . Pir. iii.
Lightoheel, Janet, alleged mother of Bertram, 348
G. Mng. i.
Like a sparrow on the house-top, 763 . O. Mrt. i.
Lilias Redgauntlet. *See* Green Mantle. Redg. iv.
Lilias, the waiting-maid, 12; informs on Roland, 18; makes his rosary into shoebuckles, 25 Abb. iii.
Lillibulero bullen a la, 106
Wav. i.
Liltup, Jean, housekeeper at Singleside, 289
G. Mng. i.
Lily of St. Leonard's. *See* Deans, Effie.
Ht. Mid. ii.
Lincoln, Bishop of, helps Elizabeth with her Hebrew, 244 . . Ken. iii.
Lindesay, Scots guardsman, 39 . Q. Dr. iv.
Lindesay, Lord, 82; reception by the Queen, 88; kneels, but not to the Queen, 95 . Abb. iii.
Lindsay, Lady Ann, note, 468 . . . Pir. iii.
Lindsay, Sir David, of the Mount, 406 Redg. iv.
Lindsay of Pitscottie, his Athole hunt, 62 Wav. i.
Linkboys of London, 575
F. Ng. iii.
Linklater, Laurie, the royal kitchener, 557; interview with Nigel at Greenwich, 666; refuses knowledge of Richie's second sifflication, 688 . F. Ng. iii.
Linklater Linn, 853
O. Mrt. i.
Linkletter, Lawrence, 413
Pir. iii.
Linlithgow, Earl of, letter to, on the battle of Drumclog, 866 . O. Mrt. i.
Linn of Linklater, 853
O. Mrt. i.
Lion, William the, of Scotland, 853 . . Tal. iv.
Lions, at watering-places, 272 . . St. Ron. iv.
Lions of Solomon, 653
C. Rt. v
Liquor, effects of, 769
S. Dt. v.
—— Mahomedan abhorrence of, 742 Tal. iv.
Listener, appearance of a, 609 . C. Rt. v.
Listneth, gode people, 112
Abb. iii.
Lists, at Ashby, 527 Iva. ii.
—— at Constantinople, 712, 722 . . C. Rt. v.
Literary career, Oldbuck's sketch of a, 409 Ant. i.
Littlejohn, Bailie, examines Edie, 490; rehearses the manual, 492 . Ant. i.
Liverpool, in 1660, 823
Pev. iii.
Livius, Titus, Bradwardine's attachment to, note, 20, 153, 171 . Wav. i.
Lizzie, Dumb, in Robert Scott's house, 733
Pev. iii.
Lochaber axe, 160
Ht. Mid. ii.
—— 44 . . Wav. i.
Loch Ard, fight at, 638, 639 . . . R. R. i.
Loch Awe, 701 H. Wid. iv.
—— it's a far cry to, 633
R. R. i.
Loches, French royal castle of, 78 . Q. Dr. iv.
Loch Fyne, 42
L. Mont. ii.
Lochleven, Lady of, 84; alarm for the Queen, 132; reminded of her youthful frailties, 146 Abb. iii.
—— Castle, 83; life at, 99; escape of Queen Mary, 149, 170 . Abb. iii.
Loch Lomond, 664; expedition up, against the MacGregors, 695 R. R. i.
Lochow, a far cry to, 633
R. R. i.
Lochside, Goodman of among the gipsies, 197
G. Mng. i.
Lochside Tower, 766
Mon. ii.
Loch Sloy, war-cry of the Macfarlanes, 8
O. Mrt. i.
Loch Tay, view of, 327
F. M. P. v.
Lochwood Castle, in Annandale, 767 . Mon. ii.
Lockhart, Sir George, 488
B. Lm. ii.
Lockhart, Sir Simon, 734
Tal. iv.
Locking the door during dinner, 864 O. Mrt. i.
Lockman, or executioner, note, 357 Ht. Mid. ii.
—— 306 . F. M. P. v.
Locksley, at the tournament, 531; his band seize Gurth in the forest, 541; shoots for the prize at Ashby, 551; meets Wamba and Gurth, 570; falls in with Richard, 572; before Torquilstone Castle, 588; on his throne in the forest, 616; presents Richard

with his horn, 618; rescues him, 653; note on, 677. *See also* Robin Hood. . . IVA. II.
Logan, the poet, 870 MAR.'S M. IV.
Logic, profligate, 113 WOOD. V.
Logie, Margaret, 268; note, 374 . . F. M. P. V.
Logothete, the, 621 C. RT. V.
Loire, valley ot, 73 Q. DR. IV.
Lokman's *Fables*, 830 TAL. IV.
Lollards and Wicklifftes, 266 . . F. M. P. V.
Lombards, 763 TAL. IV.
Long Allen, English soldier, 819 . . . TAL. IV.
Long bow of England, 693 MON. II.
Longueville, Thomas, the rover, 232. F. M. P. V.
Long-winded stories, 413 PIR. III.
London, shops, time of James I., 545; apprentices, time of James I., 546; linkboys, 575 . . F. NG. III.
—— sheriffs of, and Charles II., 962; Tower of, 899, 913; York House, 900 PEV. III.
—— Whitefriars. *See* Whitefriars. . F. NG. III.
—— Whitehall Palace. *See* Whitehall. F. NG. III.
——and Edinburgh, journey between, 256 HT. MID. II.
Look not thou on beauty's charming, 380 B. LM. II.
Lord Abbot had a soul, motto, 434. . ANT. I.
Lord Keeper. *See* Ashton, Sir W. . B. LM. II.
Lord of the Isles, connection with the lighthouse voyage, 360 . . PIR. III.
Lord Soulis' mistake, note, 289 . . G. MNG. II.
Loretto, Holy House of, 485 . . A. GEI. V.
Lorimer, servant at Ardenvohr, 41 . L. MONT. II.
Loudon Hill, battle at, 885 CAS. D. V.
—— conventicle at, 745; Cuddie's account of, 760; battle of, *see* Drumclog. O. MRT. I.
Lou Garagoule, oracle of, 539 . . A. GEI. V.
Louis IX., connection with the Swiss, 407, 419; his choice of ministers, 457; peace with Edward IV., 528 . . A. GEI. V.
Louis XI., his ridicule of chivalry, 1; death-bed of, 3; character and influence of, in France, 14; first meeting with Quentin, 16; waited on by the Countess Isabelle, 25; at court, 46; reception of Crèvecœur, 48; at the boar-hunt, 53; rescued by Quentin, 54; posts him as sentinel, 58; entertains Crèvecœur and Balue, 59; reprimands Quentin for not shooting Orleans, 65; conspiracy against Isabelle, 66; superstitions, 68; interview with the astrologer, 70; meeting with Charles at Peronne, 124; inquires the route taken by Quentin, 128; mode of corruption, 131; his conduct at the banquet, 134; incarcerated, 135; soliloquy on Charles the Simple, 138; extraordinary prayer, 138; prepares to execute Galeotti, 140; interview with him, 141; conversation with Comines, 146; his favourite scheme, 148; at the grand council, 155; reply to La Marck's herald, 161; raptures over his chase, 162; swears amity to Charles, 163; at the siege of Liége, 173; notes on, 181, 182 Q. DR. IV.
Louise, the glee-maiden, gains access to the cloister, 246; her lay, 247; description of her, 248; interview with Rothsay, 249; spurned by Douglas, 250; shown into the charnel-house, 253; her spaniel, 254, 256, 350, 371; taken home by the Smith, 255; on the Tay, 344; sings a dirge, 345; discovers Rothsay in the dungeon, 350; supplies him with food, 351; escapes from Falkland, 352; received by Marjory Douglas, 371 F. M. P. V.
Louponheight, Laird of, 759 S. DT. V.
Lovat, Lord, his rule at dinner, 173 . WAV. I.
Love, early, frequently ambitious, 40 . WAV. I.
—— and friendship, debateable ground, 428 PIR. III.
—— anxiety the companion of, 61; mutual, 116 Q. DR. IV.
—— borrowing the name of friendship, 756 O. MRT. I.
—— freemasonry of, 757 TAL. IV.
—— Parliament of, 531, 571 . . A. GEI. V.
—— recollections of, 786 PEV. III.
—— tokens, Headrigg's reflections on, 788 O. MRT. I.
Love surpassing that of women, 372 F. M. P. V.
Lovel, at the coach-office, 365; catechised by Oldbuck, 369; visit to the Antiquary, 371; speculations about, in Fairport, 378; dines at Monkbarns, 381; rescues Sir Arthur and Isabella, 388; taken home by Oldbuck, 392; occupies the haunted room, 393; interview with Isabella at Knockwinnock, 404; his parentage suspected, 406; serious conversation with Oldbuck, 408; his letter at the post-office, 412; keeps within doors, 414; visit from Oldbuck, 416; invitation from Knockwinnock, 417; jealousy of M'Intyre, 427; insulted by him, 429; receives a challenge, 430; gets Taffril to act as second, 432; flies after the duel, 434; adventure in the Priory, 436; received on board Taffril's brig, 440; report of, as Major Neville, 511; arrival of, at Fairport, and recognition by his father, 516; marriage, 517 ANT. I.
Love-letters, a great source of revenue, 411 ANT. I.
Lovers, disconsolate, French relief for, 328 G. MNG. I.
—— pleasure is in the chase, 495 . . REDG. IV.
—— when lost preferred to surviving rivals, 793 MON. II.
Love waits not for the sanction of heraldry, 802 MON. II.
Love wakes and weeps, 457 PIR. III.
Lowestoffe the Templar, 616; at the scrivener's, 699 . . F. NG. III.
Lucerne, 392 A. GEI. V.
Luckenbooths, Edinburgh, 169 . . HT. MID. II.
Lucre, it is not the, 234 G. MNG. I.
Lucy Ashton. *See* Ashton, Lucy. . B. LM. II.
Lucy Bertram. *See* Bertram, Lucy. . G. MNG. I.
Lude, hunt, commemorated by Gunn, 63 WAV. I.
Ludovic Lesly. *See* Balafré. Q. DR. IV.
Luggie the conjuror, note, 481 . . . PIR. III.
Lully, Raymond, scholar, 19 ABB. III.
Lum-cleeks, note on, 354 G. MNG. I.
Lumley, Captain, Royalist, 813 . . O. MRT. I.
Lundin, Dr. Luke, 108; brought to the Castle, 136 ABB. III.
Lundin, Sir Louis, 296 F. M. P. V.
Lunsford's light horse, 99 WOOD. V.
Lutin the page, 595 F. NG. III.
Lying, beginners in, 676 C. RT. V.
—— lady's maids, instinct for, 809 O. MRT. I.
Lykewake, Elspeth's, 500 ANT. I.
Lyle, Annot. *See* Annot Lyle. . L. MONT. II.
Lyly, John, the wit, 732 MON. II.
Lysimachus, the architect, 591; at the lists, 713 C. RT. V.

MABEL, Osbaldistone's old nurse, 540 . R. R. I.
Mabel Moffat, Redgauntlet's servant, 378 REDG. IV.
MacAdam, road-maker, 811 CAS. D. V.
MacAlpine, Jeanie, of Aberfoil inn, 628 R. R. I.
MacAlpine, Peter, the Jacobite bell-ringer, 461 REDG. IV.
M'Alpine, Sergeant, 1 L. MONT. II.
MacAnaleister. Eachin, Rob Roy's lieutenant, 658; saves his life, 686 R. R. I.
M'Aulay, Allan, 16; exploits against the Children of the Mist, 21; brings the head of Hector, 22; his evil predictions of the campaign, 25; the mist passeth from his spirit, 26; the ill-omened gift to Annot, and his predictions, 26; gives his hand to Ranald M'Eagh, 63; cuts down Ranald at Inverlochy, 70; bids Annot Lyle look over the battlefield, 74; stabs Menteith, 81 L. MONT. II.
M'Aulay, Allan, note on, 670 CH. CAN. IV.
M'Aulay, Angus, of Darnlinvarach, 18; disapproves of Menteith and Annot's marriage, 79 L. MONT. II.
M'Aulay, Lady, outrage upon, by the Children of the Mist, 4 L. MONT. II.
Macbriar, Ephraim, the Covenanting preacher, 774; disapproves Morton's appointment as leader, 782; condemns him to death, 822; led to trial in Edinburgh, 827; noble conduct of, under torture, 829 . . O. MRT. I.
MacCallum, Dougal. *See* Dougal. . REDG. IV.
M'Candlish, Mrs., of the Gordon Arms, Kippletringan, 223; informs Mannering of the sale of Ellangowan, 227; interrogated by Glossin about Brown, 273 G. MNG. I.
M'Casquil of Drumquag, an expectant of Mrs. Bertram's, 293, 294 G. MNG. I.
Maccombich, Evan Dhu, embassy to Tully-Veolan about the cattle, 43; in Edinburgh, 104; warns Waverley of assassination, 135; offers to die for his chief, 160; execution, 164 . . WAV. I.
M'Combich, Robin Oig. *See* Robin. . Two DR. IV.
MacCready, Archy, 693 CH. CAN. IV.
MacCulloch, Cutlar, notes on, 960 . . PEV. III.
Macdonald, Andrew, author, 84. L. MONT. II.
M'Donnell of Glengarry, 24 L. MONT. II.
M'Eagh, Kenneth, son of Ranald, 77 L. MONT. II.
—— Ranald, in Inverary dungeon, 45; aids Dalgetty to escape from Inverary, 50; appears with Dalgetty before Montrose, 60; introduced to Allan M'Aulay disguised as an Islesman, 62; guides Montrose's army, 64; mortally wounded by Allan at Inverlochy, 70; declares the parentage of Annot Lyle, 76; dying command to his son, 77; addresses the Spirit of the Mist, 78 L. MONT. II.
MacEvoy, Janet, 737 S. DT. V.
—— 674; receives Croft angry back to the Canongate, 688 CH. CAN. IV.
Macfarlane, Mrs., note on 953 . . . PEV. III.
Macfarlane, clan, atrocity on, 697 . . R. R. I.
—— their war-cry, 818 O. MRT. I.
—— geese, 729 MON. II.
—— lantern, 173 WAV. I.
Macfin, Miles, the cadie 290 . . G. MNG. I.
M'Fittoch, dancing-master 758 . . S. DT. V.

MacGillie Chattanach, 362 F. M. P. v.
MacGrainer the minister, 273 . . G. Mng. i.
MacGregor, clan, history of, 682; expedition against, 695 . R. R. i.
—— and the Children of the Mist, 85 L. Mont. ii.
—— Dougal. *See* Dougal Macgregor. R. R. i.
—— Dugald Ciar Mohr, 683, 695 . . . R. R. i.
—— 5 . . L. Mont. ii.
—— Hamish, tells of his father's capture, 644; his education, 657; outrage on Jean Key, 692 R. R. i.
—— Helen, 639; conduct towards her prisoners, 642; her second reception of the Bailie and Frank, 663 . . . R. R. i.
—— James Mohr. *See* Drummond, James. R. R. i.
—— Rob Roy. *See* Rob Roy. . . R. R. i.
—— of Glenstrae, 697, 726 Ch. Can. iv.
MacGruthar, Sandy, the beggar, 210 G. Mng. i.
M'Guffog, the constable, brings Hatteraick a prisoner to Glossin, 276; shows Bertram into his cell at Portanferry, 311; objects to accommodate Dandie, 315; lets Glossin enter Hatteraick's cell, 350; note, 355 G. Mng. i.
—— Mrs., of the Bridewell, 311 . . G. Mng. i.
MacIan, Eachin. *See* Conachar. F. M. P. v.
—— Gilchrist, 322; funeral of, 328 . F. M. P. v.
M'Ilduy Cameron, 66 L. Mont. ii.
MacIntosh Clan, 325 F. M. P. v.
M'Intyre, Maria, in her uncle's sanctum, 372; introduced to Lovel, 381; quiets her brother, 428; intercedes for him, 495 Ant. i.
—— Captain, Hector's father, 369 . . Ant. i.
—— Hector, Oldbuck's opinion of, 417; joins the picnic party, 426; compares his descent with that of the Wardours, 428, 511; insinuates against Lovel, 429; challenges Lovel, 430; shot in the duel, 434; his dog upsets the lachrymatory, 466; defence of the Celt, and of Ossianic poetry, 468; rencontre with the seal, 469; permission to shoot over Glenallan, 484, 489; his fowling-pieces, 495; on Sir Arthur's horse, 501; threatens the sheriff-officers at Knockwinnock, 506; Oldbuck taunts him about Miss Wardour, 511; acts military adviser to Fairport volunteers, 515 Ant. i.
Mac-Ivor, Flora, at Glennaquoich, 56; her retreat by the waterfall, 59; meets Waverley after his disgrace, 69; declines his suit, 72; at Holyrood, 107; accidentally wounded by a Highlander, 123; her solicitude for Rose, and opinion of Waverley, 126; makes Fergus's 'bridal garment,' 162; note, 173 Wav. i.
Mac-Ivor, Fergus, 51; resemblance to his sister, 56; his song at the waterfall, 61; incites Waverley to rebellion, 68, 71; meets him at Holyrood, 100; his suit rejected, 127; quarrels with Waverley, 134, 136; sees the Bodach Glas, 139, 163; made prisoner at Clifton, 141; condemned to death, 160; execution, 164 . . . Wav. i.
Mackay, Mr., at Theatre Fund Dinner, 729 Ch. Can. iv.
MacKay Clan, 197, 325 F. M. P. v.
MacKellar the Jacobite, 517 . . Redg. iv.
Mackerris. *See* Ferguson, Colonel. . S. Dt. v.
M'Kinlay, John, his Gallovidian story, 193 G. Mng. i.
Mackitchinson, the Hawes innkeeper, 368; refuses to draw anything but claret, 370 . Ant. i.
MacLaren, Clan, expedition against, 697; feud with the MacGregors, 691 R. R. i.
MacLean, Sir Hector, of Duart, 199 F. M. P. v.
Macleary's, Lucky, inn, quarrel in, 30 Wav. i.
MacLeish, Donald, the postilion, 672 Ch. Can. iv.
—— guides Mrs. Baliol into the Highlands, 699 H. Wid. iv.
Macleuchar, Mrs., of the coach-office, 366 Ant. i.
MacLouis, Captain of the Brandanes, 251; ready to arrest Albany, 370 F. M. P. v.
Maclure, Bessy, shelters Evandale, 791; her misfortunes, 850; tells Morton about Burley, 851 O. Mrt. i.
M'Morlan, Sheriff, interview with Mannering, 229; disappointed at the sale, 233; receives Lucy and the Dominie into his house, 233; orders the guard back to Portanferry, 322 . . G. Mng. i.
—— Mrs., 233 G. Mng. i.
MacMurrough the Bard, 55 Wav. i.
M'Naught, minister of Girthon, 355 G. Mng. i.
MacPhadraick, the tacksman, 705, 707, 708 H. Wid. iv.
MacPherson, Clan, 325 F. M. P. v.
Macpherson, Evan, of Cluny, 176 . . . Wav. i.
Macpherson's *Ossian*, 468 Ant. i.
Macraes, revolt of, 857 Ch. Can. iv.
Macraw, Francie, the porter at Glenallan House, 460; tells Edie about the Earl and Miss Neville, 464 Ant. i.
Macready, Pate, the pedlar, 578, 581 . R. R. i.
MacRimmon's Lament, 662 R. R. i.
MacTavish, Elspat, the Highland Widow, 702; taunts her son, 704; grief at his enlistment, 708; incites him to desert, 709; drugs him, 711; kneels to him for pardon, 715; hears of his execution, 722; disappears, 722 H. Wid. iv.
—— Hamish Baen, 704; enlists, 705; visits his mother, 707; horror of the lash, 709; sees his father's ghost, 711; drinks the drugged potion, 711; awakens too late, 713; shoots Sergeant Cameron, 717; arrest, 717; executed, 720 . . H. Wid. iv.
—— Mhor, Hamish, 703 H. Wid. iv.
Mactrickit, Wylie, Ailie's suitor, 846 O. Mrt. i.
MacTurk, Captain Hector, 204; acts peacemaker, 222; nurses the duel, 236; encounter with Meg, 237; at the duel, 241; compromise on the Highland garb, 271; turns out the pseudo-Gaels, 276; apology to Tyrrel, 319; discussion with Touchwood, 331; assists Mowbray after the duel, 351 St. Ron. iv.
MacVicar's prayer for Prince Charles, 122 Wav. i.
MacVittie, the Glasgow merchant, 600; incarcerates Owen for debt, 605, his business transactions with Osbaldistone senior, 607; superseded by the Bailie, 666 . R. R. i.
Macwheeble, Bailie, 29; in Edinburgh, 105; on the battlefield, 119; immersed in his papers, 156; in ecstacy, 157; reads the assignation of Tully-Veolan, 168 . Wav. i.
Macers, before Scotch Supreme Court, 352 G. Mng. i.
Machinery, thwarting the divine providence, 731 O. Mrt. i.
Madge Gordon, queen of the gipsies, 198 G. Mng. i.
Madge Wildfire before the procurator, 212; leads the officers to Muschat's Cairn, 216; conduct to her mother, 222; in the highwaymen's hut, 262; at her child's grave, 267; leads Jeanie Deans into church, 270; connection with young Staunton, 278; end of, 305; note on, 359 Ht. Mid. ii.
Madras, society of, 783 S. Dt. v.
Magdalen Græme, interview with Lady Avenel, 10; meets her grandson at St. Cuthbert's, 31; requires from him absolute obedience, 35; indignation at the mummers, 52; gives Roland a token for Catherine, 58; as 'Mother Nicneven,' at Kinross, 110; upbraids Roland, 116; brought to Lochleven Castle, 137; enthusiasm for the Queen, 137; protests Roland's noble blood, 155 . Abb. iii.
Maggie Dickson, Halfhanged, 359 Ht. Mid. ii.
Maggie Mucklebackit. *See* Mucklebackit. Ant. i.
Maggie Steenson, 401; her husband's fiddle, 434 Redg. iv.
Magic practised in St. Ruth's, 437 . . . Ant. i.
Magistrates, end of 14th century, 232 F. M. P. v.
Magnus Troil. *See* Troil, Magnus. . . Pir. iii.
Mago-Pico, a satire, 353 St. Ron. iv.
Mahdi, the, 759 Tal. iv.
Mahony, Dugald, Highland gillie, 49, 116, 148 Wav. i.
Maida, prototype of Bevis, 4; note, 183 Wood. v.
Maiden of Morton, 68 Abb. iii.
Maiden of Norway, 822 Cas. D. v.
Maiden of the Mist. *See* Anne of Geierstein. A. Gei. v.
Maiden, whose sorrows, 794 Mon. ii.
Mail-coaches, dislike to, 680 Ch. Can. iv.
Mailsetter, Davie, run off with by the butcher's pony, 413 . . . Ant. i.
—— Mrs., of the post-office, 411 . Ant. i.
Maire (mayor) of Dijon, 521 A. Gei. v.
Maison du Duc, Dijon, 520 A. Gei. v.
Maitre Pierre. *See* Louis XI. . . Q. Dr. iv.
Major Weir, the jackanape, 405, 410 . Redg. iv.
Maker or poet, 821 Cas. D. v.
Malagrowther, Mungo. *See* Mungo. . F. Ng. iii.
Malt, groaning, note, 351 G. Mng. i.
—— liquor, 338 St. Ron. iv.
Malvoisin, Albert, the Preceptor, 633; arrested, 668 Iva. ii.
Man, Isle of, in 1660, 782; festivities, note, 954; superstitions, note, 956; note, 967 . . Pev. iii.
Mandrin, the French smuggler, 724 . . Bet. iv.
Mangertown, Laird of, 890 Two Dr. iv.
Mannering, Colonel, seeks a guide for Kippletringan, 200; reads young Bertram's fortune, 206, 210; second visit to Kippletringan, 224; his letter to Mervyn, 227; second visit to Ellangowan, 230; silences Glossin, 231; returns to England, 235; interview with Julia, 241; takes up his residence at Woodbourne, 242; visit to Edinburgh, 285; meets Dandie at the lawyer's, 286; at Miss Bertram's funeral, 291; introduced to David Hume, Adam Smith, etc., 296; return to Woodbourne, 316; impatiently expectant, 328; receives Bertram and Dandie, 329; reconciliation with Brown (Bertram), 333; advice to Julia, 334; bails out Bertram, 337 G. Mng. i.

Mannering, Julia, acquaintance with Brown, 228; serenaded from the lake, 236, 239; extracts from her letters, 237, 265; first meeting with Lucy, 244; flirtations at Woodbourne, 266; vexations about Brown, 268; alarming meeting with Brown, 271; letter to Brown, 301; repartee with Pleydell, 327; examined by her father, 334 . . G. Mng. I.
—— Mrs., 206, 228 G. Mng. I.
—— Sir Paul, 228 G. Mng. I.
Manners, change in, chiefly external, 10 . Wav. I.
—— Highland. *See* Highland Manners *and* Highlanders. F. M. P. V.; Wav. I.
Mansel, Sir Edward, 672, 682 . . F. Ng. III.
Many a fathom dark and deep, 723 . . Mon. II.
Many great ones would part with half their states, motto, 458 . Ant. I.
Mar, Earl of, rising in 1715, 667 . . R. R. I.
March, Earl of, resents the royal slight on his daughter, 241; meditates renouncing his allegiance, 246; quits the royal council, 260 . F. M. P. V.
March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale, 773 Mon. II.
Marchmont, Matilda, Julia's correspondent, 237, 265 G. Mng. I.
Marchthorn, village, 244 St. Ron. IV.
Marck, William de la, chosen by Louis as a model husband, 66; his contempt for letters and religion, 84; attack on the Bishop's palace, 100; the murder, 109; his son seized by Quentin, 109; his herald, 159; secret of, told by Hayraddin, 165; death, 176; notes, 181, 184 Q. Dr. IV.
Mareschal, active in recovery of Isabel Vere, 124; urges the Jacobite rising, 127; end of, 142 B. Dw. II.
Margaret of Anjou, meets the Philipsons in Strassburg Cathedral, 506; at St. Victoire, 537; scene on the battlement, 538; requests René to resign his dominions, 544; death of, 551 . A. Gei. V.
Margaret Ramsay. *See* Ramsay. F. Ng. III.
Margery, Mrs., Eveline's nurse, 577 . Bet. IV.
Maria Digges. *See* Digges, Maria. St. Ron. IV.
Maria M'Intyre. *See* M'Intyre. . Ant. I.
Marjory Douglas. *See* Douglas. . F. M. P. V.
Markham, a follower of Sussex's, 241 Ken. III.
Markham Everard. *See* Everard. ; Wood. V.
Marks upon babes, 497 Redg. IV.
Marlborough, town of, 227 Ken. III.
Maroons of Derncleugh, 215 G. Mng. I.
Marquis of A——, letter to Ravenswood, 400, 423; arrival at Ravenswood Castle, 446; counsels Ravenswood to give up Lucy, 456; entertained at Girder's, 462 B. Lm. II.
Marquis's beef-stand, 463 Redg. IV.
Marriage, Marriages, Father Clement's opinion of, 267 F. M. P. V.
—— by contrast, 415 Pir. III.
—— left-handed, 314 Ken. III.
—— of reason, 495 Redg. IV.
—— private, 293 St. Ron. IV.
—— royal, note, 374 F. M. P. V.
—— Saxon, 678 C. Rt. V.
Marshal, Flora and Will, gipsies, 356 G. Mng. I.
Marshalsea, London, 645 F. Ng. III.
Marshal Wade. *See* Wade. R. R. I.; Ht. Mid. II.
Martha, housekeeper at Osbaldistone Hall, 581 R. R. I.
Martha Trapbois. *See* Trapbois. F. Ng. III.
Marthon the Bohemian, 102 Q. Dr. IV.
Marti, Galeotti. *See* Galeotti. . Q. Dr. IV.
Martigny, Marie de, 292 St. Ron. IV.
Martin, Dame, at the fishermen's dance, 412, 415 . . Redg. IV.
Martin, the shepherd, 693 Mon. II.
Martindale Castle, 739; festivities at, 750; beacon, 837, 849; seizure of Peveril, 839; the beacon rekindled, 951 Pev. III.
Martin Swart and his men, 215 . . Ken. III.
Martin Waldeck, Fortunes of, 422 . . Ant. I.
Mary, song, 414 Pir. III.
Mary Avenel. *See* Avenel, Mary. . . Mon. II.
Mary Stuart, connection with Bothwell, 61; at Lochleven, 84; reception of the lords, 88; abdication of, 94; life at Lochleven, 99; interview with the Protestant chaplain, 106; scene on the failure of her escape, 125; receives Roland's offer of succour, 130; reminded of Darnley's murder, 131; attempt on her life, 132; exculpates Lady Lochleven, 138; reminds her of her youthful frailties, 146; premonition of violent death, 149; escape, 149; the cares of liberty, 154; at the battle of Langside, 158; apostrophises her unhappy admirers, 162; departure from Scotland, 164; resignation of, 170; her demeanour, 170; escape of, 170 . . Abb. III.
—— Leicester urges her continued captivity, 253 Ken. III.
—— Wardour's ideas of, 380 Ant. I.
Mason, Captain, rescued by Colonel Blood, note, 963 Pev. III.
Masquerades at Kenilworth, 332, 338 . . Ken. III.
Mass, the hunting, 48 Abb. III.
Massamore, note, 283 F. M. P. V.
Masters, Doctor, Queen Elizabeth's physician, 241, 244, 309 . . Ken. III.
Matheson, Doctor, of High School, Edinburgh, 367 Redg. IV.
Matilda Marchmont. *See* Marchmont. G. Mng. I.
Matrimony described by Flora, 61, 72 . Wav. I.
Matthew of Doncaster, a bowyer, 408 A. Gei. V.
Mattie, Baillie Jarvie's maid, 612, 624; made Mrs. Jarvie, 667 . R. R. I.
Maugrabin, Hayraddin. *See* Hayraddin. Q. Dr. IV.
Mauley, Sir Edward, Elshie the Dwarf, 139 B. Dw. II.
Maulstatute, the magistrate, 883 . . . Pev. III.
Mause Headrigg. *See* Headrigg, Mause. O. Mrt. I.
Mauthe dog, 820 Pev. III.
Maxwell, the usher, worsted by Sir Mungo, 584 F. Ng. II.
Maxwell, W. *See* Evandale, Lord. . O. Mrt. I.
Maxwell of Summertrees, at the Provost's dinner, 460; story of his escape in 1745, 462; questioned by Alan, 465; gives him a letter to Herries, 468; its contents, 488; at Crackenthorp's, 517 . . Redg. IV.
Mayflower, Phœbe. *See* Phœbe. . Wood. V.
Maypole, festival of, note, 863 . . O. Mrt. I.
Meadowbank, Lord, 668; speech on the Author, 728 Ch. Can. IV.
Measurers of good and evil, 486 . . A. Gei. V.
Mediæval surgery, 599 Iva. II.
Medical superstitions in the Highlands, 64 Wav. I.
Medina, Gomez de, shipwreck of, 535 Pir. III.
Meg Dods, of the Cleikum Inn, 193; reception of Tyrrel, 196; extols his drawings, 202; angry reception on his return from the Well, 229; encounter with MacTurk, 237; visit to her lawyer, 245; dislike to travelling in the Fox's chaise, 252; alarm at Tyrrel's reappearance, 304; at Clara's deathbed, 349; cared for by Mowbray, 352; her cookery, 354 . . St. Ron. IV.
Meg Merrilies, first interview with, 204; at Ellangowan Castle, 208; malediction on old Bertram, 217; examined about the disappearance of Harry Bertram, 223; at Mump's Ha', 249; in the Kaim of Derncleugh with the dead smuggler, 260; craves two boons from Bertram, 264; Hatteraick's opinion of her occult influence, 282; assures Mrs. Bertram at Gilsland of Harry's safety, 299; gives the Dominie a letter to Mannering, 317; warns young Hazlewood 321; writes Mannering to send a coach to Portanferry, 329; leads Bertram and Dandie to Hatteraick's cave, 340; death and declaration of, 344; prototypes of, 196; note on, 356 G. Mng. I.
Meg Murdockson, before the magistrate, 221; connection with Effie's child, 237; in the highwaymen's hut, 262; her connection with Staunton, 278; execution of, at Carlisle, 304; particulars of her confession, 335 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Meiklehose, Isaac, elder of Roseneath, 323 Ht. Mid. II.
Meiklewham, Mr., the lawyer, 204; calls Lady Penelope to order, 215; quarrel over the wine, 221; counsels Mowbray to obtain Clara's money, 231; counsels moderate gains, 262 . . St. Ron. IV.
Melancholy overcomes mirth, 751 Pev. III.
—— yields to unexpected impressions, 94 Q. Dr. IV.
Melech Ric. *See* Richard I. Tal. IV.
Melrose Abbey (Kennaquhair), Author's explanation, 681; description, 687; Clutterbuck's amusements at, 833; search in, by Clutterbuck and the Benedictine, 836 Mon. II.
—— 45; masquerade at, 49; favoured by Robert Bruce, 171 . . . Abb. III.
Melville, Major, of Cairnvreckan, 81, 85, 145, 157, 168 . . . Wav. I.
Melville, Major-General (Henry Morton), 846 O. Mrt. I.
Melville, Sir James, account of Leicester's investiture, note, 307 . . Ken. III.
Melville, Sir Robert, 82 Abb. III.
Memory, character of Author's, 385 A. Gei. V.
Mengs, John, the innkeeper, 481; apologizes, 485 . . A. Gei. V.
Mental agitation, levelling effect of, 842 O. Mrt. I.
Menteith, Earl, meeting with Dalgetty, 9; gives the history of Allan M'Aulay, 21; saves Annot Lyle's life, 23: his attentions to Annot, 28; address to the assembled chiefs, 28; prediction as to his death, 64; Montrose's advice to him about Annot Lyle, 73; is accepted as her bridegroom, 79; stabbed by Allan, 81 L. Mont. III.
Menteith, Lake of, 647 R. R. I.
Menzies of Culdares, 712 H. Wid. IV.
Mephistopheles, character of, 1 . . Q. Dr. IV.
Mercenary soldiers, 517 A. Gei. V.
Mercer, Major, 786 S. Dt. V.
Merchant of Venice, lovers' scene in, 239 G. Mng. I.

Meredith, Mr., the wit, 204 St. Ron. iv.
Meredith, Sir, Welsh knight, 884 Cas. D. v.
Meredith, the Welsh Jacobite, 518 . Redg. iv.
Mermaiden's Fountain, legend on, 386; betrothal scene at, 437; apparition at, 450 . B. Lm. ii.
Mermaids, 369; note, 533; song, 425 . . Pir. iii.
Merrilies, Meg. *See* Meg Merrilies. . G. Mng. i.
Merrily swim we, 702 Mon. ii.
Mertoun, Basil (Vaughan), 364; occupies Yarlshof Castle, 366; quarrel with his housekeeper, 367; fits of despondency, 368; questions his son about the sisters Troil, 389; seeks out Norna in search of him, 466; told to repair to Kirkwall Fair, 467; connection with Norna, 442, 470, 495; last meeting with her, and disclosure, 526; offers his life for that of his son, 528; leaves him his mother's treasure, 529 Pir. iii.
—— Mordaunt, his education, 368; the sisters entreat him to stay, 372, 373; seeks shelter in Stourburgh, 380; questioned by his father about Minna and Brenda, 389; rescues Cleveland, 392; unwelcome news from the yagger, 399; encounters Norna at the Green Loch, 402; who warns him of danger to the sisters Troil, 404; slandered, 404, 516, 521; cold reception at Burgh Westra, 410; the 'queen of swords,' 424; explanations from Brenda, 426; rescued by Cleveland, 432; difference with him about the chaplet, 436; defended by Brenda, 444; stabbed by Cleveland, 458, 490, 494; Norna calls herself his mother, 494; and urges him to wed Minna, 496; rescues the sisters from the pirates, 524; story of his parentage, 527; marriage, 530 . . Pir. iii.
Mervyn, Arthur, of Mervyn Hall, 227; letter from, 235 G. Mng. i.
Mervyn's Tower, Kenilworth, 294, 302 Ken. iii.
Messenger, King's, 750 S. Dt. v.
Mhic Allastar More, note, 718 . . . F. Ng. iii.
Michael Wing-the-Wind, 67 Abb. iii.
Mickle, W. J., author of *Cumnor Hall*, 180 Ken. iii.
Middleburgh, Bailie, on the bench, 220 Ht. Mid. ii.
Middlemas, Richard, birth of, 748; boyish attachment to Menie, 751; passion at hearing of his birth, 756; studies medicine with Hartley, 758; quarrels with him about Menie, 760; has Menie's affections, 762; induced by Hillary to go to India, 767; and parts from Menie, 768; sails to the Isle of Wight, 769; robbed and sent to the hospital, 769, 771; rescued by Hartley, 771; interview with his parents, 777; claims legitimacy, 778; asks Hartley for the document, 783; arrives at Madras, and duel, 783; quarrel with Madame Montreville, 791; conspires with the Paupiah, 792; at Bangalore, 799; trampled to death, 801. S. Dt. v
Middlemass, village, 746 S. Dt. v.
Middleton's *Mad World*, 489 . . B. Lm. ii.
Midsummer Night's Dream at Shaws Castle, 270 St. Ron. iv.
Milan, Galeasso, Duke of, 508 . . A. Gei. v.
Miles Macfin, the cadie, 290 G. Mng. i.
Military education, 23 Wav. i.
—— frenzy, *temp.* of tale, 383 . . . Ant. i.
—— music at night, note, 725; violence preferable to peddling law, 746, 748 O. Mrt. i.
—— zeal, 832 Mon. ii.
Miller. *See* Hob Miller. Mon. ii.; Bet. iv.
Miller, Philip, gardener, 391 Redg. iv.
Miller, the, at quarter-staff with Gurth, 545 Iva. ii.
Mill multures, 726 Mon. ii.
Mills in Shetland, note, 533 Pir. iii.
Milnwood House, 723; entered by the soldiers, 734; visited by Morton after the siege of Glasgow, 801; revisited after his return from abroad, 844; the oak parlour, 847 O. Mrt. i.
Milton, on Scottish names, 84 . . L. Mont. ii.
—— Lee's abhorrence of, 124 . . Wood. v.
Miners of the Peak, rescue Peveril, 849 Pev. iii.
Ministers, Scots do nothing without their, 135 Wood. v.
Minna Troil. *See* Troil, Minna. . Pir. iii.
Minstrel, the. *See* Bertram. Cas. D. v.
Minstrels, 821, 829 Cas. D. v.
—— Provençal, 530, 571 A. Gei. v.
Minstrelsy and troubadours, 673 . . . Iva. ii.
—— Highland, 55, 57 Wav. i.
Miracles, monkish, 261 F. M. P. v.
Mirglip, tale of, 585 C. Rt. v.
Mirkwood Mere, sonnet, 19 Wav. i.
Miser, the. *See* Dwining. F. M. P. v.
Misfortune, animals instinctively fly from, 24 Wood. v.
—— claims strange privileges, 746 O. Mrt. i.
Misogynism of the Antiquary, 369 . Ant. i.
Mist, Children of. *See* Children. L. Mont. ii.
Mist, Maiden of the. *See* Anne of Geierstein. A. Gei. v.
Misticot, Malcolm, 450; Tower, 406; his grave discovered, 446; Edie's story of his hidden treasure, 449 . Ant. i.
Moabitish woman, the, 798 O. Mrt. i.
Mob, preference for an aristocratic leader, 67 Q. Dr. iv.
—— of Edinburgh, fierce character of, 163; execute Porteous, 170 Ht. Mid. ii.
Moderate Presbyterians and the Black Indulgence, 722; disown the murder of Sharp, 783; their petition, 804; note on, 866 O. Mrt. i.
Moffat, Mabel, 378 Redg. iv.
Mohammed the Prophet, 744, 826 . . Tal. iv.
Monastery, criticism on the novel, 721. F. Ng. iii.
Monastery of St. Mary. *See* Melrose Abbey. Mon. ii.; Abb. iii.
Monastic ambition, 715 Mon. ii.
Monboddo, Lord, note on, 355 . . G. Mng. i.
Monçada, Mathias de, claims his daughter, 750; letter to Gideon Gray, 754; refuses to acknowledge his grandson, 755 S. Dt. v.
—— Zilia de, left at Gideon Gray's, 747; confinement at Middlemas, 748; carried off by her father, 751; leaves her son in charge of Gray, 753; interview with her son, 777; death, 778; account of her life, 781 S. Dt. v.
Mon cœur volage, dit-elle, 31 . . . Wav. i.
Moniplies, Richie, rencontre with the apprentices, 548; refuses to give up his cloak, 551; account of his nocturnal adventures, 556; presenting his sifflication, 557, 560; under liquor, 576; expostulates with his master, 606; altercation with Christie, 661; takes charge of Martha, 663; visits his master in the Tower, 686; returns the rubies to the King, 688; behind the arras, 689; rebuked by James, 690; brings the redemption money to Andrew, 699; arrangement with Jin Vin, 702; rescue, and despatches Colepepper, 708; married and knighted, 712, 713; note, 719 F. Ng. iii.
Monkbarns, description of, 371; dinner-party at, 381; antiquarian quarrel at, 384; haunted room in, 393 . . . Ant. i.
Monkeys and the gift of speech, 34 . Wav. i.
—— Lucian's fable of, 293 G. Mng. i.
Monks, meagre traditions of, 420 . . Ant. i.
—— indulgences, 830 Mon. ii.
Monmouth, Duke of, in Scotland, 801; description of, 814 O. Mrt. i.
Monna Paula, Hermione's maid, 627. F. Ng. iii.
Monro, Colonel, of the Scots regiment, 5 L. Mont. ii.
Mons Meg cannon, note on, 681 . . . R. R. i.
Monthermer, before Garde Dolourouse, 643 Bet. iv.
Mont l'Hery, fight at, 515 A. Gei. v.
Montreville, Adela, takes charge of Menie, 786; interrupts Hartley and Menie, 788; threatens Middlemas, 791; at Bangalore, 799; made to disburse her gains, 801 S. Dt. v.
Montrose, Duke of, quarrel with Rob Roy, 685, 688; captures Rob Roy, 647; letters respecting arrest of Graham of Killearn, 695; challenge from Rob Roy, 696 . . R. R. i.
Montrose, Legend of. *See* Legend. L. Mont. ii.
Montrose, Marquis of, accompanies Menteith as man-servant, 9; at Darnlinvarach, 16; discovers himself to the chiefs, 30; description of, 30; victory at Tippermuir, 57; visit of Dalgetty and M'Eagh, 60; leads his army against Argyle, 64; roused from sleep by Cameron M'Ilduy, 66; victory at Inverlochy, 67; separates Allan and Dalgetty, 70 L. Mont. ii.
—— his invasion of Scotland, 423 . . Pir. iii.
Montserrat, Conrade of. *See* Conrade. Tal. iv.
Mont St. Victoire, 537 A. Gei. iv.
Moon, wading, charm of, 93 Wood. v.
Moonlight and love, 428 Pir. iii.
Moors, 784 . . Tal. iv.
Morat, battle of, 389, 554 A. Gei. v.
Mordaunt Mertoun. *See* Mertoun. Pir. iii.
Morgan, a Welsh soldier, 549 . . . Bet. iv.
Morgenstern, a weapon, 83 L. Mont. ii.
Moringer, tale of the Noble, 540 . . . Bet. iv.
Morning, inspiring effect of, 439 . . . Ant. i.
—— dawn in Newgate, 893 Pev. iii.
—— dram, Bailie Jarvie's opinion of, 661 R. R. i.
Morolt, Dennis, the squire, 553 . . . Bet. iv.
Morrice-dancers of Perth, 276; scene with Proudfute, 278; note on, 376 F. M. P. v.
Morris, travels along with Frank Osbaldistone, 538; robbery of, 552, 579, 622, 656; at Justice Inglewood's, 555; his charge against Frank dismissed, 559; the robbery before

Parliament, 579; discovered within the College yards, 615; Jarvie's account of the robbery, 622; thrown into Loch Ard, 645; account of the robbery, 657 . R. R. I.
Morrison, Fynes, his travels in Scotland, 173 WAV. I.
Morrison, Hugh, the drover, 861; gives the dirk to Robin, 866 Two DR. IV.
Mortal warp and mortal woof, 724 . . MON. II.
Mortcloke, the undertaker, 292 . . G. MNG. I.
Mortemar, Alberic. *See* Theodoric. TAL. IV.
Mortgage on Nigel's property, 562. F. NG. III.
Mortimer's Tower, Kenilworth, 294 . KEN. III.
Morton, minister of Cairnvreckan, 81; visits Waverley in his confinement, 87; ministers to Donald Bane, 145; intercedes for Waverley, 157, 168 WAV. I.
Morton, Earl of, and the Orkney Islands, note, 378 PIR. III.
—— in Queen Mary's service, 814 MON. II.
—— interview with Murray, 71 . . . ABB. III.
Morton, Henry, success at the popinjay, 716; insulted by Bothwell, 720; shelters Burley, 723; conversation with him in the hayloft, 725; receives the Headriggs at Milnwood, 733; confession about Burley, 736; made prisoner by Bothwell, 738; carried off to Tillietudlem, 740; visited in confinement by Edith, 749; his character and intimacy with Edith, 755; his defence before Claverhouse, 758; carried off a prisoner, 760; saves Evandale's life at Drumclog, 772; gained over by Burley, 782; reprobates the murder of Sharp, 784; presented to the Covenanters' council, 785; his scruples, 787; his letter to Major Bellenden, 795; leads the attack, 796; taunted with affection for the 'Moabitish woman,' 798; styled a 'Gallio,' 799; visits Milnwood, 802; dispute with Burley, 803; releases Evandale, 806; guards Edith on the road to Edinburgh, 808; urges moderate terms, 811; despatched as envoy to the Duke of Monmouth, 813; declines Claverhouse's protection, 815; finds distraction in the rebel camp, 817; his supposed flight, 819; falls into the hands of the Cameronians, 821; rescued by Claverhouse, 823; his character in Claverhouse's *Black Book*, 826; accepts the King's mercy, 828; leaves for Holland, 831; revisits his native country, 833, 834; arrival there of Edith and Evandale, 837; flight from the cottage, 843, 844; recognised by his dog and Ailie, 845; visits the Piper's Howff, 848; and Bessie Maclure, 850; visits Burley at Linklater Linn, 854; brings assistance to Evandale, 859; marriage, 860 O. MRT. I.
Morton, Ralph, of Milnwood, 728; watches the appetite of his servants, 734; offers to ransom his nephew, 737; declines visiting him in adversity, 831; directions about the viands for his funeral, 845 O. MRT. I.
—— Colonel Silas, Henry's father, 717 O. MRT. I.
Morton, Maiden of, 68 ABB. III.
Mortsheugh the sexton, 453 B. LM. II.
Mother darksome, mother dread, 447. . PIR. III.
Mother Nicneven. *See* Magdalen Græme. ABB. III.
Mother Redcap, a midwife, 580 . . F. NG. III.
Motives originated by our own will, 408 . ANT. I.
Mottoes, Author's explanation of, 670 CH. CAN. IV.
—— to the chapters of the Antiquary, 518 ANT. I.
Moullah, Mohammedan saint, 784 . . S. DT. V.
Moultrassie Hall, 740; miners' attack on, 850 PEV. III.
Mount Pilatus, Switzerland, 393 . . A. GEI. V.
Mount Sharon, 388; the garden, 391 REDG. IV.
Mourning, excessive, note on, 532 . REDG. IV.
Mousa Castle, Shetland, note, 536 . . PIR. III.
Mowbray, Clara. *See* Clara Mowbray. ST. RON. IV.
—— Mr., of St. Ronan's, 202; bet on the salmon, 206; bets Tyrrel a raff, 211; quarrel over the wine, 221; consultation with Meiklewham, 230; obtains Clara's money, 234; at play with Etherington, 264; who proposes for Clara, 264; theatricals at Shaws Castle, 269; sneer at Lady Penelope about the shawl, 283; interview with Clara about the proposal, 285; receives the anonymous warning, 288; shows it to Etherington, 290; fatal play with Etherington, 330; hears Clara slandered at the tea-party, 333; last interview with her, 335; throws away his hunting-knife, 337, 345; revelation from Touchwood, 338; search for his sister, 344; shoots Etherington, 351; latter days of, 352 ST. RON. IV.
—— family, 193 ST. RON. IV.
Mucklebackit, Elspeth. *See* Elspeth, Old. ANT. I.
—— Maggie, the fishwife, 401; 'it's men's lives,' 401; her cottage, 454; selling fish after Steenie's death, 497 . ANT. I.
Mucklebackit, Saunders, helps the Wardours, 390; at work after Steenie's death, 479 . ANT. I.
—— Steenie, renders assistance at the crags, 390; in St. Ruth's with Edie, 452; flight home, pursued by the mute, 457; news of his death, 465; his funeral, 470 . ANT. I.
Mucklestane Moor, 95 B. DW. II.
Mucklewrath, Habakkuk, holds not his peace, 786; incites the insurgents to stone Morton, 817; cries out for his death, 821; summons Claverhouse to God's tribunal, 824 O. MRT. I.
Mucklewrath, John, the smith of Cairnvreckan, 80 WAV. I.
—— Mrs., the virago, 80 WAV. I.
Muffled man, 142 ABB. III.
Mum, Grizel's beverage, 398 . . . ANT. I.
Mumblazen, Rev. Michael, at Lidcote, 231; supplies Tressilian with his purse, 233 . . . KEN. III.
Mummery at the Abbey, 49 ABB. III.
Mumps, Tib, 249 G. MNG. I.
Mump's Ha', meeting of Brown and Dandie at, 249; note, 353 G. MNG. I.
Mumpsimus sumpsimus, note, 872 MAR.'S M. IV.
Mungo Malagrowther, at Heriot's dinner, 570; reminded of his debts, 574; quarrel with the usher, 584; interview with Nigel in the Park, 610; conversation with Prince Charles, 613; complaints against the court, 682; his raven song to Nigel, 683; on court favour, 711; note on, 716 F. NG. III.
Murder, Burley's justification of, 784 O. MRT. I.
Murdockson, Meg. *See* Meg Murdockson. HT. MID. II.
Murray, Lord George, Jacobite leader, notes, 174, 176 . . WAV. I.
Murray, Lord James, 812 MON. II.
—— the Regent, 70 ABB. III.
Murray, William, of Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, 56 . . WAV. I.
Murrays, feud with the Drummonds, 4 L. MONT. II.
Murten, battle of, 554 A. GEI. V.
Muschat's Cairn, Jeanie and Robertson, at, 208; note on, 357 HT. MID. II.
Muses' temple, Blacquernal, 602 . . C. RT. V.
Musgrave, Sir Giles, Royalist officer, 17 L. MONT. II.
Music, influence of simple, 424 . . . PIR. III.
—— regimental, at night, note, 725 . O. MRT. I.
Musselcrag, note, 370; Oldbuck buys fish at, 401; funeral at, 470 . ANT. I.
Mustard and pepper terriers, 249; mutilated by badger, 258; note, 353 G. MNG. I.
Mutes, vassal, note on, 966 PEV. III.
Mutilation of Stubbs, note, 718 . . F. NG. III.
My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, tale, 870 MAR.'S M. IV.
My bairn! my bairn! 220 G. MNG. I.
My banes are buried, 264 HT. MID. II.
My conscience! 608 R. R. I.
My foot is on my native heath, 655 . R. R. I.
My heart's in the Highlands, 73 . . . WAV. I.
—— 455 . REDG. IV.
My hounds may a' rin masterless, motto, 759 O. MRT. I.
My Master! 50 WAV. I.
Myrebeau, Sire de, 523 A. GEI. V.
Mysie, Lady Bellenden's maid, 749 O. MRT. I.
Mysie of the Mill, 727; admiration of Sir Piercie, 730; makes herself useful in the kitchen, 738; resolves to rescue Sir Piercie, 785; is presented with his gold chain, 788; becomes his page, 792; second rescue of Sir Piercie, 818 MON. II.
My sons weavers! 658 R. R. I.
Mysore, 794 S. DT. V.
My sword, my spear, 703 H. WID. IV.
Mythology, ancient, 698 C. RT. V.
My tongue pads slowly, motto, 28 . WOOD. V.

NABOB, the. *See* Touchwood. . ST. RON. IV.
Nairne, Miss, note on, 175 WAV. I.
Names, raillery upon, 620 F. NG. III.
Nancy, battle of, 565 A. GEI. V.
Nanty Ewart. *See* Ewart, Nanty. . REDG. IV.
Napoleon Bonaparte, Scott's Life of, 546 . BET. IV.
Narrative, the course of, 165 WAV. I.
—— seductive love of, 529 R. R. I.
Nathan ben Samuel (Israel), physician, 629, 643 IVA. II.
Naval fight in the Bosphorus, 714 C. RT. V.
Nay, if she love me not, motto, 511 . ANT. I.
Necessity, thou best of peacemakers, motto, 852 PEV. III.
Nectabanus, the dwarf, in the chapel, 758; decoys Kenneth from the banner, 789; tells of the assassination, 854 . . TAL. III.
Ned Kilderkin, his eating-house, 666 F. NG. III.
Negro, colour of, 624; slavery, 642 C. RT. V.
—— slaves, 673 IVA. II.
Negus-making, 205 ST. RON. IV.
Neil Blane, piper and publican, 718; requisitioned by both parties,

781; tells Morton the news of the country, 848; death of, 861 O. Mrt. I.
Neilson, Christopher, Glasgow surgeon, 617 R. R. I.
Neipperg. *See* Ferrand. A. Gei. V.
Nell Gwyn, 912 Pev. III.
Nelly, Dame. *See* Christie. F. Ng. III.
Nelly Trotter, the fishwoman, 202; brings Tyrrel's drawing to the Well, 205; tries to reclaim it, 207 . . St. Ron. IV.
Netherbow Port, Edinburgh, 60 . Ht. Mid. II.
Neufchatel, Lake, 546 A. Gei. V.
Neville, Eveline, tragic story of, 464; narrated by Elspeth Mucklebackit, 475; her acquaintance with Oldbuck, 480; her story, 484 . . Ant. I.
—— Geraldin, 517 Ant. I.
—— Major, report of, 511; arrival at Fairport, and recognition by his father, 516. *See also* Lovel. Ant. I.
Neville, Sir Henry, 818 Tal. IV.
Newark, Jeanie at, 260 Ht. Mid. II.
Newcastle, Duchess of, 801, 933 . . . Pev. III.
New England, tale of, 797 Pev. III.
Newgate Prison, 885; dawn in, 893 Pev. III.
—— after the Jacobite rebellion, 670 . . R. R. I.
News, evil, fly fast, 177 O. Mrt. I.
Newspaper *temp.* Waverley, 11 . . . Wav. I.
Newton, Sir Isaac, and his dog Diamond, 441 Ant. I.
Nicanor the Protospathaire, 595, 602, 604, 718, 722 C. Rt. V.
Nicephorus. *See* Briennius. C. Rt. V.
Nicholas Faggot, the clerk, 441; presents the warrant to Herries, 446; the solatium, 448 . Redg. IV.
Nick, young, and auld Nick, 607 . . . R. R. I.
Nick-sticks, note on, 520 Ant. I.
Nick Strumpfer, the dwarf, 473, 484, 530 . Pir. III.
Nicneven, Mother. *See* Magdalen Græme. Abb. III.
Nicol, Andrew, note, 533 Redg. IV.
Nicolas, Brother, of St. Mary's, 718 Mon. II.
Nicol Jarvie. *See* Jarvie, Bailie Nicol. R. R. I.
Niddrie Castle, arrival of the Queen at, 153 Abb. III.
Nidering, opprobrious Saxon epithet, 555 . Iva. II.
Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch, 554; indignation at the proclamation, 558; the mortgage, 562; accepts Heriot's assistance, 563; services of his father, 569; at Heriot's dinner-party, 572; attends the court, 582; questioned by James in Latin, 585; Lord Huntinglen's assistance, and success of the petition, 1587; introduced to Dalgarno, 590; joked about his landlady, 594; scruples about gaming, 597; enters gay life, 603; unwelcome information, 607; receives a warning note, 609; vexatious interview with Sir Mungo in the Park, 610; cut by the Prince, 614; strikes Dalgarno in the Park, and flees, 615; entered in Duke Hildebrod's book, 622; lodged in Trapbois's house, 641; visit from Captain Colepepper, 645; Hildebrod's proposal, 649; shoots the murderer, 654; leaves Alsatia with Martha, 659; arrival at Greenwich, 665; accosts the King at the chase, 668; incarcerated in the Tower, 672; joined by Margaret as a page, 672; visited by John Christie, 674; and interrogated by Heriot, 677; unwelcome condolence from Sir Mungo, 683; visit from Moniplies, 686; pardoned by the King, 698; marriage, 711; note, 715 F. Ng. III.
Nikkel Blok the butcher, 107, 109 . Q. Dr. IV.
Nixon, Crystal, 376; guarding Darsie, 437; villany to Green Mantle, 502; questions Darsie, 503; at Crackenthorp's, 507; found eavesdropping, 522; cut down by Nanty, 524 Redg. IV.
Nixon, Martha, Oxford's nurse, 564 A. Gei. V.
Nobility, time of Richard I., 505 . . Iva. II.
Noble Moringer, tale of, 540 Bet. IV.
Noir Faineant. *See* Richard. . . . Iva. II.
Norman, the gamekeeper, 381 . . B. Lm. II.
Norman nan Ord, the hammerman, interview with the Smith, 358; struck down in the combat, 366 . F. M. P. V.
Normans, hostility to Saxons, 505; language, 520; dress, time of tale, 554 Iva. II.
—— and Saxons, 615, 616 C. Rt. V.
—— nobleness of, 597 Bet. IV.
Norna of Fitful Head (Ulla Troil), at Stourburgh, 383; tempest song, 385; at the wreck, 393; warns Mordaunt against Cleveland, 404; visit to the sisters Troil, 439; tale of her life, 440; tells the fortunes of the company, 447; meeting with Mordaunt's father in St. Ringan's churchyard, 466; Magnus's account of her, 470; her burgh or cavern, 471; visit from the Troils, 474; her spell over Minna, 475; throws out the Udaller's victuals, 478; claims Mordaunt as her son, 495; separates Minna and Cleveland, 513; meeting with Mordaunt's father in the cathedral, 526; finds that Cleveland is their son, 527; end of, 530; criticism on the character, 360; note on, 537; her songs, 439, 466, 476 . . . Pir. III.
Norse fragments, note, 532 Pir. III.
Northern Lighthouse voyage, 359 . . Pir. III.
Norway, Maiden of, 822 Cas. D. V.
Nosebag, Mrs., 143 Wav. I.
No, sir—I will not pledge, motto, 747 . Pev. III.
Notes to Waverley, author's apology for, 8 . Wav. I.
Not serve two masters? motto, 192 Ken. III.
Novel, novels, plot of, 315 F. M. P. V.
—— and epics, 721 F. Ng. III.
—— contempt for, 8 Q. Dr. IV.
—— domestic, 187 St. Ron. IV.
—— ending of, like last cup of tea, 860 O. Mrt. I.
November melancholy, 707 Mon. II.
November's hail-cloud drifts away, 35 L. Mont. II.
Novit, Nichil, attorney, 179 Ht. Mid. II.
Now, a plague of their votes, 835 . . Pev. III.
Now, gentle readers, I have let you ken, 186 Wav. I.
Now, haud your tongue, baith wife and carle, 498 Ant. I.
Now, hoist the anchor, mates, 819 . Pev. III.
Now takis James his waige, 809 . . Cas. D. V.
Nubian slave. *See* Kenneth, Sir. . . . Tal. IV.
Nun of Kent, 45 . Abb. III.
Nurses, Scottish, 110 B. Dw. II.

Oak, King's, Woodstock Park, 18, 134 Wood. V.
Oak Tree, to an, 78 Wav. I.
Oates, Dr. Titus, his evidence, 918 Pev. III.
Oath on the salmon, 282 G. Mng. I.
—— upon the dirk, note on, 177 . . Wav. I.
Ochiltree, Edie. *See* Edie. Ant. I.
Odin, betrothal of, 678 C. Rt. V.
—— promise of, note, 536 Pir. III.
Of all the birds on bush or tree, 185 . . Ken. III.
O for the voice of that wild horn! 534 . . R. R. I.
Oggam hieroglyphic, note, 75 . . . Wav. I.
Ogilvies and Leslys, wars between, 30 Q. Dr. IV.
Oh, bold and true, 350 F. M. P. V.
O Lady of the desert, hail! 61 . . . Wav. I.
Oldbuck, Griselda, description of, 381; altercation with her brother about domestic arrangements, 394; questions Lovel how he passed the night, 398; sorts the fishwife, 410; excitement over Lord Glenallan's visit to Monkbarns, 482. . Ant. I.
Oldbuck, Jonathan, prototype of, 361; encounter with Mrs. Macleuchar at her coach office, 366; his pedigree, 368; receives Lovel at Monkbarns, 371; invites the Wardours to dinner, 378; vindicates his descent, 385; comes to the assistance of the Wardours on the crags, 389; takes Lovel home, and altercation with his sister, 392; lights Lovel to the haunted room, 395; refers to an early attachment, 395, 480; at breakfast, and altercation with his sister, 398; relates the story of Aldobrand the printer, 400; buys fish at Musselcrag, 401; visit with Lovel to Knockwinnock, 404; sketches Lovel's literary career, 409; proposes to try poetry along with Lovel, 410; opinion of, at the post-office, 412; visit to Fairport, 415; calls on Lovel, 416; acts cicerone at the picnic to St. Ruth's, 418; his disquisition, with interruptions, 427; counsels peace to Lovel, 430; Edie's opinion of his wisdom, 439; neglect in his household during Hector's illness, 440; visit from the Wardours about money matters, 442; interrogates Dousterswivel, 444; puts him to the test, 446; interrogates Caxon about Steenie's funeral, 465; the lachrymatory upset by M'Intyre's dog, 466; contempt for the Celt, 468; attends Steenie Mucklebackit's funeral, 470; finds the father repairing his boat, 479; serious interview with Lord Glenallan, 480; his first love, 480; brings his lordship to Monkbarns, 481; throws light on Miss Neville's story, 484; essay on the Quickens-bog, 486; assists Edie out of gaol, 491; visit to Elspeth Mucklebackit, 497; stops the warrant of distress at Knockwinnock, 506; prepares to meet the French, 514 Ant. I.
——prototype of, 670 Ch. Can. IV.
—— at the Waverley Novel meeting, 543 Bet. IV.
Oldenbuck, Wolfbrand, the printer, 385; Aldobrand, the Monkbarns ghost, 395, 396; romantic story of, 400 . . . Ant. I.
Old Mortality (Robert Paterson), history and wanderings of, 706; found at work, 709; note on, 862 O. Mrt. I.
—— Mr. Train's notes on, 668, 669 . Ch. Can. IV.
—— the novel, Author's remarks upon, 711 O. Mrt. I.
Old Plays, the Author's scraps, 722 F. Ng. III.
Old Rowley. *See* Charles II. Pev. III.

Old Testament language among the Covenanters, 774, 782 . O. Mrt. I.
Olifant, Basil, has an eye on Tillietudlem, 822; congratulates Claverhouse, 826; becomes Catholic to obtain possession of Tillietudlem, 835; turns Whig again to keep it, 851; death of, 859 O. Mrt. I.
Oliver le Dain, 45; cat-like motions, 55; puts in a word for himself, 66; asserts himself an earthly reptile, 130; makes friends for Louis, 151 Q. Dr. IV.
Oliver Proudfute. *See* Proudfute. F. M. P. V.
On Hallowmas Eve, ere ye boune ye to rest, 37 Wav. I.
On n'arrête pas dans un si beau chemin, 326 G. Mng. I.
Opal, the Geierstein, 441, 442, 443, 497 A. Gei. V.
Orange, William of. *See* William. . O. Mrt. I.
Ordeals, 808. . Tal. IV.
—— by fire, note on, 376. *Also* Bier-right. F. M. P. V.
Ordinary, Beaujeu's, 589 F. Ng. III.
Oriflamme of France, 42 Q. Dr. IV.
—— 509 . A. Gei. V.
Orkney, Patrick Stewart, Earl of, 487, 533 Pir. III.
Orkney Islands, held by Lord Morton, note, 378 Pir. III.
Orlando Innamorato by Boiardo, 353 Ken. III.
Orleans, Duke of, 45; intended marriage with Joan, 52; attentions to Isabelle, 63; attempted rescue of the Ladies de Croye, 76; throws away his sword, 77; proposed alliance with Countess Isabelle, 150; objected to by her, 167 Q. Dr. V.
Ormond, Duke of, 870, 913 Pev. III.
Ormiston, Black Laird of, 829 . . Mon. II.
Ormiston, Jock, sheriff's officer, 490 . Ant. I.
Orphan Maid, Annot Lyle's song, 35; literal translation, 83 . L. Mont. II.
Orrock, Puggie, sheriff's officer, 490 . Ant. I.
Orson Pinnet, bear-keeper, 256 . . . Ken. III.
Orvietan or Venice treacle, note, 236 . . Ken. III.
Osbaldistone, Francis, first interview with his father, 530; his verses discovered, 534; leaves his father's house, 537; meets Die Vernon and his cousins, 543; seated next her at dinner, 547; meets Andrew Fairservice, 549; the hunt, 551; charged with robbing Morris, 552, 579, 622; arrives with Diana at the Justice's, 555; the charge dismissed, 559; taken by Die into the library, 563; inquires of Rashleigh respecting his release, 565; conversation about Miss Vernon, 569; strikes Rashleigh, 571; admonished by Die, 574; warns Owen of Rashleigh, 576; rises in estimation at the Hall, 578; sees two shadows in Die's room, 581; miscarriage of letter to Owen, 582; urged by Die to return to London, 585; glove scene in the library, 588; leaves for Glasgow with Andrew, 593; attends service in the cathedral, 597; the warning voice from the pillar, 599; meets the stranger on the bridge, 602; taken into the gaol, 602; opens Diana's letter, 609; enraged with Fairservice, 612; breakfast with Nicol Jarvie, 613; rencontre with Rashleigh, 615; separated by Rob Roy, 616; his prospects, 618; sets out for the Highlands, 624; at Aberfoil Inn, 628; receives a letter from Rob Roy, 632; arrested by Captain Thornton, 635; the march into Rob Roy's country, 637; brought before Helen MacGregor, 642; sent with message to Rob Roy's captors, 646; escapes from Montrose's party, 651; and meets with the Vernons and Rob Roy, 652, 654; asks the latter about Diana, 656; return to Aberfoil, 657; recovery of the assets, 659, 660; receives Die's love-token from Helen MacGregor, 664; return to London, 667; becomes heir to Osbaldistone Hall, 669; takes possession, 671; with the Vernons in the library, 673; arrival of Rashleigh, 676; marriage, 679 . . . R. R. I.
Osbaldistone, John, 546, 547, 669 . . . R. R. I.
—— Percival, 546, 547, 668 R. R. I.
—— Rashleigh, 544, 546; meets Frank and Die at the Justice's, 554; joins them in the library, 565; conversation about Miss Vernon, 569; struck by Frank, 571; conduct towards Miss Vernon, 575; leaves the Hall, 576; plunders the firm's estate, 590; rencontre with Frank in the College Yards, 615; his part in breaking the firm, 622; his treachery, 662; is reprobated by his father, 668; enters the Hall, and captures the Vernons, 677; death, 678 R. R. I.
—— Richard, 546, 547, 668 R. R. I.
—— Sir Hildebrand, and his sons, 546; his suspicions, 567; joins the insurrection, 668 R. R. I.
—— Thorncliff, introduction to Frank, 544; keeps close to Die, 551; his mare carried off by Fairservice, 594; death of, 668 R. R. I.
Osbaldistone, William, Frank's father, 530, 569; Jarvie's account of his affairs, 622; receives his son at Glasgow with good news, 666 . . R. R. I.
—— Hall, 545; dinner at, 547; the hunt, 549; the library, 563; Sunday at, 567; revisited, 671 R. R. I.
O Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia! 385 . Ant. I.
O sleep ye sound, 218 Ht. Mid. II.
Ossian, Oldbuck's attack on, 468, 469 . Ant. I.
Ossulston, Lord, his adventure with wild cattle, 889 Cas. D. V.
Otterscopescaurs, fox-hunt, 255 . . G. Mng. I.
Ourang-outang, the. *See* Sylvan. C. Rt. V.
Our Lady of the Broken Lances, 633, 731 C. Rt. V.
Our work is over — over now, 306 . Ht. Mid. II.
Outcast from the family, feelings of, 537. R. R. I.
Out, to go, conventional phrase for the Highland rebellion, 98 . Wav. I.
Outlaws, time of tale, 527; catch Gurth with the zecchins, 543; distribute the plunder from Torquilstone, 616, 619 . Iva. II.
Outram, Lance. *See* Lance. Pev. III.
Over the mountains and under the waves, motto, 510 . . . Pir. III.
O vous, qui buvez, à tasse pleine, 61 . . Wav. I.
Owen, Osbaldistone's clerk, 521; remonstrates with Frank, 535; in Glasgow gaol, 604; at the Bailie's 618 . . . R. R. I.
Oxford, Earl of, at Elizabeth's court, 309 Ken. III.
—— *See* Philipson, Seignor. A. Gei. V.

Pacolet, Norna's dwarf, 473, 484, 530 . Pir. III.
Paduan Doctor, 876 Mar.'s M. IV.
Pages in the seventeenth century, 716 F. Ng. III.
—— note on, 953. Pev. III. *See also* Foot-page.
Paget, Lady, at Elizabeth's court, 258. . Ken. III.
Painting and poetry, 373 B. Lm. II.
Palestine, Author's non-acquaintance with, 733 Tal. IV.
Palgrave's history of the Vehme-gericht, 387 A. Gei. V.
Palmer, the. *See* Ivanhoe. Iva. II.
Palmers' (Lacy and Guarine) return, 645 Bet. IV.
Palm Sunday, at Perth, 361 F. M. P. V.
—— 869; in Douglas Church, 879 Cas. D. V.
Paltock's *Peter Wilkins*, note, 399 . . Ant. I.
Papists, Maggie Mucklebackit's opinion of, 456 Ant. I.
Parental love, my friend, has power o'er wisdom, motto, 494 . Pir. III.
Paris, Count and Countess of. *See* Robert and Brenhilda. . C. Rt. V.
Park, Mungo, 746 S. Dt. V.
Parliament, Cromwell's opinion of, 42 Wood. V.
—— Scotch appeal to, 489 B. Lm. II.
—— of Burgundy, 521 A. Gei. V.
—— of Love, 531, 571 A. Gei. V.
Parochial charity, 354 St. Ron. IV.
Parole of honour, 83 L. Mont. II.
Parsons, Robert, the Jesuit, note, 178 . Ken. III.
Partnership often makes pleaship, 419 Redg. IV.
Party feeling, violence of, 816 . . . Pev. III.
Pass breath, come death, 345 . . G. Mng. I.
Pass of Leny, near Callander, 9 L. Mont. II.
Pate-in-Peril. *See* Maxwell of Summertrees. Redg. IV.
Pate Macready, the pedlar, 578, 581 . . R. R. I.
Paterson, Pate, Snailsfoot's boy, 433, 491, 492 Pir. III.
Paterson, Robert (Old Mortality), history of, 706; note, 862 O. Mrt. I.
—— Mr. Train's notes on, 669 . . Ch. Can. IV.
Paton, Captain John, note, 868 . . O. Mrt. I.
Patriarch, the Greek. *See* Zosimus. . C. Rt. V.
Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, 487, 533 Pir. III.
Pattieson, Paul, the usher, 580 . . Ct. Rt. V.
—— Peter, of Gandercleugh, 704; after school hours, 708 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— 372 . . B. Lm. II.
—— 578, 583 . C. Rt. V.
Pauline, Lady Hermione's attendant, 625 F. Ng. III.
Paul Jones in Firth of Forth, 187 . Wav. I.
Paupiah of Madras, 792 S. Dt. V.
Pavillon, citizen, 95; rescued by Quentin, 103; receives him and Isabelle, 111 . . Q. Dr. IV.
—— Dame, 111 Q. Dr. IV.
—— Gertrude. *See* Trudchen. . Q. Dr. IV.
Peak Castle, Derbyshire. *See* Martindale. Pev. III.
Pearson, Gilbert, Cromwell's attendant, 40; proposes the use of torture, 169; speaks for the prisoners, 173 Wood. V.
Peasantry, Scotch, simplicity and pathos of their language, 261 Ant. I.
—— radical, 249 St. Ron. IV.
Peden, Alexander, his terror of a French invasion, 441 O. Mrt. I.
Pedestrianism, exhilarating effects of, 248 G. Mng. I.
Pedlar (Donald Bane), joins Gilfillan, 91 . Wav. I.
—— met by Halbert Glendinning, 811 . Mon. II.
—— Shetland. *See* Snailsfoot. . . . Pir. III.
Pedlars, time of Elizabeth, 265 . . Ken. III.

Peebles, Peter. *See* Peter Peebles . REDG. IV.
—— *versus* Plainstanes, 424 . REDG. IV.
Peel, Sir R., kindness to the Author, 679 . R. R. I.
Peel Castle, 800; note on, 955 . . . PEV. III.
Peel-towers, 688 MON. II.
Peggy, Widow Maclure's grandchild, 850 O. MRT. I.
Peggy Johnstone, laundry-maid, 300, 301, 304 G. MNG. I.
Pelican in the wilderness, Kettledrummle uplifts his voice as, 763 O. MRT. I.
Pembroke, Earl, 837; sends word to capitulate, 885 CAS. D. V.
Pembroke, the tutor, his interview with the bookseller, 21; letter of ten folio pages, 66, 83; in the 'Priest's Hole,' 165 WAV. I.
Penfeather, Lady Penelope, 202; told on by Maria, 205; patronises Tyrrel, 212; called to order by Meiklewham, 215; skirmish with Lady Binks, 216; determination to be single, 219; acts Hermia, 274; tries to gain information from Cargill, 280; sneered at about the shawl, 283; takes Etherington to Hannah Irwin, 324; her tea-party, 331 ST. RON. IV.
Pengwern, Torch of. *See* Gwenwyn. . BET. IV.
Pennon, 640 . BET. IV.
Penny, Lee. *See* Lee Penny. . . TAL. IV.
Penny weddings, 710 F. NG. III.
Pepper and Mustard terriers, 249; mutilated by the badger, 258; note, 353 . . G. MNG. I.
Periodicals, advantages of, 690 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Peronne, 122; the keep, 127; seneschal of, 136; council at, 155; note on, 181 . . Q. DR. IV.
Persecution, Morton's ideas of, 67 . . O. MRT. I.
Persecutors of the Covenanters, 532 REDG. IV.
Personal appearance, regard for, a species of self-love, 304; never unimportant to women, 317 KEN. III.
Perth, North Inch, combat on, 197, 362; note, 378; beauty of, 205; town council, 296; St. John's Church, 309; feast of town council, 313; East Port, note, 375; High Street, and Curfew Street, notes, 375; council-room, note, 376; Skinner's Yards, note, 377; Dominicans' garden, note, 378; Errol's lodgings, note, 378 F. M. P. V.
—— combat of the clans at, note, 681 . . R. R. I.
Perthshire, beauties of, 205 F. M. P. V.
Pest, the advocate, 369, 420 REDG. IV.
Petard-firing at Woodstock, 431 . . . WOOD. V.
Peter Bridgeward, of Kennaquhair, 701 MON. II.
—— 59 . . ABB. III.
Peterkin Geislaer, 104 Q. DR. IV.
Peterkin Vorst, a Fleming, 573 . . . BET. IV.
Peter Peebles, at his solicitor's, 419; induced to leave the court, 423; his cause 'Peebles *v.* Plainstanes,' 424; appearance at the Justice's, 443; recognises Darsie, 445; and Herries, 445; at Crackenthorp's, 509; castigated by Nanty Ewart, 512; produces a warrant against Alan, 514; lodged beside Alan, Green Mantle, and the Quaker, 525; recognises Alan, 525; end of, 531; note on, 533 REDG. IV.
Peter the Hermit, 586, 692 C. RT. V.
Peter Wilkins, by Paltock, 399 . . . ANT. I.
Petit André, the laughing hangman, 37; acts as guide, 75; prepares for Galeotti's execution, 141; at Hayraddin's execution, 164 . . Q. DR. IV.
Peveril, Julian, takes care of Alice, 744; defends her against the Countess of Derby, 755; in the Isle of Man with Lord Derby, 782; visit to Alice at the Black Fort, 784; interview, 790; interrupted by Bridgenorth, 792; who tries to gain him over to the cause, 795; meets Alice at the Goddard Crovan, 807; warned by Bridgenorth, 811; interview with Fenella, 814; entrusted with the Countess's mission, 817; sails for England, 821; at the horse-dealer's, 824, 869; meets Ganlesse at the Cat and Fiddle, 826; tries to shake him off, 830; entertained at the hostelry by Ganlesse and Smith, 832; drugged, 835; tries to escape in the morning, 836; inhospitable reception at the Peveril Arms, 837; tries to rescue his father, 839; receives his blessing, 842; taken to Moultrassie Hall, 843; saves Bridgenorth from the miners, 851; warns him against Ganlesse, 853; sets off for London, 854; overhears the conversation in the inn about Alice, 856; pursues, and recovers his papers from Chiffinch, 860; meets with Fenella at the Savoy, 870, and interview with the King, 872; taken with Fenella to Madame Chiffinch's, 873; meets Alice, 876; escapes with her and Fenella, 880; encounter with Jenkins, 882; before the magistrate, 884; sent to Newgate, 885; meets the dwarf there, 888; an invisible voice in the cell, 892; renewed, 894; receives a billet from 'Unknown, 897; taken to the Tower, 897; puts mourning on his hat, 899; nearly run down by a galley, 899; recognised by his mother, 900; with his father before the Chief Justice, 917; acquitted, 921; assaulted by the mob, 922; gains refuge in Bridgenorth's house, 924; meets Christian, 927; and Alice, 946; refuses to commit Bridgenorth, 947; reunion, 951 PEV. III.
Peveril, Lady Margaret, takes charge of Alice, 742; receives the Puritans, 752; and the Cavaliers, 753; loyal reception of the Countess of Derby, 756; arrests Bridgenorth, 760; letter from him, 769; encounters Bridgenorth in the avenue, 778; intercedes with him for her son, 841; recognises Julian at the Tower, 900; presents Alice to her husband, and reunion, 946 PEV. III.
—— Sir Geoffrey, of the Peak, 739; cheers up Bridgenorth, 743; his return to the Castle, 761; guards Lady Derby in her escape, 765; encounter with Bridgenorth, 767; ejects Solsgrace from the vicarage, 772; challenges Bridgenorth, 775; dislike to him, 789; seized by Bridgenorth and his men, 839; before the Chief Justice, 917; acquitted, 921; assaulted by the mob, 922; gains refuge in Bridgenorth's house, 924; appears at Charles's court, 947 . . . PEV. III.
—— William, at Hastings, 739 . . . PEV. III.
—— of the Peak, strictures on the novel, note, 952 PEV. III.
Peveril's Pole-star, 837 PEV. III.
Phantasmagoria, Ramorny's, 288 F. M. P. V.
Pharmacopœia, Quackleben's, 217 . ST. RON. IV.
Phil, the fisherman's boy, 432 . . REDG. IV.
Philip, Father, visits Glendearg, 699; carries off the Book, 700; adventure with the White Lady, 702; arrival at the Monastery, 705 . . . . MON. II.
Philip, King of France, 763; intervenes between Richard and Leopold, 786; desire to return to Europe, 843 . TAL. IV.
Philip drunk and Philip sober, 395 . . ANT. I.
Philipson, Arthur, travelling in the Alps, 392; rescued by Anne, 400; shoots the bow of Buttisholz, 409; duel with Donnerhugel, 415; at Graffs-lust, 426; sees the apparition of Anne, 429; asked to join Rudolph's league, 434; in the dungeon, 457; rescued by Anne, 458; apprises the Swiss of the danger, 461; warned by Anne on the road, 473; separates from his father, 474; arrives at Arnheim Castle, 492; interview with Anne, 498; discloses his rank, 500; accompanies her to Strassburg, 503; meets Queen Margaret, 507; Anne's memento, 520; journey to Provence, 530; interview with King René, 533; interview with the Queen at St. Victoire, 538; discovers the invisible ink, 541; second challenge from Rudolph, 559; and encounter, 561; interview with Anne's father, 561; the union, 568 . . . A. GEI. V.
Philipson, Seignor (De Vere, Earl of Oxford), travelling as a merchant, 392; anxiety for his son's safety, 397; presents Anne with ear-rings, 418; parts from the delegates, 446; robbed and imprisoned by Hagenbach, 454; rescued from the dungeon, 466; recovers his casket, 469; repairs to Strassburg, 471; separates from his son, 474; meets the Priest of St. Paul's, 477; at the inn, 479; his bed lowered into the Vehme-gericht, 486; meets Queen Margaret in Strassburg Cathedral, 506; interview with Charles of Burgundy, 511; pleads for the Swiss deputies, 515, 529; letter to the Queen, 541; attends her funeral, 552; rouses Charles to action, 557; finds Charles's camp undefended, 565; return to England, 568 A. GEI. V.
Philosopher's gardens, Constantinople, 668 C. RT. V.
—— stone, 226, 263, 279 KEN. III.
Philosophy, and the golden calf in Fairport, 409 ANT. I.
—— Hereward's ideas of, 625 . . C. RT. V.
Phoca, Hector's rencontre with, 469, 495 ANT. I.
Phœbe Mayflower, appearance at Woodstock Lodge, 22; informs Everard about Kerneguy, 116; encounter with Tomkins at the fountain, 144; questioned by Cromwell, 166 . . WOOD. V.
Phraortes, the Greek admiral, 714, 717 C. RT. V.
Physicians and their payment, 109 . . ABB. III.
Picara Justina Diez, history of, 52 . . WAV. I.
Picnic to St. Ruth's, 418 ANT. I.
Pictish Burgh, note, 536 PIR. III.
Picts, angry discussion upon, 384 . . . . ANT. I.
Piercie, Sir, Author's explanations, 685; arrival at Glendearg, 730; fine speeches, 732; soliloquy on his situation, 737; relates his mission to the Abbot, 740; his dress admired by Mysie, 751; presented with the bodkin, 752; challenges Halbert, 754; the duel, 759; falls, 761; accused of murder, 776; describes the duel,

779; escape from the Tower, 786; sets off for Edinburgh with Mysie, 792; annoys the Abbot with his fine speeches, 819; made prisoner, and exposure of, 825; note on, 829 . . . Mon. II.
Pierre, Maître. *See* Louis XI. . . . Q. Dr. IV.
Pike, Gideon, Major Bellenden's valet, 748 O. Mrt. I.
Pilatus, Mount, Switzerland, 393 . . A. Gei. V.
Pilgrim's Progress, adapted by Madge Wildfire, 267, 269 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Pillaging, a natural trade, 788 . . O. Mrt. I.
Pinkie-cleuch, battle at, 692 Mon. II.
Pinkie House, near Musselburgh, 121 Wav. I.
Pinnet, Orson, bear-keeper, 256 . . Ken. III.
Pipers, Highland, emulation of, 28 . L. Mont. II.
—— onslaught of the, 367 F. M. P. V.
Piper's Howff inn, 718; revisited by Morton, 848 O. Mrt. I.
Piquet, game, 567 R. R. I.
—— 263 . St. Ron. IV.
Piracy, Scandinavian virtue in, 589 . C. Rt. V.
Pirate, the captain. *See* Cleveland. . Pir. III.
—— the novel, 361 Pir. III.
—— vessel. *See* Fortune's Favourite. . Pir. III.
Pistols, carrying of, 683 F. Ng. III.
Pit and gallows, privilege, 776 . . O. Mrt. I.
Pitcairne, Dr., 424 Redg. IV.
Pitmurkie wood, 408 Redg. IV.
Pitscottie, beware of, 545 Bet. IV.
—— Lindsay of, on Athole hunt, 62 . . Wav. I.
Pixie, Sir Henry Lee's pony, 121. Wood. V.
Plaid, shepherd's, 815 Cas. D. V.
Plantagenet, Edith. *See* Edith. . . Tal. IV.
Plantagenets, cognizance of, 840 . . . Tal. IV.
Plantie cruive, 532 Pir. III.
Play, opinions regarding the, 257 . . Ken. III.
Plays, old, the Author's store of, 722 F. Ng. III.
Pleasure, relations to pain, 345 . . F. M. P. V.
Plessis-les-Tours Castle, 20 Q. Dr. IV.
Pleydell, Mr., the advocate, 287; always speaks truth of a Saturday night, 289; at home, 291; examines Rebecca about Meg Merrilies' story, 298; at Woodbourne, 326; examines Harry Bertram, 330; offers bail for him, 337; his fees from the young ladies, 346; examines Hatteraick and Glossin, 347; final visit to Ellangowan, 352 G. Mng. I.
Plot, Dr., on the Woodstock mystery, 3 Wood. V.
Plot of a story, reader's desire to understand, 315 F. M. P. V.
Plumdamas, Peter, on Porteous's reprieve, 164; acts as peacemaker, 243 Ht. Mid. II.
Plum porridge, Cuddie's regret over, 732 O. Mrt. I.
Poaching, by the landlord of the Wallace inn, 704 O. Mrt. I.
Poet or maker, 821 Cas. D. V.
Poetry and painting, 373 B. Lm. II.
—— and versification, 410 Ant. I.
—— fugitive, 469 Ant. I.
Poisoning, in the middle ages, 275 F. M. P. V.
Police system in Scotland in 1589, 85 L. Mont. II.
Policy, Mrs., the housekeeper of Holyrood, 200 F. M. P. V.
Politeness of the Highlanders, 76 . Wav. I.
Polonaise dress worn by Scotch boys, 64 Wav. I.
Polwarth, Alick, Waverley's servant, 135, 160 Wav. I.
Polydore, 689 C. Rt. V.
Pontius Pilate, Swiss legend of, 393 . A. Gei. V.
Pontoys, Stephen, a veteran, 640 . . . Bet. IV.
Ponty, authority on forest-trees, 224 St. Ron. IV.
Poor-man-of-mutton, 489 B. Lm. II.
Poor sinners whom the snake deceives, 491 Pir. III.
Poor's-rates, Oldbuck's change of opinion about, 377 . . . Ant. I.
Pope, powers of the, 844 Cas. D. V.
Popinjay, near Tillietudlem, 714; festival of, note, 863 . O. Mrt. I.
Popish Plot, 802; witnesses of, note, 959; narratives of, note, 960; first check to, note, 961 Pev. III.
Pork, dislike of, by the Scotch, 173 Wav. I.
—— 665 . F. Ng. III.
—— Mahomedan abhorrence of, 742 Tal. IV.
Portanferry bridewell, 310; attacked by the smugglers, 324 G. Mng. I.
Porteous, Captain John, 159; fires upon the mob, 162; reprieved, 164; dragged out to execution, 173; murder of, 353 Ht. Mid. II.
—— Mob, 170; note on, 353 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Porter at Kenilworth, 293; his speech to the Queen, 306 . . Ken. III.
Porte-Royale, Jansenist headquarters, 498 Redg. IV.
Portsmouth, Duchess of, 857 . . . Pev. III.
Post-chaise, Dr. Johnson's love of, 248 G. Mng. I.
Postilions, 699 H. Wid. IV.
Post-office at Fairport, 411 Ant. I.
Postscript, important part of a letter, 748 O. Mrt. I.
Postulate, what is it? 202 F. M. P. V.
Pott, Mr., librarian at the Spa, 318 St. Ron. IV.
Pottingar. *See* Dwining. F. M. P. V.
Poundtext, Rev. Peter, counsels the razing of Tillietudlem Tower, 786; stands up for mercy, 803; quarrel with Burley, and sides with Morton, 811 O. Mrt. I.
Powheid, Lazarus, the sexton, 847; defies the torture, 849 Cas. D. V.
Powis Castle. *See* Castell-Coch. . . Bet. IV.
Practice necessary to the law, 417 . Redg. IV.
Prætorium at Kinprunes, 376, 408; note on, 519 Ant. I.
Prayer, used to support evil counsels, 822 O. Mrt. I.
—— consolations, 793; blessedness, of, 803 Mon. II.
—— motives rather than forms of, 88 Q. Dr. IV.
—— value of, 824 Tal. IV.
—— of Louis XI., 138; note, 182 Q. Dr. IV.
Preachers at the Reformation, 774 . . Mon. II.
Preaching after the battle of Drumclog, 775, 787 O. Mrt. I.
Precentor Skreigh, 224 G. Mng. I.
Preceptories of the Knights Templars, 629 Iva. II.
Preferment, Church, Butler's ideas of, 345 Ht. Mid. II.
Presbyterian clergy, ejection of, note, 953; compared with Independents, 763 Pev. III.
—— form of worship in Scotland, 597 R. R. I.
Presbyterianism, disliked by the Highlanders, 7 L. Mont. II.
Presbyterians, Moderate, and the Black Indulgence, 722; disown the murder of Sharp, 783; their petition to Government, 804; note on, 866 . O. Mrt. I.
Presence of mind is courage, 761 . . . Pev. III.
Prestonpans, battle of, 113, 157 . . Wav. I.
Pretender, Young. *See* Charles Edward. Wav. I.; Redg. IV.
Pride, and reason, 756 Mon. II.
—— *versus* reason before a duel, 431; after, 434 Ant. I.
Priest of St. Paul's. *See* Geierstein, Count Albert. A. Gei. V.
Priest's Hole, 165 Wav. I.
Prince Charles. *See* Charles Edward . Redg. IV.
Prince John. *See* John, Prince. Iva. II.; Bet. IV.
Princess Joan. *See* Joan. Q. Dr. IV.
Printer, Oldbuck's ancestor, 385 . . . Ant. I.
Prior Anselm, receives King Robert's confession, 242; threatens to expel Louise, 245; restrains Douglas, 250; twitted by Rothsay, 261; applies for commission against heresy, 264 F. M. P. V.
Prior Aymer, meets Gurth in the forest, 508; at Cedric's table, 516; in the hands of the outlaws, 621; his letter to the Templar, 623, 633; quarrel with the Friar, 624 . Iva. I.
Prior of Namur monastery, 83 . . Q. Dr. IV.
Prison cages, 867 Cas. D. V.
Prisoner, danger of murdering a, 302 . Ken. III.
Prisons, modern, 659 Bet. IV.
Pritchard, William, master of H.M.S. Shark, 222 G. Mng. I.
Privy Council, Covenanters before, 828 O. Mrt. I.
Procession from the Abbey, 822 . . . Mon. II.
Proclamation against Scotch entering England, note, 715 . . F. Ng. III.
Procopius' legend of the English Channel, 615 C. Rt. V.
Prodigious! 205, 245, 352 G. Mng. I.
Profligate logic, 113 Wood. V.
Proof against shot, note on, 865 . . O. Mrt. I.
Proof, legal, and moral conviction, 336 G. Mng. I.
Property, duties of, 592 F. Ng. III.
Protestant heresy, guards against, 119 Abb. III.
Protocol, Peter, the attorney, 294 . . G. Mng. I.
Protospathaire, imperial general, 595, 602, 604; watches Achilles, 718; field-marshal at the lists, 722 . . C. Rt. V.
Proudfute, Magdalen, made widow, 292; chooses the Smith to be her champion, 299; demands the combat, 304; her child cured by Dwining, 308; equips the Smith, 364 F. M. P. V.
—— Oliver, at the rescue, 220; button-holding, 229; unhorsed by Devil's Dick, 236; meets Henry with the glee-maiden, 256; lets out the secret to Simon Glover, 277; caught by the morrice-dancers, 279; makes amends to the Smith, 281; murdered, 282; his body found, 288; from which blood oozes when Dwining passes, 308; avenged, 311 F. M. P. V.
Proud Maisie is in the wood, 307 . . Ht. Mid. II.
Provençal Troubadours, 530, 571 . . A. Gei. V.
Provence, 532 A. Gei. V.
Providence, Divine, thwarted by machinery, 731 O. Mrt. I.
Provosts, Scotch, end of 14th century, 232 F. M. P. V.
Psalm, the quavering, before the battle, 818 O. Mrt. I.
Public voice, Author's deference to, 721 F. Ng. III.
Publishing, expense of, 410 Ant. I.
Puggie Orrock, sheriff's officer, 490 . Ant. I.
Pulpit, power of, time of tale, 20 . . Abb. III.
Punch-bowl at Burgh Westra, 417; on board the Pirate, 507 . Pir. III.
Punds Scotch, ye bitch! 737 O. Mrt. I.

Puritanical spirit in Scotland, time of the Stuarts, 731 . . O. Mrt. I.
Puritans, stern character of, 750; at the festivities in Martindale Castle, 752; their potations, 753; at Moultrassie Hall, 843; notes, 952, 953 Pev. III.
Purse, throwing of, note, 740 . . O. Mrt. I.
—— Rob Roy's, 620 R. R. I.

Quackleben, Dr. Quentin, 203; consideration for Tyrrel's health, 210; sits down by Mrs. Blower, 217; feels her pulse, 218; at the duel, 240; his rider to the statement, 243; sacrifices the whole drama for Mrs. Blower, 271 . . St. Ron. IV.
Quackleben's *Flower of a Sweet Savour*, 587 R. R. I.
Quaigh, a drinking-cup, 390 B. Lm. II.
Quaker, the. *See* Geddes, Joshua. . Redg. IV.
Quakers, Author's connection with, 352 Ht. Mid. II.
—— their views on sport, 386; courage, 432; Author's residence with, note, 532 Redg. IV.
Quavering psalm before the battle, 818 O. Mrt. I.
Queenhoo Hall, edited by the Author of Waverley, 5, 181 . . Wav. I.
Queen of Sheba. *See* Montreville. . S. Dt. V.
Queensferry diligence, 365; inn, 367 . . Ant. I.
Quentin Durward, encounter at the river, 16; at breakfast with Maître Pierre, 23; first meeting with the Countess Isabelle, 25; hearing her lute, 28; interview with his uncle Ludovic, 29; cuts down the gipsy, 35; condemned by the provost-marshal, 36; rescued, 38; enrolled in the archer guard, 41; apology from Tristan, 46; rescues the King, 54; sent for, 56; acts sentinel to the King, 58; and over the ladies in the gallery, 61; sees Isabelle, 61; encounter with Orleans, 63; reprimanded for not shooting him, 65; interview with the astrologer, 71; escorts the Ladies de Croye to Liége, 73; encounter with Orleans and Dunois, 76; his wound dressed by Isabelle, 79; discovers Hayraddin's treachery, 85; gets him to tell his fortune, 91; surrounded by the citizens of Liége, 95; receives a billet in the garden, 99; escapes with the wrong lady, 101; rescues Isabelle, 103; protests against the Bishop's murder, 109; escapes to Pavillon's house, 110; flight from Liége, 113; falls in with the Burgundians, and separated from Isabelle, 116; questioned by Crèvecœur, 118; his descent ridiculed, 120; refuses service with Burgundy, 121; desires to resign his commission, 152; interview with Isabelle at the grating, 153; before the council, 158; receives Hayraddin's last confession and secret, 164; hands Isabelle her aunt's note, 169; the reply, 170; informs Louis and Charles of La Marck's stratagem, 171; encounter with La Marck in the battle, 175; called off to assist Trudchen, 175; union with Isabelle, 177 Q. Dr. IV.
Quentin Durward, the novel, note, 179 Q. Dr. IV.
Quhele, Clan, combat with Clan Chattan proposed, 262; territory of, 325; the combat, 198, 364; notes, 374, 378 F. M. P. V.
Quhen his men lang, 806 Cas. D. V.
Quickens-bog, Oldbuck's essay on, 486 . Ant I.
Quid, the tobacconist, 293, 295 . . G. Mng. I.
Quill, only one used to write Gill's *Commentary*, 565 . . F. Ng. III.

Rabb Tull, his communication with the ghost, 394 Ant. I.
Rachel, Aunt, 16, 22; inquires about Rose, 67 Wav. I.
Railroad, perilous to the nerves, 578 C. Rt. V.
Raine, Dame, 838 Pev. III.
Raising the country, 111 B. Dw. II.
Raleigh, Walter, at Saye's Court, 240; lays his cloak down for the Queen, 242; in the royal barge, 255; recites the vision of Oberon, 257; inscribes a line to Elizabeth on the window pane, 258; at Kenilworth, 303; gracious reception by the Queen, 307; knighted, 311; notes on, 352 . . Ken. III.
Ralph Fisher, encounter with Roland, 26 Abb. III.
Ramorny, Sir John, his hand lopped off by the Smith, 219; and picked up by Proudfute, 220; exhibited at the Cross, 260; his ring produced against him, 236, 240, 265; attended and counselled by the Pottingar, 271; their paction of revenge, 273; the mutilated stump, 274; startled from sleep, 283; tells a state secret to Rothsay, 286; his phantasmagoria, 288; brought before the King, 304; with Dwining conspires against the prince, 306; induces him to proceed to Falkland, 342, 345; finds Catharine at Rothsay's dungeon, 352; threatens to fling her from the battlements, 353; arrested by Douglas, 354; hanged, 356 F. M. P. V.
Ramsay, David, 546; reminded of his debt, 564; lost in his calculations, 573; note, 714 F. Ng. III.
Ramsay, John, 716 F. Ng. III.
—— Margaret, 570; interview with Dame Ursley, 580; confides her love, 581; her character, 626; asks Hermione to aid Nigel, 628; brought into the Tower as a page, 672; tells Nigel her dream, 676; discovered by Heriot, 680; marriage, 703; a pedigree found for her by the King, 709 F. Ng. III.
Ram's horn casket found in St. Ruth's, 438, 443, 446, 450 . . . Ant. I.
Ranald M'Eagh. *See* M'Eagh. L. Mont. II.
Randal de Lacy. *See* Lacy. Bet. IV.
Ranger of the forest, 673 Iva. II.
Rank and ancestry, 29 Wav. I.
—— and duty, 496 A. Gei. V.
Ranters, 142; note on, 185 Wood. V.
Ranzelman, Shetland, note, 533 . . . Pir. III.
Raoul, the huntsman, 586; his matrimonial relations, 603; bargain with the hawk merchant, 629; meeting with the pilgrims, 652 . . . Bet. IV.
Rape, upon the Church, 832 O. Mrt. I.
Raredrench, the apothecary, 550 . . F. Ng. III.
Rashleigh Osbaldistone. *See* Osbaldistone. R. R. I.
Rash thy deed, 724 Mon. II.
Rasp iron, 726 Ch. Can. IV.
Ratcliffe, Jim, urged to flee from the gaol, 174; before the magistrate, 202; interview with the procurator, 211; his scruples of conscience, 214; assists to apprehend Robertson, 216; appointed gaoler of the Tolbooth, 227; gives Jeanie his pass, 246; nearly recognises Staunton, 344 Ht. Mid. II.
Ratcliffe, Mr., his position at Ellieslaw Castle, 122; protests against the Jacobite rising, 128; accompanies Miss Vere to the Dwarf, 132 B. Dw. II.
Rathillet, Hackston of, 827; note on, 863 O. Mrt. I.
Ratton's Skerry, 387 Ant. I.
Ravelston garden, notes on, 25 . . . Wav. I.
Raven shot at the betrothal, 438 . . B. Lm. II.
Ravenswood, house of, 375 B. Lm. II.
—— Lord Allan, funeral of, 377 . . B. Lm. II.
—— Master of (Edgar), at his father's funeral, 377; rescues Lucy from the bull, 385; hasty visit to the Tod's Den, 392; combat with Buckław, 393; lodges him in Wolf's Crag, 396; thoughts of Lucy, 399; meets Sir W. Ashton and Lucy at the chase, 404; gives them refuge in the Tower, 406; his thoughts on their visit, 421; feels the influence of Lucy, 425; contemptuous treatment of Craigengelt, 426; reconciliation with Ashton, 428; warning from Caleb, 429; visit to Ravenswood, 431; accompanies Lucy to old Alice's, 434; betrothal at the fountain, 437; love passages with Lucy, 440; desired to leave the Castle, 448; meets an apparition at the well, 450; evil prognostications, 452; interview with the sexton, 453; counselled by Marquis A——, 456; departure for abroad, and letters to the Ashtons, 465; reply from Lucy, 466; interrupts her betrothal to Buckław, 476; receives back the engaged token, 478; at Lucy's funeral, 484; perishes in the Kelpie's Flow, 485 B. Lm. II.
Ravenswood Castle, 431 B. Lm. II.
Raymond de Roussillon, 530 . . A. Gei. V.
Raymond Lully, 19 Abb. III.
Raymond of Thoulouse, 649 C. Rt. V.
Reading, desultory, 14 Wav. I.
—— good, characteristics of, 266 . G. Mng. I.
Reasoning, lover-like, 396 Ant. I.
Rebecca, at the tournament, 529; description of, 530; rewards Gurth, 543; nurses Ivanhoe, 598; meets Rowena in the forest, 568; incarcerated in Torquilstone, 582; scene with the Templar, 584; viewing the assault, 604; carried off by the Templar, 615; her trial, 636; throws down her gage, 641; her evening hymn, 645; forgives the Templar, 648; at the stake, 665; her deliverance, 669; farewell interview with Rowena, 671 Iva. II.
Rebecca, Singleside's maid, 295 . . G. Mng. I.
Rebellion of 1715, 464 Redg. IV.
—— of 1745, 359, 464 Redg. IV.
Rebels, safe when lurking in dens, 754 O. Mrt. I.
Recruits for India, 772 S. Dt. V.
Redcap, Mother, a midwife, 580 . . F. Ng. III.
Red coat, love of, 832 Mon. II.
Redding straik, note, 261 G. Mng. I
Red-Finger haunted chamber, 592, 597 . Bet. IV.
Redgauntlet, Sir Alberic, 450 . . Redg. IV.
—— Sir Arthur Darsie. *See* Darsie Latimer. Redg. IV.
—— Edward Hugh. *See* Herries. . Redg. IV.
—— Sir Henry, a prisoner in 1745, 463; father of Darsie, 464 Redg. IV.

Redgauntlet, Sir John, and his rent-book, 406 REDG. IV.
—— Lilias. *See* Green Mantle. . REDG. IV.
—— Sir Robert, Wandering Willie's tale of, 404–411 REDG. IV.
—— the novel, criticism on, note, 363 . REDG. IV.
Red-hand, note on, 378 F. M. P. V.
Red Land, 487, 490 A. GEI. V.
Reformation preachers, 774 MON. II.
—— religious, 330 F. M. P. V.
Reformers, early, scruples of, 710 . . MON. II.
Regalia, Colonel Blood's attempt against, 965 PEV. III.
Regent Murray. *See* Murray, Regent. MON. II. ; ABB. III.
Regimental music at night, note, 725 . O. MRT. I.
Reimkennar, the. *See* Norna. . . PIR. III.
Reinold, the butler, 556 BET. IV.
Remember the Holy Sepulchre, 780 . . TAL. IV.
Remorse, she ne'er forsakes us, motto, 475 ANT. I.
Renault Vidal. *See* Cadwallon. . . BET. IV.
René, King, 508 ; Charles's estimate of, 514 ; account of, 531 ; interview with Arthur, 533 ; dressed as King Solomon, 537 ; signs away his dominions, 544 A. GEI. V.
Rent, whistling up the, note, 332 G. MNG. I.
Rentowel, Jabesh, Cameronian preacher, 76, 90 WAV. I.
Rere suppers, 76 WOOD. V.
Reserve used by superiors, 559 . . F. NG. III.
Resignation of Queen Mary, 94, 170 . . ABB. III.
Restoration of Charles II., 181 . . WOOD. V.
—— treatment of the Cavaliers after, 762 PEV. III.
Retreats of the Covenanters, note, 868 . O. MRT. I.
Revenge, doctrine of, 272 F. M. P. V.
—— and forgiveness, 866 PEV. III.
—— deferred the most dangerous, 283 ST. RON. IV.
Rewcastle, John, a Jedburgh smuggler, 127 B. DW. II.
Rhine, river, 423, 472, 491 A. GEI. V.
Rhinegrave's mutinous soldiers, 503 A. GEI. V.
Rhinoceros, the, 645 C. RT. V.
Rhymer, Thomas the, fragment of a romance, 178 WAV. I.
—— Thomas, tale of, 825 ; the fatal volume, 841 ; his book of prophecies, 875 CAS. D. V.
Richard I., Author's explanation, 734 ; stricken with the fever, 760 ; impatient of inactivity, 762 ; reads Saladin's letter, 769 ; interview with Kenneth about his mission, 774 ; accepts the Moorish physician, 777 ; tramples on the Austrian banner, 785 ; rage at Kenneth for the stolen banner, 797 ; the Queen and others intercede for him, 803 ; the Moorish physician prevails, 806 ; hears about the espousal of Edith to Saladin, 811 ; at the Council, 812 ; charged with arrogance by the Grand Master, 813 ; his eloquent reply, 813 ; visit to the Queen and her ladies, 815 ; receives the Nubian slave, 817 ; hears of factions in England, 818 ; attempted assassination, 820 ; at the trial by procession, 831 ; impeaches Conrade of treason, 832 ; and challenges him to combat, 834 ; caracoling in the desert, 843 ; meets Saladin at the lists, 845 ; shows him the strength of his arm, 846 ; offers to fight him for Jerusalem, 856 ; notes on (appendix), 892 . . TAL. IV
Richard I. in the lists at Ashby, 549 ; effect of his return, 557 ; forces an entrance into St. Dunstan's cell, 560 ; his song, the Crusader's Return, 563 ; assists Locksley to recover Cedric, 572 ; summons Front-de-Bœuf, 587 ; leads the assault against Torquilstone, 605 ; carries the castle, 612 ; accepts Locksley's horn, 618 ; exchanges buffets with the Friar, 620 ; his song, Anna Marie, love, 651 ; attacked in the forest, 653 ; dissolves the Temple chapter, 668 ; note on, 676 . . . IVA. II.
—— Prince (Cœur-de-Lion), eagerness to assault the castle, 650 . BET. IV.
Richie Moniplies. *See* Moniplies. F. NG. III.
Richmond Park, scene in, 291 . . HT. MID. II.
Rickets, Mabel, the old nurse, 540 . . R. R. I.
Ride your ways, Laird of Ellangowan, 217 G. MNG. I.
Ridicule, force of, 405 A. GEI. V.
—— and enthusiasm, 653 C. RT. V
—— on youth, 592 F. NG. III.
Riding, favourite exercise on the Border, 259 G. MNG. I.
Right makes our might, 303 G. MNG. I.
Ringan Aikwood the poinder, 454 . . ANT. I.
Rings, engagement, breaking of, 400 . ANT. I.
Rintherout, Jenny, Monkbarns' maid, 372 ; visit to her sweetheart's cottage, 455 . . . ANT. I.
Riotous attack on Sir James Graham's property, note, 533 . . REDG. IV.
Rising Sun, Annot Lyle's song, 25 L. MONT. II.
Ritchie, David, prototype of the Black Dwarf, 89 B. DW. II.
Rivers, Scotch reverence for, 627 . . . R. R. I.
Rizpah. *See* Marthon, the Bohemian. Q. DR. IV.
Rizzio, place of his assassination, 69 ; Lindesay's part in, 89 . . ABB. III.
—— his blood at Holyrood, 200 . . F. M. P. V.
Roads, in Liddesdale, note, 296 . . G. MNG. I.
—— time of George I., 537, 539 . . . R. R. I.
Roaring boys, Cavalier, 97 WOOD. V.
Robb, Duncan, the grocer, 209 . . G. MNG. I.
Robber knights, 419 A. GEI. V.
Robert, Wardour's servant, 502 . . . ANT. I.
Robert, Count, of Paris, usurps the Emperor's throne, 576, 632 ; how he gained his Countess, 635 ; meets Agelastes, 636 ; routs the Scythians, 641 ; at Agelastes' retreat, 643 ; conversation with Anna, 646 ; challenged by Hereward, 648 ; smashes the lions of Solomon, 653 ; drugged by Alexius, 655 ; encounter with the tiger in the dungeon, 656 ; discovers Ursel in the next cell, 658 ; beats off the ourang-outang, 660 ; dresses its wound, 661 ; slays the warder, and struggle with Hereward, 662 ; sees his Countess with Agelastes and the Cæsar in the gardens, 670 ; secreted by Hereward, 674 ; combat with him in the lists, 725 ; his arm stayed by Bertha, 726 ; end of, 731 C. RT. V.
Robert III. of Scotland, 240 ; confesses to the prior, 242 ; falls, 248 ; raised and advised by March, 249 ; at his council, 259 ; chides his son, 265 ; intercedes for him, 301 ; grief at his death, 370 F. M. P. V.
Robert Guiscard of Apulia, 601 . . C. RT. V.
Roberts, Heriot's cash-keeper, 573 F. NG. III.
Robertson, George, escape from the Tolbooth Church, 159 ; engages in the Porteous riot, 171 ; accosted by Butler in the Park, 191 ; meets Jeanie Deans at Muschat's Cairn, 208 ; escapes from the officers, 217. *See also* Staunton, George. HT. MID. II.
Robertson, Patrick, at the Theatre Fund Dinner, 729 CH. CAN. IV.
Robertson, Rev. Dr., 81 WAV. I.
—— 290 . G. MNG. I.
Robin, Milnwood's butler, etc., 734 . O. MRT. I.
Robin Hood, 500 ; note on, 677. *See also* Locksley. IVA. II.
—— and Little John, 168 ABB. III.
—— was a yeoman, 259 HT. MID. II.
Robin Oig, shoots MacLaren, 691 ; carries off Jean Key, 692 ; his execution, 694 ; ballad on, 697 R. R. I.
Robin Oig M'Combich, the drover, 859 ; gives up his dirk, 861 ; Wakefield's cattle turned out for his, 862 ; quarrel in the alehouse, 864 ; gets back his dirk, 866 ; stabs Wakefield, 866 ; judge's charge to the jury, 867 ; execution of, 869 Two DR. IV.
Robin redbreast, 133 WOOD. V.
Robin Rover said to his crew, 494 . . PIR. III.
Robins, Zerubbabel, 170, 172 . . WOOD. V.
Robin Tider, servant of Leicester, 345 KEN. III.
Robison, Dick, the murdered player, 68, 146 WOOD. V.
Rob Roy, at Darlington, 540 ; at Justice Inglewood's, 558 ; his connection with Morris's robbery, 582, 622, 656 ; warns Frank in the cathedral, 599 ; leads him into the gaol, 602 ; scene with Bailie Nicol Jarvie there, 608 ; opens Diana's letter, 609 ; separates Rashleigh and Frank, 616 ; Jarvie's account of Rob Roy, 620 ; captured by the Duke of Montrose, 644 ; under examination, 649 ; description of, 649 ; escape in fording the river, 651 ; joins Osbaldistone on the heath, 654 ; regrets the outrage on Morris, 655 ; reception at Aberfoil, and meeting with Jarvie, 656, 657 ; his purse, 658 ; reflects on his mode of life, 660 ; escorts the Bailie and Osbaldistone homewards, 661 ; assures the Bailie of his aid, 664 ; rescues the Vernons from Rashleigh, 677 . . . R. R. I.
—— (original character), 528 ; history of, 684 ; his family, 691 ; advertisement for his apprehension, 695 ; his arrest of Grahame of Killearn, 695 ; challenge to Duke of Montrose, 696 ; letter to Marshal Wade, 698 ; escape from the Duke of Athole, 698 R. R. I.
—— note on, 172 WAV. I.
Robsart, Amy. *See* Amy. KEN. III.
—— Sir Hugh, of Lidcote, 216, 231 . . KEN. III.
—— family, account of, 215, 216 . . . KEN. III.
Rochecliffe, Dr. Anthony, at evening service, 62 ; attends the fainting knight, 94 ; his *pis aller*, 104 ; in his chamber, 105 ; his plots, 106, 146 ; informs Alice of the duel, 132 ; encounter with Wildrake, 134 ; tries to stop the duel, 135 ; seized by Cromwell, 162 ; recognises Holdenough, 175 ; note on, 184 ; MSS. of, 5. *See* also Albany, Joseph. . WOOD. V.
Rochester, Earl of, 856 PEV. III.
Roe, coursing at Tully-Veolan, 35 . WAV. I.

Roe venison, 34 WAV. I.
Roger Wildrake. *See* Wildrake. WOOD. V.
Rögnvald, Norse hero, note, 533 . . . PIR. III.
Roland Cheyne, 498 ANT. I.
Roland Græme, rescued, 7; knocks down the falconer, 17; preached at, and leaves the chapel, 20; expelled the castle, 24; encounter with Ralph Fisher, 26; assisted by Woodcock, 28; meets Magdalen at St. Cuthbert's, 31; attachment to Church of Rome, 33; first meeting with Catherine, 38; stabs the Abbot of Unreason, 52; re-enters Glendinning's service, 55; sets off for Edinburgh, 59; aids the Seytons, 63; enters Catherine's house, 65; taken into Regent Murray's service, 70; likeness to Julian Avenel, 72; meets Henry Seyton at the hostelrie, 75; appointed page to the Queen, 80; enters Lochleven Castle, 84; his support of the Queen, 87; draws Seyton's sword, 93; interview with Douglas about Catherine, 101; receives a rosary from her, 102; warned by the chaplain, 104; visits the revels at Kinross, 107; meets with Henry Seyton, 113; and Magdalen Græme, 116; and Abbot Ambrosius, 117; receives absolution, 119; altercation with Dryfesdale, 121; scene at night in the garden, 124; determines to aid the Queen's escape, 129; Catherine's likeness to her brother, 145; forges false keys, 147; and escapes thereby, 149; dispute with Henry Seyton, 155; assists him at Langside battlefield, 161; account of his birth, and marriage, 165 ABB. III.
Roman camps, the Antiquary's favourite subject, 367 . . . ANT. I.
—— wall, of Cumberland, 248 . . G. MNG. I.
Romance, characters requisite to make interesting, 10 . . . WAV. I.
Romances, of the seventeenth century, note, 750 O. MRT. I.
Romeo and Juliet, opinions on, 130 . . WAV. I.
Romish Church, errors of, 795; in Scotland, time of tale, 795; discussion on, 799 . . . MON. II.
Ronaldson, Neil, the Ranzelman, at the wreckage, 394, 396; ideas of saving life, 405 . . PIR. III.
Roost of Sumburgh, 363 PIR. III.
Rory Bean, Dumbiedikes' pony, 200 HT. MID. II.
Rosabelle, Mary's horse, 152 . . . ABB. III.
Rosamond Clifford of Woodstock, Charles II.'s views on, 127 WOOD. V.
Rosamond's fountain, Woodstock, 143; Phœbe's encounter with Tomkins at, 145; labyrinth, 5; tower, 19; light seen in, 51; blown up, 171 WOOD. V.
Rose Bradwardine. *See* Bradwardine. WAV. I.
Roseneath, in Firth of Clyde, 310 HT. MID. II.
Ross, Lord, of the King's army, 799 O. MRT. I.
Rosslyn caves, 434 ANT. I.
Roswal, the hound, 767; on the watch, 790; wounded, 793; taken care of by the Hakim, 794; tears down Conrade, 832 . . TAL. IV.
Rotherwood Castle, 512; feast at, 554 . IVA. II.
Rothsay, Duchess. *See* Douglas, Marjory. F. M. P. V.
—— Duke of, accosts Catharine in the street, 208; attempt to enter her house, 219; character of, and marriage, 240; champions the glee-maiden, 249; hands her over to the Smith, 251; twits the Prior, 261; confesses to the King, and appeals in favour of Ramorny, 265; his designs on Catharine, 267; with the morrice-dancers, 279; enters Ramorny's sick chamber, 283; repels Ramorny's machinations, 286; and spurns him, 304; charged by Bonthron with Proudfute's murder, 311; given into the charge of Errol, 313; sends for Ramorny, 341; who induces him to proceed to Falkland, 342; meets the glee-maiden on the Tay, 344; disguises himself in the Duchess's clothes, 346; and scene with Catharine, 347; drugged by Dwining, 348; finds himself in the dungeon, 349; presented by Bonthron with the bull's head, 350; fed by Catharine and Louise, 351; found dead, 355; note on, 379 F. M. P. V.
Rougedragon, Lady Rachel, 499 . . REDG. IV.
Rouslaer, citizen of Liége, 95 . . Q. DR. IV.
Roussillon, Raymond, 530 A. GEI. V.
Rover, life of, 488 PIR. III.
Rowena, at Rotherwood, 517; invites the Palmer to her apartment, 522; chosen by Ivanhoe Queen of Beauty, 538; crowns him with the chaplet, 550; preference for Ivanhoe over Athelstane, 567; captured by De Bracy, 569; scene with, in Torquilstone, 580; forgives De Bracy, 617; relinquished by Athelstane, 663; nuptials with Ivanhoe, 670; interview with Rebecca, 671 IVA. II.
Rowland Yorke, 829 MON. II.
Rowley, Old. *See* Charles II. . . . PEV. III.
Roxburghe, Duke of, his funeral, 520 ANT. I.
Roxburghe Club, Author's connection with, 736 PEV. III.
Roy MacGregor, James. *See* MacGregor, Hamish. R. R. I.
Royal marriages, note, 374 F. M. P. V.
Rubies, restored to James I., 688 . F. NG. III.
Rubrick, the Baron's chaplain, 75 . . WAV. I.
—— of the Duchran, 157, 159 . . . WAV. I.
Ruddimans, the, 368 REDG. IV.
Rudpiki, Persian poet, 747 TAL. IV.
Ruffin. *See* Bane Lane, Donald. . . WAV. I.
Rump, parliamentary, 88 WOOD. V.
Running footmen, 489 B. LM. II.
Rushin, Castle, note, 801 PEV. III.
Rutherford, Lord, and Janet Dalrymple, 365 B. LM. II.
Rutherfurd, Mr., his dream, note, 519 . . ANT. I.
Ruthven, Lord, 89 ABB. III.
Rutland, Duchess of, asks knighthood for Raleigh, 311 . . . KEN. III.
Rutledge, Farmer, and his will, 560, 561 . R. R. I.
Rutledge, Job, the smuggler, 471 . . REDG. IV.
Ryde, Isle of Wight, 707 S. DT. V.

SABBATARIANISM, Tom Trumbull's, 474 REDG. IV.
Sabbath, Scotch, 596 R. R. I.
Sacheverel, Henry, D.D., 124 . . . WAV. I.
Sacque, Lady in the, tale of, 882 MAR.'S M. IV.
Saddletree, Bartoline, 165; officious counsel to Deans, 194, 196; at Effie's trial, 233; on child-murder, 244; visit to Butler, 253; in his old age, 343 HT. MID. II.
—— Mrs., and her shop, 166; takes Effie into her employment, 188 HT. MID. II.
Sadhu Sing, story of, 795 S. DT. V
Sadoc. *See* Middlemas, Richard. . S. DT. V.
Sagas, Norse, 369 PIR. III.
St. Andrews, Archbishop of. *See* Sharp. O. MRT. I.
St. Anthony's Chapel, on Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, 208 . . HT. MID. II.
St. Asaph, Dean of, hears of many evils in plays, 257 . . . KEN. III.
St. Aubyn, Lucy, the widowed *fiancée*, 16 WAV. I.
St. Augustine's apparition, 395 . . ANT. I
St. Bride's Abbey, 806, 814, 844 . . CAS. D. V.
St. Bridget's Chapel, note, 167 . . . ABB. III.
St. Cuthbert's cell, 29; note, 167 . . . ABB. III.
St. Drusas, 731 C. RT. V.
St. Dunstan's Chapel, 559 IVA. II.
St. Dunstan's Church, London, 556 F. NG. III.
St. Gall Library, Switzerland, 391 A. GEI. V.
St. George, Fort, Madras, 783 . . S. DT. V.
St. Giles's — Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh, 159 HT. MID. II.
St. Hubert, 179 Q. DR. IV.
St. James's Park, London, 610 . . F. NG. III.
St. John's Church, Perth, 309, 376 . F. M. P. V.
St. Johnstone's tippet, note on, 257 . . WAV. I.
St. Johnston's hunt is up, note, 375 . F. M. P. V.
St. Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, 512 PIR. III.
St. Magnus control thee, that martyr of treason, 459 . . . PIR. III.
St. Mary's Monastery. *See* Melrose Abbey. MON. II. ; ABB. III.
St. Michael's hostelrie, 74 ABB. III.
St. Ninian's Church, Shetland, 465 . . PIR. III.
St. Olla fair, Kirkwall, 487, 491 . . . PIR. III.
St. Paul's, Priest of. *See* Geierstein, Count Albert. A. GEI. V.
St. Peter, first successors of, 47 . . . ABB. III.
St. Ringan's Church, Shetland, 465 . . PIR. III.
St. Ronald, Norse hero, note, 387, 533 . PIR. III.
St. Ronan's. *See* Mowbray, Mr. . . ST. RON. IV.
—— Castle, 8; kirk, 11; manse, 10, 181; spawell, 16; Meg's account of, 29; the government of, 37; village, 8 ST. RON. IV.
St. Ronan's Well, the novel, Author's account of, 1 ST. RON. IV.
St. Ruth's priory, description of, 419; duel at, 432; entered at night by Sir Arthur and Dousterswivel, 436; casket found in, 438; second visit with Oldbuck, and great discovery, 446, 493, 512; Edie and Dousterswivel search for the remaining treasure, 450, 493, 512; Countess of Glenallan's funeral at, 453 ANT. I.
St. Serf Island, Lochleven, 123, 133 . . ABB. III.
St. Sophia, mosque, Constantinople, 662 C. RT. V
St. Swithin's chair, sonnet, 37 . . . WAV. I.
St. Valentine's Eve, 208 F. M. P. V.
St. Victoire Convent, Provence, 537 . A. GEI. V.
Saints, invocation of, 800 MON. II.
Saladin, Author's explanation, 734; encounters Kenneth in the desert, 737; with him at the fountain, 741; singing in the desert, 747; attacked by the hermit, 750; as a physician in the Crusaders' camp, 765; heals the sick squire, 771; his skill questioned by the Templar, 776; comforts Kenneth on the loss of the banner, 794; asks him to flee to the Saracens, 795; intercedes with Richard for Ken-

neth, 804; obtains his release, 806; and returns him to Richard, 817; carries off Kenneth to his camp, 823; administers a drug to him, 827; and appears to him as his old opponent Ilderim, 828; speaks of Edith, 829; disguises Kenneth as a Nubian, 830; shows Richard his dexterity of swordsmanship, 846; his impressive inscription, 854; strikes off the Grand Master's head, 855; declines Richard's challenge, 856 . . . TAL. IV.
Sale, of a dancing girl, note on, 959 . . PEV. III.
—— of Ellangowan, 230 G. MNG. I.
Saleth, the prophet, 785 S. DT. V.
Salisbury Crags, Edinburgh, 694 CH. CAN. IV.
—— 176 . HT. MID. II.
Salmon, how to catch, 224 F. M. P. V.
—— despised by servants in the olden time, 734 O. MRT. I.
—— fishery riots, 433; note on, 533 . REDG. IV.
—— leistering at Charlieshope, 256 . G. MNG. I.
—— oath on the, 282 G. MNG. I.
Saltmarket of Glasgow, 614; accommodations, 657 R. R. I.
Salver, exhibited to James, 567 . . F. NG. III.
Sam, Darsie Latimer's groom, 367 REDG. IV.
Sampson, Abel. *See* Dominie Sampson. G. MNG. I.
Sanctuary of Holyrood, 673, 725 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Sanctum sanctorum, the Antiquary's, 372 ANT. I.
Sandy MacGruthar, 210 G. MNG. I.
Sapling, Meg breaking the, 217 . . G. MNG. I.
Saracens, copied the manners of the Crusaders, 740; their legendary origin, 748; invited into Spain, 842 . . . TAL. IV.
—— light cavalry of, 760, 844 . . . TAL. IV.
Satan, a ridiculous creation, 698 . C. RT. V.
Satan's Invisible World, 1 WOOD. V.
Satire, light, women gifted with, 188 ST. RON. IV.
Saufen bier und brantewein, 280 G. MNG. I.
Saunders Jaup, a farmer, 303 . . ST. RON. IV.
Saunders Mucklebackit. *See* Mucklebackit. ANT. I.
Saunderson, Alex., butler at Tully-Veolan, 27, 28; as clerk, 114; brings in the restored 'Bear,' 169 WAV. I.
Saville, Lord, conversation with Chiffinch at the hostelry, 856 PEV. III.
Savoy, London, 870 PEV. III.
Saxons, Author's explanation, 496 . . IVA. II.
—— and Normans, 615, 616; time of Rufus, 678 C. RT. V.
Saxons, hostility towards, by Normans, 505; swine and Norman pork, 508; knights, 514; drinks, 515; dress, time of tale, 554; gods, 593; funeral, 659 IVA. II.
—— hospitalities, 591 BET. IV.
Saye's Court, 237 KEN. III.
Scambester, Eric, the Udaller's butler, 417 PIR. III.
Scapa, bicker of, note, 537 PIR. III.
Scarborough warning, note, 503 . . REDG. IV.
Scenery, Scottish, 192 ST. RON. IV.
—— hidden character of, 418 . . . ANT. I.
Scharfgerichter. *See* Steinernherz. . A. GEI. V.
Scheik Hali, 797 S. DT. V.
Schiller's *Robbers*, 740 S. DT. V.
Scholey, Laurence, the Udaller's servant, 480 PIR. III.
Schonfeldt, Lieutenant, 450 A. GEI. V.
Schonwaldt Castle, 92; the assault, 100; revel in, 106 . . Q. DR. IV.
School, joy on dismissal of, 708 . . O. MRT. I.
—— Paul Pattieson's, 580 C. RT. V.
—— days, anecdote of Author's, 185 WAV. I.
Schoolmaster, monotonous life of, 708 O. MRT. I.
Schreckenwald, Ital, 412; interview with Anne at Arnheim, 501; conducts her to Strassburg, 503; death, 566 A. GEI. V.
Schwanker, Jonas, the fool, 782 . . . TAL. IV.
Schwarz-reiters, note, 181 Q. DW. IV.
Scot, John, of Amwell, 393 REDG. IV.
Scotch, Frank's early antipathies to, 540 R. R. I.
—— Lee's evil opinion of, 96; do nothing without their minister, 135 WOOD. V.
—— Rashleigh's description of, 565 . . R. R. I.
Scotch advocate, entering at the bar, 366 REDG. IV.
—— Archers of the French Body Guard. *See* Archers. Q. DR. IV.
—— armies, 56 L. MONT. II.
—— bar, convivial habits of, note, 355 G. MNG. I.
—— better bankers than beaux, 212; scenery, 312 ST. RON. IV.
—— bishops, expulsion of, 359 . . HT. MID. II.
—— burial customs, 452 B. LM. II.
—— character advantaged by adversity, 709 O. MRT. I.
—— civility of, 421 REDG. IV.
—— clanship, 298 HT. MID. II.
—— Convention of Estates, 8 . . L. MONT. II.
—— dialect, differences in, 696 . . CH. CAN. IV.
—— dinner-table, note, 173 WAV. I.
—— dislike to pork. *See* Pork. WAV. I.; F. NG. III.
Scotch emigrants, proclamation against, note, 715 F. NG. III.
—— forfeited estate, note, 173 . . . WAV. I.
—— forms of worship, 597 R. R. I.
—— inns, note, 171 WAV. I.
—— inns, 353 ST. RON. IV.
—— judges, 429 REDG. IV.
—— kings, portraits of, at Holyrood, 201 F. M. P. V.
—— peasantry, their language, 261 . . ANT. I.
—— rebellions, 823 CAS. D. V.
—— soldiers of fortune, 8 L. MONT. II.
—— their relations to the English, 764, 798 TAL. IV.
—— wild cattle, 385 B. LM. II.
—— wild cattle, 831, 833, 888 . . CAS. D. V.
Scotland, effects of the Jacobite rebellion upon, 170 . . . WAV. I.
—— political and social change in, since 1745, 170 WAV. I.
—— increase of wealth in, 7 . . ST. RON. II.
—— kings of, Holyrood portraits of, 201 F. M. P. V.
—— witchcraft in, 37 WAV. I.
Scott, Anne, 4 WOOD. V.
—— Thos., supposed author of Waverley, 8; his tale of fiction, 185 WAV. I.
—— his notes on the Isle of Man, 731 . PEV. III.
Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, note, 520 ANT. I.
Scriever, Jock, Macwheeble's apprentice, 156 WAV. I.
Scriptural language, among the Covenanters, 774, 782 O. MRT. I.
—— perverted, 10 WOOD. V.
Scrivener. *See* Andrew Skurliewhitter. F. NG. III.
Scroggs, Sir William, Lord Chief-Justice, 917; notes, 959, 961 . . PEV. III.
Scrogie family, connection with Etherington, 203; disclosure by Touchwood, 339 . . ST. RON. IV.
Scrow, Glossin's clerk, 276 G. MNG. I.
Scudéry, author of *Artamenes*, 750 O. MRT. I.
Scutari, 689 C. RT. V.
Scythians, assault on Brenhilda, 640 C. RT. V.
Sea-fowl, capture of, in Shetland, 369 PIR. III.
Seal, Hector's rencontre with, 469 . . ANT. I.
Sealskins risen in price, 494 ANT. I.
Sea-monsters, 532 PIR. III.
Search No. I., 446, 493; explanation of, 512 ANT. I.
Search, H.M. gun-brig, 440, 493 . . . ANT. I.
Sea-serpent, 533 PIR. III.
Sea-sickness, 481 REDG. IV.
Sebastes, the assassin, 593; death in the dungeon, 662 C. RT. V.
Second sight, 23, 82, 84 L. MONT. II.
—— persons gifted with, 47 WAV. I.
Secret Tribunal. *See* Vehmegericht. . A. GEI. V.
Seelencooper, superintendent of the hospital, 770 S. DT. V.
Seer, Highland, 47 WAV. I.
See yonder woman, motto, 477 . . . PIR. III.
Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia, 385 . . ANT. I.
Seid suas, 'strike up,' 664 R. R. I.
Self-defence, 235 G. MNG. I.
Selfishness, inimical to good breeding, 543 F. NG. III.
Self-preservation, recalls the mind to an equipoise, 843 O. MRT. I.
Selkirkshire yeomanry, remarkable march of, note, 521 . . . ANT. I.
Sellok, Cisly, servant to Lady Peveril, 848 PEV. III.
Sempach, battle of, 388, 404 A. GEI. V.
Semple, John, Presbyterian minister, 354 HT. MID. II.
Seneschal of Peronne, 136 Q. DR. IV.
Sensuality, inimical to philanthropy, 543 F. NG. III.
Serenade, of Julia, 236, 239 G. MNG. I.
Sergeant M'Alpine, 1 L. MONT. II.
Seringapatam, India, 795 S. DT. V.
Serious people, society of, 795 . . . PEV. III.
Sermons, Anglican, Fairservice's opinion of, 588 R. R. I.
—— after the battle of Drumclog, 774 O. MRT. I.
Servants, manners of, seventeenth century, 725; at table, 734 O. MRT. I.
—— Scotch, note, 725 O. MRT. I.
—— the Antiquary's ideas of, 382 . . ANT. I.
—— time of tale, 695 MON. II.
Settle, Elkana, the poet, 863 PEV. III.
Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, 445 . . A. GEI. V.
Seward, Miss, of Lichfield, 882 . MAR.'s M. IV.
—— 883 . TAP. CH. IV.
Sexton of Douglas. *See* Powheid. CAS. D. V.
Seyton, Catherine. *See* Catherine Seyton. ABB. III.
—— Henry, at the hostelrie, 75; dressed as a lady at Kinross, 113; frustrates the Queen's escape, 125; stabs Dryfesdale, 140; dispute with Roland at Niddrie, 155; aided by Roland at Langside, and death, 161 ABB. III.
—— Lord, fight with the Leslies, 62; rewards Roland, 65; protects him from his sons, 155; note on, 169 ABB. III.
—— Lord George, 169 ABB. III.
Shafton, Ned, Jacobite prisoner, 496. . R. R. I.
Shafton, Sir Piercie. *See* Piercie, Sir. MON. II.

Shakespeare at Elizabeth's court, 254; opinions of him, 256 . . KEN. III.
—— Lee's reverence for, 14; Independents' denunciation of, 23. . WOOD. V.
Sharon, Mount. *See* Mount Sharon. . REDG. IV.
Sharp, Archbishop, news of his assassination, 721; opinions on the murder of, 736, 784; his murderers, 863 O. MRT. I.
Sharper, the cutler of the Strand, 923 PEV. III.
Sharpitlaw, interview with Ratcliffe, 211; examines Madge Wildfire, 212; and Effie Deans, 214 HT. MID. II.
Shawfield's mob, in Glasgow, 308 HT. MID. II.
Shawl, got for Clara, 198; Mrs. Blower's estimate of it, 274; given to Lady Penelope, 282; evil result of, 366 ST. RON. IV.
Shawls, Cashmere, 802 S. DT. V.
Shaws Castle, theatricals at, 269; description of the house, 273 ST. RON. IV.
Sheba, Queen of. *See* Montreville. S. DR. V.
Shedbarschemoth Schartachan, Dousterswivel's spell, 437 . . ANT. I.
She does no work by halves, motto, 388 . PIR. III.
Sheerkohf. *See* Saladin. TAL. IV.
Shemus an Snachad, the tailor, 102 . WAV. I.
Shepherd's Bush, 374 REDG. IV.
Shepherd's plaid, 815 CAS. D. V.
Sheriffmuir Battle, Rob Roy's part in, 688 R. R. I.
Sheriffs of London, and Charles II., 962 PEV. III.
Shetland, burghs of, 677 IVA. II.
—— mainland, 363; Scotch settlers in, 365, 378; taxes in, note, 367; tempest in, 373; ponies, 406; allegiance to Denmark, 435; the white fishery, 450; fishermen's song, 451; drawbacks of, 482; corn mills, 533; fishermen, 536 PIR. III.
Shetlanders, dislike to Scotch settlers, 365 PIR. III.
Shoes *versus* gloves, 226 F. M. P. V.
Sholto's Club, an oak, 832 CAS. D. V.
Shoolbred, Lucky, her horror of the glee-maiden, 257 . . F. M. P. V.
Shops in London, time of James I., 545 F. NG. III.
Shortcake, Mrs. at the post-office, 411 . ANT. I.
Short sheep, 93 B. DW. II.
Shot, proof against, note, 865 . . O. MRT. I.
Shrewsbury, Lord, at Elizabeth's court, 320 KEN. III.
Sic itur ad astra, 673 CH. CAN. IV.
Siddons, Mrs. Henry, 56 WAV. I.
Sidier Dhu, 50 WAV. I.
Sidney, Sir Philip, the poet, 257 . . KEN. III.
—— his *Astrophel*, 755 MON. II.
Sifflication, Moniplies's, 557, 560 . . F. NG. III.
Sigismund, emperor, 423 A. GEI. V.
Signal of danger, note on, 185 . . WOOD. V.
Sign-painting, 370 B. LM. II.
Silk armour, 962 PEV. III.
Silverquill, Sam, the forger, 313 . . G. MNG. I.
Simon Glover. *See* Glover, Simon. . F. M. P. V.
Simon of Hackburn. *See* Hackburn. B. DW. II.
Simpson, Sir J. Y., on the Lee penny, 734 TAL. IV.
Simson, Luckie, 746, 748 S. DT. V.
Sincerity, merely a child's whistle, 830 . PEV. III.
Singleside, bequeathed to Harry Bertram, 272; to be occupied by him, 352 G. MNG. I.
Sintram, by Motte Fouqué, 196 . . G. MNG. I.
Sir Tristrem, romance of, 825 . . CAS. D. V.
Sister Theresa, 161, 164 WAV. I.
Sister Ursula. *See* Ursula. CAS. D. V.
Skelton, Sam, a smuggler, 483 . . REDG. IV.
Skene-occle, or Highland knife, 78 . . WAV. I.
Skill wins favour, 400 ANT. I.
Skimmington, note on, 718 F. NG. III.
Skreigh, the precentor, 224 G. MNG. I.
Skurliewhitter. *See* Andrew Skurliewhitter. F. NG. III.
Slavery of a dancing-girl, 959 . . . PEV. III.
Slaves, negro, 673 IVA. II.
—— of the colliers and salters, 534 REDG. IV.
Sleep, difficult after violent agitation, 397 ANT. I.
—— induced by calculations, 895 . . . PEV. III.
Sleepless nights, lawyers', note, 256 . G. MNG. I.
Sludge, Dickie. *See* Flibbertigibbet. KEN. III.
—— Gammer, 218 KEN. III.
Sluggard Knight. *See* Richard. . . IVA. II.
Smallpox, treatment of, 773 S. DT. V.
Small talk, 414 REDG. IV.
Smith, of Perth. *See* Henry Wynd. F. M. P. V.
Smith, Adam, carried off by gipsies, 215 G. MNG. I.
Smith, Wayland. *See* Wayland. . . KEN. III.
Smith, Will. *See* Chiffinch, Tom. . . PEV. III.
Smotherwell, Stephen, executioner, 306 F. M. P. V.
Smugglers, 209, 217; attacks on Woodbourne, 268; on Portanferry customhouse, 324; note, 356 G. MNG. I.
—— Fairservice's ideas of, 593 . . . R. R. I.
—— in Scotland, time of tale, 158 HT. MID. II.
—— night adventure among, note, 867 O. MRT. I.
—— of the Solway, 472; concealment of, note, 533 REDG. IV.
Snail, collector of customs, 218 . . G. MNG. I.
Snailsfoot, Bryce, the yagger, at Stourburgh, 382; promised a harvest of wreckage, 387; refuses to help the rescued man, 392; tells of the coming festivities, 399; deals in slander, 404, 516, 521; reports arrival of the pirate vessel, 433; sells the chaplet, 436; encounter with Cleveland, 491; his verses, 491 . . . PIR. III.
Snow, effects on a landscape, 278 . . G. MNG. I.
Snowballing, in Scotland, note, 618 . . R. R. I.
Snuffy Davie, book-collector, 373 . . . ANT. I.
Society, dislike to, 15 WAV. I.
—— of serious people, 795 PEV. III.
—— mixed, 107 WOOD. V.
Sodor Peel. *See* Peel Castle. PEV. III.
Soissons, chapel of, 576 C. RT. V.
Soldan of Trebizond, 500 A. GEI. V.
Soldiers of fortune, Scottish, 8 . . L. MONT. II.
Soldier, wake, the day is peeping, 613 BET. IV.
Solemn League and Covenant, 726, 810, 833 O. MRT. I.
Soles, the shoemaker, 347 G. MNG. I.
Soliloquy, useful medium, 644 . . F. NG. III.
Solitude, in the desert, 763 . . O. MRT. I.
Solmes, employed to abstract the packet, 317; and remove Hannah Irwin, 329; outmanœuvred by Touchwood, 341 ST. RON. IV.
Solomon, Joshua Geddes' pony, 387, 390 REDG. IV.
Solomon's lions, 653 C. RT. V.
Solsgrace, Nehemiah, the Presbyterian parson, 751; his ejection from the vicarage, 773; discountenances the duel, 775 PEV. III.
Solway, the salmon spearers of, 374; scene at night, 433 REDG. IV.
Somerset House, London, 870 . . . PEV. III.
Sommerville, Miss Nelly, 675 CH. CAN. IV.
—— Mr., a paralytic, 675 CH. CAN. IV.
—— family of, 678 CH. CAN. IV.
—— memoir of, note, 863 O. MRT. I.
Sorcery, in the middle ages, 438 . . A. GEI. V.
Sorners, in Scotland, 714 MON. II.
Soulis's, Lord, mistake, note, 289 . . G. MNG. I.
Sound, sound the clarion, motto, 823 O. MRT. I.
Spa, the. *See* St. Ronan's. ST. RON. IV.
—— life, 187, 188 ST. RON. IV.
Spanish Armada, pillaging of, 449, 535 PIR. III.
Sparrow on the house-top, 763 . . O. MRT. I.
Spectre, the Bodach Glas, 139, 163 . . WAV. I.
—— at Baldringham, 597; note on, 724 . BET. IV.
Speculation, mercantile, 530 R. R. I.
Spenser, Edmund, the poet, 253 . . KEN. III.
Spider, superstition about the, 212 . F. M. P. V.
Spirits, evil, 169 ABB. III.
Spitfire, Wildrake's page, 146, 148; brings the woodcock's feather, 155; note on, 185 . WOOD. V.
Spontoon, Colonel Talbot's servant, 145, 147 WAV. I.
Sporran, Rob Roy's, 620 R. R. I.
Sports and pastimes, idea of, among the Covenanters, 713 . . O. MRT. I.
—— Quakers' opinions of, 386 . . REDG. IV.
Sprenger, Martin, Veilchen's sweetheart, 495, 497 A. GEI. V.
Spruch-sprecher, Leopold's wise man, 782 TAL. IV.
Squire Ireby, 862 TWO DR. IV.
Stage-coaches, time of tale, 151 . . HT. MID. II.
Stag's horn, wound from, 63 WAV. I.
Stair family, connection with the novel, 365; note on, 487 . . B. LM. II.
Stanchells, Captain, Glasgow gaoler, 606 . R. R. I.
Standard. *See* Banner. TAL. IV.
Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester! 320 KEN. III.
Stand to it, noble pikemen, 274 . . HT. MID. II.
Stanley, Francis, Waverley's *alias*, 144, 147 WAV. I.
Stanley's spirit or Banshie, 819 . . . PEV. III.
Staples, Laurence, warder of Kenilworth, 301; rescues Amy, 316 KEN. III.
Staunton, George, discovered by Jeanie, 277; upbraided by his father, 281; offers his life to save Effie, 284; history of, 284; flying visit to the Deanses, 326; visit to Edinburgh, 342; meets with Butler, 343; navigates the boat, 346; killed by his own son, 348. *See also* Robertson, George, *and* Whistler. HT. MID. II.
—— Rev. Mr., interests himself in Jeanie, 272; hears her story, 275; upbraids his son, 281 HT. MID. II.
Steakraid, 62 WAV. I.
Steele the Covenanter, 683, 725 . . CH. CAN. IV.
Steenie Mucklebackit. *See* Mucklebackit. ANT. I.
Steenson, Maggie. *See* Maggie Steenson. REDG. IV.
—— Steenie, his story of the rent receipt, 405 REDG. IV.
—— Willie. *See* Wandering. . . REDG. IV.
Steinernherz, Francis, the executioner, 452; executes his own master, 466 A. GEI. V.
Steinfeldt, Baroness, 442 A. GEI. V.
Stennis, standing stones of, 517; note, 537 PIR. III.
—— House, Kirkwall, 514 PIR. III.

Stephanos, the wrestler, 591; at the lists, 713, 728 C. Rt. v.
Stephen Pontoys, a veteran, 640 . . . . Bet. iv.
Stephens, Catherine, vocalist, 28 . Q. Dr. iv.
Stern eagle of the far north-west, 385 . . Pir. iii.
Stevenlaw's Land, 760 S. Dt. v.
Stevens, Sussex's messenger 234 . . Ken. iii.
Stewart, Allan Breck, and the murder of Campbell of Glenure, 693; note on, 697 . . . . R. R. i.
Stewart, Allan, of Iverach, at Aberfoil inn, 629; combat with the Bailie, 630 R. R. i.
Stewart, Donald, governor of Doune Castle, 97 Wav. i.
Stewart, Francis. *See* Bothwell, Sergeant. O. Mrt. i.
Stewart, James, of Ardvoirlich, assassin of Lord Kilpont, 5, 85 L. Mont. ii.
Stewart, Patrick, Earl of Orkney, 487, 533 Pir. iii.
Stewart, of Ardvoirlich, 670 Ch. Can. iv.
Stewart, of Garth, quoted, 726 . . Ch. Can. iv.
Stewart, of Invernahyle, 669 Ch. Can. iv.
—— 186 . . Wav. i.
—— his combat with Rob Roy, 691 . . R. R. i.
Stickit minister, 203 G. Mng. i.
Still in his dead hand clenched, motto, 478 Ant. i.
Still small voice, 794 Mon. ii.
Stirling Castle, defied by Balmawhapple, 99 Wav. i.
Stirrup cup, 172 Wav. i.
Stock-jobbing, time of Charles II., 907 Pev. iii.
Stone walls do not a prison make, 806 O. Mrt. i.
Stories, long-winded, 413; Claud Halcro's, 418 Pir. iii.
Storm, approach of a, 693 C. Rt. v.
—— in the Alps, 393 A. Gei. v.
Stourburgh (Harfra), the factor's house, 374; cold hospitality at, 379 Pir. iii.
Stradiots, 559 A. Gei. v.
—— 832 . . Tal. iv.
St[illegible]e ape of man! motto, . . . C. Rt. v.
Str[illegible]burg Cathedral, 506 A. Gei. v.
Stra[illegible]han, Kenneth's sick square, 767 . Tal. iv.
Street-fighting, in the sixteenth century, note, 717 F. Ng. iii.
Streiking the corpse, 261 G. Mng. i.
Strickalthrow, Merciful, 172 Wood. v.
Strike up, *seid suas*, 664 R. R. i.
Strumpfer, Nick, the dwarf, 473, 484, 530 Pir. iii.
Strutt, Joseph, posthumous works, 5 . . Wav. i.
Stuart, Mary. *See* Mary Stuart.
Ant. i.; Abb. iii.; Ken. iii.
Stuart, Prince Charles Edward. *See* Charles Edward. . . Wav. i.
—— family, pedigree of, 831 . . . Mon. ii.
Stuarts, judicial blindness of, 522 . Redg. iv.
—— suppression of the Covenanters by, 713 O. Mrt. i.
Stubbs, beadle at Willingham, 273 Ht. Mid. ii.
Stubbs, Cecilia, flirtation with, 17 . . Wav. i.
Stubbs, mutilation of, note, 718 . . F. Ng. iii.
Stukely, Thomas, antiquary, 829 . . . Mon. ii.
Sturmthal, Melchior, 420, 469 . . A. Gei. v.
Suddlechop, Dame Ursley, 577; acts counsellor to Margaret Ramsay, 580; interview with Jin Vin, 637; note on, 716 F. Ng. iii.
—— the barber, 636 F. Ng. iii.
Suffolk, Lady, George II.'s mistress, 293 Ht. Mid. ii.
Sully's *Memoirs*, 529 R. R. i.
Sumburgh Head, Shetland, 363 . . . Pir. iii.
Summertrees, Maxwell of. *See* Maxwell. Redg. iv.
Sunday, the traveller's, 539; at Osbaldistone Hall, 567; in Scotland, 596 R. R. i.
Supernatural, enjoyment in, 873 . Mar.'s M. iv.
Superstitions, stages of, 383; charms of, 446 Pir. iii.
—— fairy, 681 R. R. i.
—— gipsy, 354 G. Mng. i.
—— Highland, 69, 84 L. Mont. ii.
—— 64 . . Wav. i.
Supper, a favourite meal, 326 . . G. Mng. i.
Surgeon, country, duties of, 745 . . S. Dt. v.
Surgeons, a secret generation, 617 . . R. R. i.
Surgeon's Daughter, the novel, 741, 802. *See also* Gray, Menie. S. Dt. v.
Surgical superstitions in the Highlands, 64 Wav. i.
Surnames, clan, note, 354 G. Mng. i.
Sussex, Earl of, 238; takes Wayland's medicine, 240; at Greenwich Palace, 247; made to join hands with Leicester, 248; Alasco's attempt on, 263; at Kenilworth, 311 Ken. iii.
Swabia, 412 A. Gei. v.
Swan Inn, of Middlemas, 747 . . S. Dt. v.
—— of Lichfield, 883 Tap. Ch. iv.
Swart, Martin, and his men, 215 . . Ken. iii.
Swearing, among the Antiburghers, 273 G. Mng. i.
—— Puritan's abhorrence of, 43; relief to the feelings, 124 . Wood. v.
Swedish 'feathers,' 12 L. Mont. ii.
Sweepclean, Saunders, King's messenger, 506, 509 . . . Ant. i.
Swertha, Mertoun's housekeeper, 367; ideas of wreckage, 394, 492; her prophetic wisdom, 405; alarm at her master's appearance, 467 Pir. iii.
Sweyn Erickson, fisherman, dispute with Swertha, 366 . . . Pir. iii.
Swinton, Mrs. Margaret, 869 . Mar.'s M. iv.
—— 952 . . Pev. iii.
Swiss, language, 474 A. Gei. v.
—— wars, 391, 409, 419, 546, 553, 559; wine, 406; compared to the Scots, 518 . . A. Gei. v.
—— deputies. *See* Deputies. . . A. Gei. v.
Switzerland in 1474, 392 A. Gei. v.
Sword-dance, 423; note, 534 . . . Pir. iii.
Sybilla of Arnheim, 444 A. Gei. v.
Syddall, Anthony, butler at Osbaldistone Hall, 672 R. R. i.
Sylvan, the ape, encounter in the dungeon, 660; pursues Bertha, 676; strangles the philosopher, 699; spreads confusion in the lists, 727 C. Rt. v.
Symson of Kirkinner, Scotch poet, 367 . B. Lm. ii.

Tacket, Tibb, the shepherd's wife, 692 Mon. ii.
Taffril, Lieutenant, his love-letters examined, 411; acts as Lovel's second, 432; receives him on board his gun-brig, 440; evil tidings of the vessel, 493 . . . Ant. i.
Tailor, Highland hereditary, 104 . . . Wav. i.
Talbot, Colonel, Waverley's prisoner, 116, 122; character and opinions of, 125; receives ill tidings from home, 131; gets leave to return from Prince Charles, 133; receives Waverley into his house, 144; letter to Waverley, with pardon for him and Bradwardine, 157; at Tully-Veolan, festivities, 167; protection of, by Waverley, note on, 186 . . . Wav. i.
—— prototype of, 669 Ch. Can. iv.
—— Lady Emily (Blandeville), 12, 144, 167 Wav. i.
Tales, the winding up of, 709 . . F. Ng. iii.
Tales of my Landlord, first series, introduction to, 703 . . O. Mrt. i.
—— success of, 578 C. Rt. v.
Tales of the Crusaders, Author's explanation, 539 Bet. iv.
—— title of, 733 Tal. iv.
Tale-tellers, privilege of, 832 . . O. Mrt. i.
Talisman, explanation of title, 734 . . Tal. iv.
—— the novel, Clutterbuck's opinion of, 544 Bet. iv.
Talisman, the Saracen's charmed medicine, 806; bequeathed by Saladin to Huntingdon, 856 Tal. iv.
Talla Linns conference, 225 Ht. Mid. ii.
Tam Hudson, the gamekeeper, 249 G. Mng. i.
Tancred of Otranto, offers to rescue Brenhilda, 691; fight in the Bosphorus, 714; lands, 716; acts as field-marshal of the lists, 723 . . C. Rt. v.
Tapestried Chamber, tale of, 882 . Tap. Ch. iv.
Tapestry, in Monkbarns Green Room, 396 Ant. i.
—— behind the, note, 719 F. Ng. iii.
Tappit Hen, 355 G. Mng. i.
Tar and feathers, 690 C. Rt. v.
Tarrasque, Provençal festival, 536 . A. Gei. v.
Tartans, distinctive of clans, 93 . . Wav. i.
Taste, as displayed by semi-civilised peoples, 663 R. R. i.
Tatius. *See* Achilles Tatius. C. Rt. v.
Taylor's hunt, in the braes of Mar, 162 . Wav. i.
Tay River, beauties of, 205 F. M. P. v.
Tea, Touchwood's opinions of, 163 . St. Ron. iv.
Teacher, monotonous life of, 708 . . O. Mrt. i.
Teaching, love dangerous in, 176 . St. Ron. iv.
Tea-party, Lady Penelope's, 376 . . St. Ron. iv.
Tell me not of it, friend, motto, 470 . . Ant. i.
Temperance, in drink an offence to the Udaller, 565 Pir. iii.
Tempest, in Shetland, 373; song, 385 . . Pir. iii.
Templar, the. *See* Bois-Guilbert, Brian de. Iva. ii.
Templars and Knights of St. John hostile to Richard I., 529; irregularities of, 630 . . Iva. ii.
—— their interests in the Crusades, 778; Saracen opinion of, 825. *See also* Grand Master. Tal. iv.
Temple Bar, time of James I., 565 . F. Ng. iii.
Temple of the Muses, Blacquernal, 602 C. Rt. v.
Templestowe, 630, 665 Iva. ii.
Templeton, Laurence, at the Waverley Novel meeting, 544 . . Bet. iv.
—— his introductory letter to Dr. Dryasdust, 500 Iva. ii.
Terriers, Dandie Dinmont's, note, 353 G. Mng. i.
Terry-fied muse, 723 F. Ng. iii.
Testimony, old Mause's, 737 . . O. Mrt. i.
Test oath, administered by Bothwell at Milnwood, 737 . . O. Mrt. i.
Thames, time of James I., 583 . . F. Ng. iii.
Thane of Fife, Davie Duff, 743 . . S. Dt. v.
Theatre, the Fortune, London, 602 F. Ng. iii.
Theatrical fund dinner, 728 Ch. Can. iv.
Theatricals at Shaws Castle, 214 . . St. Ron. iv.
The Baptist's fair morrow, 841 . . . Tal. iv.
The course of human life is changeful still, motto, 847 Pev. iii.

The dark shall be light, 327
G. Mng. I.
The deadliest snakes, motto, 115 . . Wood. V.
The dews of summer night did fall, 179 Ken. III.
The friars of Fail, 60
Abb. III.
Theft, concealments for, 533
Redg. IV.
The herring loves the merry moonlight, 498 Ant. I.
The Highlandmen are pretty men, ballad, 174 Wav. I.
The hour's come, and the man, 343 G. Mng. I.
The lord abbot had a soul, motto, 434. . Ant. I.
The monk must arise, 382
B. Lm. II.
Theodoric of Engaddi, attack on Saladin, 750; receives him and Kenneth into his cell, 751; account of his life, 752; takes Kenneth into the chapel, 754; intercedes with the King for Kenneth, 804; foretells assassination to Richard, 809; tells his history as Alberic Mortemar, 809; dismissed by the Grand Master, 849; his predictions, 853
Tal. IV.
Theodosius the Great, 588
C. Rt. V.
The Paip, that pagan full of pride, 53 . . Abb. III.
There came three merry men, 651 . . Iva. II.
There is mist on the mountain, 60 . . Wav. I.
Theresa, Sister, with Flora at Carlisle, 161, 164
Wav. I.
There's a bloodhound ranging, 217 . Ht. Mid. II.
The storm increases, motto, 612 . . C. Rt. V.
The sun is rising dimly red, 422 . . . Pir. III.
The wisest sovereigns err, motto, 310 . Ken. III.
Thiebault, the Provençal, 530 . . A. Gei. V.
Thieves, Highland gentlemen, 49 . . Wav. I.
Thimblethwaite, Timothy, the London tailor, 413, 419 . . . Pir. III.
Thirlwall, James of, 824
Cas. D. V.
This a love meeting? motto, 807 . . . Pev. III.
This is a gentle trader, motto, 398 . Pir. III.
This is he who rides on the court gale, 205 Ken. III.
This is rare news thou tell'st me, motto, 237 Ken. III.
This is the day, 745
Mon. II.
Thomas of Gilsland. *See* Gilsland. . Tal. IV.
Thomas the Rhymer, romance, 178 . Wav. I.
— tale of, 825; the fatal volume, 841; his book of prophecies, 875 Cas. D. V.
Thomson, Rev. George, prototype of Dominie Sampson, 198 . G. Mng. I.
Thomson, Peg, 746, 748
S. Dt. V.
Thorncliff Osbaldistone. *See* Osbaldistone, Thorncliff. . . . R. R. I.
Thornton, Captain, arrives at Aberfoil, 634; the march into Rob Roy's country, 637; repulsed, 640; his compliments to Rob Roy's captors, 646 . R. R. I.
Thou art yet in the court of the Gentiles! 772
O. Mrt. I.
Thoulouse, Raymond of, 649 . . C. Rt. V.
Thou so needful, yet so dread, 476 . Pir. III.
Thou that over billows dark, 476 . . . Pir. III.
Thou who seek'st my fountain lone, 803 Mon. II.
Three things useless to a Highlander, 58 Wav. I.
Thrice to the holly brake, 722, 745 . . Mon. II.
Through the kirkyard, 187
Ht. Mid. II.
Thy craven fear, 723
Mon. II.
Thy hue, dear pledge, is pure and bright! 789
O. Mrt. I.
Tibb Tacket, shepherd's wife, 692 . . Mon. II.
Tib Mumps, of Mump's Ha', 249 . . G. Mng. I.
Tider, Robin, servant of Leicester, 345 Ken. III.
Tiel Wetzweiler. *See* Glorieux. . Q. Dr. IV.
Tiger, encounter with, in the Blacquernal dungeon, 656
C. Rt. V.
Tillietudlem Tower, 740; the whigs' dungeon, 742; view from the turrets, 750; Claverhouse's visit, 751; siege of, by the Covenanters, 778; summoned to surrender, 795; attack on, 796; straits of the garrison, 805; evacuated, 807; falls into Olifant's hands, 835; burnt by Burley, 857; restored, 860 O. Mrt. I.
Tillmouth chapel, 167
Abb. III.
Time, measurement of, 231
G. Mng. I.
—— privilege of tale-tellers, as to, 832; vacancies caused by, readily refilled, 848 . . O. Mrt. I.
Timotheus, the musician, 402 . . Redg. IV.
Timothy, John Mengs's servant, 480, 485 A. Gei. V.
Tims, corporal of Waverley's troop, 112, 124
Wav. I.
Tinchel, a mode of driving the deer, 63 . Wav. I.
Tine-egan, note, 323
F. M. P. V.
Tinto, Dick, a painter, 195, 201 . . St. Ron. IV.
—— his pedigree, 370
B. Lm. II.
Tippermuir, battle of, 57
L. Mont. II.
Tippoo Saib, his entrance into Bangalore, 798
S. Dt. V.
'Tis not alone the scene, motto, 366 . Pir. III.
'Tis strange that, in the dark sulphureous mine, motto, 664 C. Rt. V.
Titles, taking, 539 Bet. IV.
Titus Livius, Bradwardine's attachment to, 20, 153
Wav. I.
Titus Oates, his evidence, 918 . . . Pev. III.
To an oak-tree, song, 78
Wav. I.
Tobacco, the justice's sonnet on, 560 . R. R. I.
Tod's Den alehouse, 390
B. Lm. II.
To horse, and fear not for your quarters, 322
F. M. P. V.
Toison d'Or, Burgundian herald, 522 A. Gei. V.
—— questions the false herald, 161 Q. Dr. IV.
Tolbooth, or prison of Glasgow, 603 R. R. I.
—— Old, Edinburgh, Robertson's escape from church of, 159; Krames of, 169; broken into by rioters, 172; note on, 353
Ht. Mid. II.
Toleration, reprobated by the Cameronians, 832
O. Mrt. I.
Tolling to service, in Scotland, 360 Ht. Mid. II.
Tomahourich, Janet of, 860
Two Dr. IV.
Tomalin Blacklees, English soldier, 819 Tal. IV.
Tom Jerningham. *See* Jerningham . . Pev. III.
Tomkins, Joseph (Hazeldine), pulls Holdenough down from the pulpit, 9; his oratory, 10; encounter with Sir Henry Lee, 15; enters the Lodge, 20; rebukes Phœbe and Joceline, 22; and denounces Shakespeare, 23; startled by Wildrake, 31; account of the ghost disturbance at Woodstock, 67; fencing bout with Sir Henry, 88; played on by Rochecliffe, 106; confidence in, 141; attempt on Phœbe at the fountain, 144; death of, 145; and burial, 162 . . Wood. V.
Tony Foster. *See* Foster, Tony. . . Ken. III.
Tools or cats' paws think themselves indispensable, 906 . . Pev. III.
Toothache, a cure for, 139
St. Ron. IV.
Topham, Charles, Black Rod, at the horse-dealer's, 824; at Martindale Castle, 840 . Pev. III.
Topiarian art, at Monkbarns, 371 . Ant. I.
To prayer, to prayer! 824
Tal. IV.
Torch of Pengwern. *See* Gwenwyn. Bet. IV.
Torf, yarl of Orkney and Shetland, 365 Pir. III.
Torfe, George, provost of Kirkwall, 501, 511 Pir. III.
Tormot, son of Torquil of the Oak, 368 F. M. P. V.
Torquil of the Oak, 323; demonstration on the lake, 331; will marry his daughter to a foeman to save Eachin, 340; at the clan combat, 366; fall of, 368 . F. M. P. V.
Torquilstone Castle, incarceration of Cedric's party, 574; summons to surrender, 587; the assault, 604; fall of, 612; on fire, 615 . Iva. II.
Tortures, 674 . Iva. II.
—— Covenanters', examination under, 830; note, 864
O. Mrt. I.
Toshach Beg, objects to Torquil's plan of the fight, 363 F. M. P. V.
Touch not the cat, but a glove, 362 F. M. P. V.
Touchwood, Peregrine, at Bindloose's, 248; at the Cleikum Inn, 252; visit to Cargill, 257; has him at dinner, 259; invited to Shaws Castle, 260; on shawls, 274; detects Binks as boatswain, 277; tries to improve the Aultoun, 301; falls into the sewer, 302; interviews Jekyl, 313; on points of honour, 331; offers assistance to Mowbray, 333; discloses his relationship to Mowbray, 338; countermines Etherington, 341, 347
St. Ron. IV.
Tough, the advocate, 425
Redg. IV.
Tournament, at Ashby, 527; second day of, 546; laws of, 547 . . Iva. II.
—— at Constantinople, 355, 381, 712, 722 C. Rt. I.
Tours, city, 73 Q. Dr. IV.
Touthope, clerk to the peace, 504 . R. R. I.
Tower of London, 899; visited by Charles II., 913 . . . Pev. III.
—— Traitors' Gate, 671; lieutenant of, 672, 682
F. Ng. II.
Toxartis, the Scythian, 641
C. Rt. V.
Train, Joseph, assistance to the Author, 668
Ch. Can. IV.
—— his notes on Old Mortality, 707, 862
O. Mrt. I.
—— his story of the Surgeon's Daughter, 743
S. Dt. V.
Traitors' Gate, Tower of London, 671 F. Ng. III.
Trapbois, his house in Alsatia, 641; steals in upon Nigel, 653; murdered, 654, 701
F. Ng. III.
—— Martha, 642; interferes with her father, 652; lamentation over his death, 655; leaves Alsatia, 658; taken charge of by Moniplies, 663; married, 712 F. Ng. III.
Travellers, manners of, 364
Ant. I.
—— commercial, Meg's dislike to, 21 St. Ron. IV.
Treason can't be [illegible] over, 808 O. [illegible] I.
Trebizond, Soldan of, [illegible]
A. Gei. V.
Treddles, Mr., senior, 382
Ch. Can. IV.
Trees, each with its story, 374 . . . Ant. I.
Trefoil, vervain, John's-wort, dill, 204 G. Mng. I.
Trepanning and concealment, 533 Redg. IV.
Tresham, Richard, arrival at Middlemas, 747. *See* Witherington. S. Dt. V.
Tresham, Will, Osbaldistone's correspondent, 530
R. R. I.
—— W., senior, 531; tells of Rashleigh's peculations, 589. . R. R. I.

Tressilian, Edmund, at the Black Bear Inn, 184; visit with Lambourne to Cumnor Place, 190; interview with Amy, 194; rencontre with Varney, 196; Leicester's dislike to, 209; warned by Giles Gosling, 215; arrives at the Vale of Whitehorse, 218; interview with Wayland, 224; arrival at Lidcote Hall, 230; summoned to court by Sussex, 234; arrival at Saye's Court, 238; his petition to the Queen at Greenwich, 249; interview with Elizabeth, 251; meets Amy at Kenilworth, 297; twitted by Lambourne, 299; offends the Queen, 307; encounter with Leicester, 336; rescued by Flibbertigibbet, 340; before Elizabeth after the discovery, 342; hastes off to Cumnor, 345; but arrives too late, 350 KEN. III.

Trifles, subserviency to, 409 . . ST. RON. IV.

Trim-go-trix, 53 ABB. III.

Trimmel, the London bookseller, 22 . . WAV. I.

Tripoli, come from, a revel, 354 . . G. MNG. I.

Triptolemus Yellowley. *See* Yellowley. . PIR. III.

Tristan l'Hermite, meeting with Quentin at the river, 17; orders him to be hung, 36; apologises, 46; takes charge of Orleans and Dunois, 78; ready to execute the astrologer, 139; note on, 141 Q. DR. IV.

Tristrem, Sir, and the forest laws, 835 . . TAL. IV.

—— romance of, 825 CAS. D. V.

Troil, Brenda, 370, 389; cold reception to Mordaunt, 411; explanations with him, 426; confidences with Minna, 438; night visit from Norna, 439; her feelings and affections, 443; her fortune told, 449; visit to Norna, 472; in the hands of the pirates, 506; with Minna meets Cleveland at Stennis, 523; seized by the pirates but rescued by Mordaunt, 524; marriage, 530 PIR. III.

—— Magnus, the Udaller, 364; cold reception to Mordaunt at the festivities, 410; his punch-bowl, 417; indignant at the factor's improvements, 418; his fortune told, 447; visit to Norna, 469; dismissed, 479; and finds shelter in the hut, 481; Norna urges him to visit Kirkwall fair, 485; captured by the pirates, 506; liberated by Cleveland, 517; closing years, 530 PIR. III.

—— Minna, 370, 389; cold reception to Mordaunt, 411; attentions from Cleveland, 415; confidences with Brenda, 438; night visit from Norna, 439; her feelings and affections, 443; her fortune told, 450; meeting with her lover, 452; plights him the troth of Odin, 454; serenaded by Cleveland, 457; her feet stained with Mordaunt's blood, 460; riding on the precipice, 472; under Norna's spell, 475; in the hands of the pirates, 506; put ashore and takes the pistol, 510; meets Cleveland in the cathedral, 513; and at Stennis, 523; resignation, 531; disturbed by the pirates and rescued by Mordaunt, 524 . . . PIR. III.

Troil, Ulla. *See* Norna. PIR. III.

Trois-Eschelles, the weeping hangman, 37; his scruples, 143; at Hayraddin's execution, 164 Q. DR. IV.

Tronda Dronsdaughter, the servant, 381, 382 PIR. III.

Troth-plight, Norse, 362 PIR. III.

Trotter, Nelly. *See* Nelly Trotter. . ST. RON. IV.

Troubadours, 673 IVA. II.

—— Provençal, 530, 571 A. GEI. V.

Trouble, different effects of, 518 . . . PIR. III.

Trows, the, 402; note, 533 PIR. III.

Trudchen, assists Isabelle and Quentin, 111; rescued by Quentin, 176 Q. DR. IV.

Trumbull, Tom, the sanctimonious smuggler, 469; says grace over the punch, 474; Sabbatarianism of, 474; his hymn-book, 475; Nanty's opinion of, 479 REDG. IV.

Trumpeter Marine, at Sheriffmuir, 489 B. LM. II.

Truth, a cure for jealousy, 205 . . KEN. III.

—— the foundation of honour, 325 KEN. III.

—— when it serves my turn, 72 . ABB. III.

Trysting-tree of the outlaws, 616 . . IVA. II.

Tuck, Friar. *See* Friar Tuck. . . IVA. II.

Tulchan bishop, 674 IVA. II.

Tull, Rab, and the ghost, 394 . . . ANT. I.

Tully-Veolan, village, 23; manor-house and garden, 24, 25; *creagh* on, 40; revisited by Waverley, desolation, 149; festivities at, 166 . . WAV. I.

Tunstall, Frank, 547 F. NG. III.

Turf-Einar, yarl of Orkney and Shetland, note, 365 PIR. III.

Turnbull, Michael, at the chase, 835; conducts Augusta to De Walton, 870; struck down by him, 873; death of, and last words, 882 CAS. D. V.

Turner, Mrs. Anne, note on, 716 . . F. NG. III.

Turner, Sir James, 583 L. MONT. II.

—— note, 864 O. MRT. I.

Turner's Holm, note, 116 L. MONT. II.

Turnpenny, Tom. *See* Trumbull. REDG. IV.

Turntippet, Lord, his restitution, 464 B. LM. II.

Tuscar, the, of Shetland, note, 534 . . PIR. III.

Tutbury Bull-running, note on, 184 . WOOD. V.

Twapennie Faith, 764 MON. II.

'Twas near the fair city of Benevent, 840 TAL. IV.

Tweed, at Melrose, 687 MON. II.

Tweedie, family of, 539 BET. IV.

Twigtythe, the Cumberland clergyman, 143 WAV. I.

Twiscar, the, of Shetland, note, 534 . . PIR. III.

Twist ye, twine ye! 208 G. MNG. I.

Two Drovers, tale of, 859 TWO DR. IV.

—— Author's explanation, 672 . . CH. CAN. IV.

Tyburn Tom, highwayman, 261 . . HT. MID. II.

Tyre, Archbishop of, his opinion of doctors, 770; visits the sick squire, 771; his proposal to Richard, 810 . . . TAL. IV.

Tyrie, Rev. Michael, 713; tries to save Hamish, 719; tells his mother of his execution, 722 H. WID. IV.

Tyrrel, Frank, arrival at the Cleikum Inn, 196; reflections on the scene, 198; sensation at the Well over his drawing, 205; invitations to the Well, 208; joins the company at the Well, 210; the bet on his position, 211; arrested by Clara's empty chair, 214; quarrel over the wine, 221; throws Sir Bingo out of his way, 224; meets Clara, 226; receives Sir Bingo's challenge, 238; his disappearance, 246; Mowbray's inquiries about him, 291; history of his connection with Etherington and Clara, 292; assists Touchwood out of the sewer, 302; his reappearance at the Cleikum, 303; Jekyl's mediation, 306; gazes at Clara's portrait, 312; apology from Sir Bingo, 319; his meeting with Etherington, 319; his documents abstracted by Etherington, 327; at Clara's death-bed, 349 ST. RON. IV.

UBEDA, FRANCISCO, a hair in his pen, 52 WAV. I.

Udaller of Burgh Westra. *See* Troil, Magnus. PIR. III.

Ulla Troil. *See* Norna. PIR. III.

Ulrica, interview with Rebecca, 582; with Cedric, 591; her confession, 592; derides Front-de-Bœuf, 609; fires the castle, 610; her death-song, 615; note on, 676 . . IVA. II.

Una, Flora's attendant, 58 WAV. I.

Unction, extreme, Donald Bane on, 145 WAV. I.

Union of Scotland and England, 95 . B. DW. II.

Union of Scotlond and England, Fairservice's opinion of, 579, 595 . R. R. I.

Unreason, Abbot of, 49; note on, 167 . ABB. III.

Urfried. *See* Ulrica. IVA. II.

Urica, the Saxon, 680 C. RT. V.

Urrie or Urry, Sir John, 65 . . L. MONT. II.

—— note, 533 . PIR. III.

Ursel, Zedekias, in the dungeon, 657; visited by the Emperor, 701; attended by the physician, 706; restored to sight, 708; becomes giddy with his liberty, 710; refuses the Emperor's honours, 711; presented to the people, 724 . . C. RT. V.

Ursley, Dame. *See* Suddlechop. . F. NG. III.

Ursula, Sister, 854; her tale of elopement, 856; distress at her disfigurement, 858; leads Augusta to Douglas, 865; saves Fleming, 884; marriage, 887 CAS. D. V.

VAIN man! thou mayest esteem thy love as fair, motto, 617 C. RT. V.

Valence. *See* De Valence, Aymer. CAS. D. V.

Valentine Bulmer. *See* Etherington. ST. RON. IV.

Vallum at Kinprunes, 375, 409 . . . ANT. I.

Vanbeest Brown. *See* Brown, Vanbeest, *and* Bertram, Harry. G. MNG. I.

Vane, Sir Henry, English commissioner, 9 L. MONT. II.

Vanda, the murdered wife, 598; Eveline's dream of, 659 . . . BET. IV.

Vandyck, the painter, his power, 45 . WOOD. V.

Vanwelt, Jan, Rose's suitor, 568 . . . BET. IV.

Varanes, the Arab, 611 C. RT. V.

Varangian, the. *See* Hereward. . C. RT. V.

—— Guard, 589; at Laodicea, 608; at the lists, 722; note, 733 C. RT. V.

Varney, Richard, rencontre with Tressilian, 196; his account of Amy Robsart's position, 199; interview with her, 203; dissuades Leicester from leaving the court, 208; takes Lambourne into his service, 212; stopped by the usher at Greenwich, 247; alleges Amy is his wife, 249; sends Alasco down to Cumnor, 264; plies Leicester with his invention, 273; spurned by Amy, 276; administers the poison, 280; presents certificates of Amy's ill-health, 308; knighted, 310; again extricates Leicester from his difficulty, 321; his crisis, 325; slanders Amy to Leicester, 326; carries her off to Cumnor, 346; shoots Lambourne, 348; sets the trap, 349; suicide, 350 . . . KEN. III.

Vassals of the Church, 688 MON. II.

Vaudemont, Ferrand de. *See* Ferrand. A. GEI. v.
Vaughan, Master. *See* Mertoun, Basil. PIR. III.
—— *See* Cleveland. PIR. III.
Vaughan, Father. *See* Vernon, Sir Frederick. R. R. I.
Vaux. *See* Gilsland, Lord Thomas of. . TAL. IV.
Vehme-gericht, the Secret Tribunal, 486, 488; scroll presented to Charles, 518; president of, 550; summons Charles, 560; Palgrave's history of, 387 A. GEI. v.
Veilchen. *See* Annette Veilchen. A. GEI. v.
Vengeance, the Borderers' creed, 782 . MON. II.
Venice treacle, note, 236 KEN. III.
Venison, of roe, 34 WAV. I.
Venner, Thomas, Fifth Monarchy preacher, note, 926 PEV. III.
Vere (Earl of Oxford). *See* Philipson, Seignor. A. GEI. v.
Vere, Isabella, visit to the Dwarf, 105; delivered from Westburnflat, 116; story of her capture, 121; return to Ellieslaw, 124; forced to consent to marry Langley, 131; appeals to the Dwarf for help, 133; interview in his hut, 136; is delivered from Sir F. Langley, 139; marries Earnscliff, 142 B. DW. II.
—— of Ellieslaw, Hobbie incites Earnscliff against, 97; allows his daughter to be captured, 121; forces her consent to marry Sir F. Langley, 131; resigns his property to Isabella, 140; end, 142 B. DW. II.
Vermandois, Hugh, Count of, 614; wrecked, 629 C. RT. v.
Vernon, Diana. *See* Die Vernon. . R. R. I.
—— Sir Frederick (Vaughan), 583, 587, 656; meets with Osbaldistone near Aberfoil, 652, 662; his history, 670; seeks the protection of Osbaldistone, 673; made prisoner by Rashleigh, and rescue, 677 . . . R. R. I.
Vexhelia, Brenhilda's attendant, 697 C. RT. v.
Vich Alister More, 24 L. MONT. II.
Vich Ian Vohr. *See* MacIvor, Fergus. WAV. I.
Vidal, Renault. *See* Cadwallon. . . BET. IV.
Vienne, Archbishop of, 522 A. GEI. v.
Viewless essence, thin and bare, 308 F. M. P. v.
Village idiots, 27 WAV. I.
Villages, emigration from, to towns, 7 ST. RON. IV.
Villehardouin, the historian, 733 . . C. RT. v.
Vin, Jin. *See* Jin Vin. F. NG. III.
Violante, the muse, 601 C. RT. v.
Violence, effects on the mind, 645 . . R. R. I.
—— when raw and recent, 30 . . . ABB. III.
Virtue and talent, 111 WOOD. v.
Voet, Jan, law professor, 370 . . REDG. IV.
Voluminous authors, 724 F. NG. III.
Volunteers, time of George III., 383, 513 . ANT. I.
Von Eulen, journal of, 181 WAV. I.
Vorst, Peterkin, a Fleming, 573 . . . BET. IV.
Vulture, Alpine, 399 A. GEI. v.

WABSTER, MICHAEL, 220 F. M. P. v.
Wade, Marshal, letter from Rob Roy to, 698 R. R. I.
—— his Highland roads, 701 HT. MID. II.
Wager, about the candlesticks, 17, 18 L. MONT. II.
Waiting, clumsy, 43 ST. RON. IV.
Wakefield, Harry, the English drover, 861; his beasts turned out for Robin's, 862; quarrel in the alehouse, 864; stabbed by Robin, 866 TWO DR. IV.
Wakeman, Sir George, Queen's physician, 856; note, 961 . . PEV. III.
Waken, lords and ladies gay, 181 . . WAV. I.
Waldeck, Martin, tale of, 422 . . . ANT. I.
Waldemar. *See* Fitzurse. IVA. II.
Waldstetten, Countess, 441 A. GEI. v.
Walker, Helen, prototype of Jeanie Deans, 149; epitaph on, 353 HT. MID. II.
Walker, Peter or Patrick, Cameronian historian, 357 HT. MID. II.
Walker, Rev. Mr., minister of Dunnottar, 706 O. MRT. I.
Walker, Rev. Robert, 738 S. DT. v.
Walking exercise, exhilarating, 248 . G. MNG. I.
Walkinshaw, Mrs., Prince Charles's mistress, 361; at Fairladies, 491; the Jacobites' objections to, 519 . . REDG. IV.
Wallace, Sir William, encounter with the Red Rover, 233 F. M. P. v.
—— rescues Ursula, 857 CAS. D. v.
Wallace, William, architect of Heriot's Hospital, note, 714 . . F. NG. III.
Wallace Inn, at Gandercleugh, 703 O. MRT. I.
—— supper at, 153 HT. MID. II.
Walladmor, German novel, 544 . . . BET. IV.
Wallenrode, Earl, thrown by Richard, 785 TAL. IV.
Wallenstein, Dalgetty's service with, 12 L. MONT. II.
Wallflower, fragrance of, at night, 436. . ANT. I.
Wallingford Castle, 743 PEV. III.
Walloons, 517 A. GEI. v.
Walpole, Sir Robert, treatment of the Jacobites, 360 REDG. IV.
Walter of Guiyock's curse, note, 637 . . R. R. I.
Waltheof, Duchess of Rothsay's confessor, 346 F. M. P. v.
Waltheof, the Saxon, 677 C. RT. v.
Walton, Sir John de, 806, 824; conversation with Greenleaf, 829; disagreement with Aymer, 831, 836; warned by Turnbull, 835; examines the minstrel, 841; repulsed by Augustine, 844; Lady Berkely's vow, 855; learns of Augustine's disguise, 861; meets her at Bloody Sykes, 872; refuses the conditions, 872; strikes down Turnbull, 873; encounter with Douglas, 873; in the church, 883; surrenders, 885 . . CAS. D. v.
Wamba, the fool, in the forest, 507; at Cedric's table, 518; vanquishes the Jew with a shield of brawn, 531; goes for assistance, 569; enters Torquilstone as a priest, 589; exchanges his dress with Cedric, 590; examined by Front-de-Bœuf, 595; caressed by his master, 617; song, O Tybalt, love, 651; hamstrings Fitzurse's horse, 653 . . . IVA. II.
Wandering Willie, 401; his tale, 404; at the dance at Brokenburn, 412; communicates with Darsie by means of his tunes, 454; attachment to Sir H. Redgauntlet, 464; at Crackenthorp's, 507; plays 'The Campbells are coming,' 528 REDG. IV.
Wappenschaws, in Scotland, 713 . . O. MRT. I.
Warden, Henry, meets Halbert, 762; guided to Avenel Castle, 764; objects to Avenel's mode of life, 771; brought prisoner to the Sub-Prior, 797; ordered to be bound, 799; liberated on parole, 804; visits the convent, 820 MON. II.
—— admonishes Lady Avenel, 8; his sermon on Roland, 20 . ABB. III.
Ward Hill carbuncle, note, 535 . . . PIR. III.
Wardlaw, Osbaldistone's land steward, 673 R. R. I.
Wardlaw, Henry, Archbishop of St. Andrews, 321 . . F. M. P. v.
Wardour, Sir Anthony, 379 ANT. I.
—— Sir Arthur, 379; pedigree and quarrel with Oldbuck, 384, 385; goes home by the sands, 387; his mining schemes, 405; embarrassments, 407; judged of by his letters, 411; at the picnic, 420; with Dousterswivel in St. Ruth's, 437; visit to Oldbuck for another advance, 442; presents him with the discovered casket, 443; second visit to St. Ruth's, and great discovery, 450, 493; Edie's story of his ancestors, 449; in the hands of the sheriff-officers, 496, 505; the crisis, 501; good news, 509; turns out to resist the French, 515 ANT. I.
Wardour, Isabella, 380; meets Lovel at the Antiquary's, 383; proposes to return home by the sands, 386; the rescue, 387; tries to reward the mendicant, 402; interview with Lovel and Oldbuck, 404; at the picnic in St. Ruth's, 419; her romance of Martin Waldeck read by Lovel, 422; sets the *savans* to differ, 427; with the feelings of Macbeth after Duncan's murder, 442; opens the creditor's letter, 503; interview with Edie, 504; marriage, 517 ANT. I.
—— Reginald, opportune letter from, 509; arrival of, in Fairport, 516 ANT. I.
—— Sir Richard, 'with the Red Hand,' 449, 508 ANT. I.
—— Manuscript, 503 IVA. II.
Warroch Point, cave at, 279, 342; tragedy at, 219, 331, 347, 349 G. MNG. I.
Warroch Wood, 219; revisited, 341 G. MNG. I.
War's a fearsome thing! 820 O. MRT. I.
Washing scene, at Tully-Veolan, 26 . WAV. I.
Wasp, Brown's terrier, annoys the enemy, 252; left at Charlies-hope, 258; its long trot with Dandie, 314; sounds the alarm at Portanferry, 323 G. MNG. I.
Wasted, weary, wherefore stay? 260 . G. MNG. I.
Waste of Cumberland, 251 G. MNG. I.
Was that an echo? 438 ANT. I.
Watch, to Highlanders a living thing, 117 WAV. I.
Watchwords, Dalgetty on, 13 . . L. MONT. II.
Waterfall, at Glennaquoich, 59; note on, 173 WAV. I.
—— 663 R. R. I.
Watering-place characters, 4; governments, 37; surveillance, 79 ST. RON. IV.
Water spirit, or kelpie, 162 HT. MID. II.
Watkins, Will, the Englishman, 287 . F. M. P. v.
Watt, James, his scientific achievements, 838 MON. II.
Waverley, novel, authorship and origin of, 3; revision of the Novels, 1; notes on, apology for, 8; notes, 185, 187 . . WAV. I.
—— explanation of characters, etc., 669 CH. CAN. IV.
—— Edward, education, 13; choice of a profession, 17; military education, 23; reception at Tully-Veolan, 26; affronted by Balmawhapple, 31; journey to Glennaquoich, 44; in Donald Bane's cave, 46; health drunk by MacIvor, 55; emotions towards Flora, 59; his loyalty incited by the bard, 60; loss of his seal, 62; wounded

in the stag-hunt, 63; returns to Glennaquoich, 65; ordered to return to his regiment, 67; undoes the 'sable cockade,' 69; last meeting with Flora at the waterfall, 72; 'inquired after by the soldiers at Tully-Veolan, 74; leaves Glennaquoich, 76; detained at Cairnvreckan, 79; examined before Major Melville, 81; rescued from Gilfillan, 92; arrives at Doune Castle, 96; leaves for Edinburgh, 98; presented to Prince Charles, 100; assumes the Mac-Ivor tartan, 102, 104; repulsed by Flora at Holyrood, 107; commences the march, 109; saves Colonel Talbot's life at Prestonpans, 116; discovers the missing letters and the plot against him, 123; his courtships in Edinburgh, 126; changes his affections, 129; quarrel with Mac-Ivor, 136; gets separated from the Highlanders at Clifton, 141; journey to London, 143; return to Scotland, 147; receives explanations of past events, 153; an accepted lover, 159; leaves for Carlisle to intercede for Mac-Ivor, 160; returns to Waverley-Honour, 165; nuptials at Tully-Veolan, 166; note, 186 . . . WAV. I.
Waverley, Sir Everard, his will and courtship, 11, 12; his political susceptibilities, 18; parting advice to his nephew, 20; letter to his nephew, 67; charged with treason, 143, 145; favours his nephew's suit, 157, 165, 167 WAV. I.
—— Rachel. *See* Rachel, Aunt. . . WAV. I.
—— Richard, estrangement from his brother, 11; political intrigue and fall, 66; death of, 143 WAV. I.
—— Honour, 10; revisited, 166 . . . WAV. I.
—— Novels, joint-stock company, 543 BET. IV.
Wayland Smith, the farrier, 220; surprised by Tressilian, 224; narrative of his life, 225; his den blown up, 227; administers a draught to Sir Hugh Robsart, 233; buys medicine from the Jew, 236; administers it to the Earl of Sussex, 240; sent down by Tressilian to Cumnor, 259; interview with Amy as a pedlar, 268; aids her escape to Kenilworth, 283; loses Amy's letter to Leicester, 300; expelled from the castle, 301; explains Amy's escape to Leicester, 341; weds Janet, 350; note on, 352 KEN. III.
Weatherport, Captain, of the Halcyon frigate, 525, 528 . . . PIR. III.
Weddings, ancient and modern, 177 Q. DR. IV.
—— penny, 710 F. NG. III.
We do that in our zeal, motto, 81 . WOOD. V.
Weeping, woman's last resource, 747 O. MRT. I.
Weir, Major, the ape, 405, 410 . . REDG. IV.
Weiver, Fifth Monarchy preacher, 926, 944 PEV. III.
Well. *See* St. Ronan's. ST. RON. IV.
We'll give them the metal our mountain affords, 106 WAV. I.
We'll keep our customs, motto, 418 . PIR. III.
Well, well, at worst, 'tis neither theft nor coinage, motto, 492 . ANT. I.
Wellwood, Sophia (Mrs. Mannering), 206, 228 G. MNG. I.
Welsh wars, time of Henry II., 542; chieftains favourable to the Crusades, 547; banquet, 549; houses, 550; weapons, 550; invasion, 553; bowmen, 724; gold chains, 724 . . . BET. IV.
Wenlock, Wild, besieged, 638, 642 . . BET. IV.
Wert thou, like me, in life's low vale, 75 L. MONT. II.
Westburnflat, Willie of, interview with the Dwarf, 107; ordered by Elshie to give up Grace Armstrong, 110; burns Heughfoot, 111; attacked in his tower, 116; death, 142; note, 143 B. DW. II.
—— Tower, 114 B. DW. II.
Westminster Assembly, note, 15 . WOOD. V.
Westphalia, the Red Land, 490 . . A. GEI. V.
Wetzweiler, Tiel. *See* Glorieux. . Q. DR. IV.
Whacker, Major, 148 WAV. I.
Whale-chase, in the Shetland voe, 430 PIR. III.
Whalley, Richard, the regicide, tale of, 797; note on, 955 . . PIR. III.
What ails me, I may not, 690 . . CH. CAN. IV.
What did ye wi' the bridal ring, 214 HT. MID. II.
What ho, my jovial mates! motto, 481 . PIR. III.
What I am, I must not show, 723 . . . MON. II.
What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones? 306 . . KEN. III.
What's your wull? 833 O. MRT. I.
When Israel, of the Lord beloved, 645 . IVA. II.
When I was a young lad, 174 . . WOOD. V.
When the cannons are roaring, 43 L. MONT. II.
When the cock crows, 876 CAS. D. V.
When the fight of grace is fought, 306 HT. MID. II.
When the glede's in the blue cloud, 217 HT. MID. II.
When the last Laird of Ravenswood, 429 B. LM. II.
Where is the grave of Sir Arthur Orellan, 849 CAS. D. V.
Whet the bright steel, 615 IVA. II.
Whigs, the only true, 710; triumph of, under William III., 832. *See also* Covenanters *and* Cameronians. O. MRT. I.
Whig's vault, at Dunnottar, 706 . . O. MRT. I.
Whisky, among the Highlanders, 47 . WAV. I.
—— 333 . F. M. P. V.
Whistler, the (Effie's child), his birth, 336; rescues his mother, 340; his connection with Donacha Dhu, 349; slays his own father, 350; end of, 351 HT. MID. II.
Whistling up the rent, note, 332 . . G. MNG. I.
Whitaker, Dick, the steward, 746; blames the double ale, 747; arrests Bridgenorth, 760 . PEV. III.
Whitecraft, Dame, of the Cat and Fiddle, 826; warns Julian, 829 PEV. III.
—— John, the innkeeper, 828 . . . PEV. III.
Whitefoord, Colonel, 669 CH. CAN. IV.
—— note on, 187 WAV. I.
Whitefriars, in London, 543; the Sanctuary, 616, 620; characters of, note, 714 F. NG. III.
Whitehall Palace, 565; time of James I., 565; court at, 583 . . F. NG. III.
Whitehorse Vale, 218; note on, 352 . KEN. III.
White Lady, Author's explanation, 683; appears to Mary, 694; Tibb's account of, 698; encounter with Father Philip, 702; and with Eustace, 714; meeting with Halbert, 723; gives him the bodkin, 746; appears in Halbert's bedroom, 756; reveals the Book to Mary, 794; appears to Edward, 803; last appearance, 826; criticism on, and notes, 828, 831 . . MON. II.
Who is he?—One that for the lack of land, motto, 465 . . . ANT. I.
Why sitt'st thou by that ruin'd hall? 398 ANT. I.
Why, then, we will have bellowing of beeves, motto, 744 . . . PEV. III.
Wicklifffites and Lollards, 266 . . F. M. P. V.
Wicks of Baiglie, 206; note on, 374 . F. M. P. V.
Wight, Isle of, 769 S. DT. V.
Wigs, the three paragon, of the parish, 418 ANT. I.
Wildblood, Claverhouse's charger, 751, 823; note on, 865 . O. MRT. I.
Wildblood, Dick, Royalist, 752 . . PEV. III.
Wild cattle, 831, 833, 888 CAS. D. V.
Wilderness of the temptation, 747 . TAL. IV.
Wildfire, Madge. *See* Madge Wildfire. HT. MID. II.
Wildfire Club, 17 ST. RON. IV.
Wildrake, Roger, 29; startles Tomkins, 31; sent with Markham's letter to Cromwell, 36; interview with the Protector, 40; and receives the warrant, 46; his struggles to be temperate, 47; his dream of the devil, 52; throws up his hat, 66; crosses swords with Harrison, 69; drugged by the spirits, 75; joins the Lees at the lodge, 97; brings the challenge to Charles, 129; encounter with Rochecliffe, 134; devotion to the King, 139; sends warning to the Lodge, 148; lunges at Cromwell, 150; joins the prisoners, 174; conveys news of the Restoration to the King, 181 WOOD. V.
Wilibert of Waverley, the Crusader, 15 WAV. I.
Wilkinson, James, 394 REDG. IV.
Will, Mrs. Bertram's, 294 G. MNG. I.
Will, the originator of our motives, 408 ANT. I.
William of Orange, effects of his accession on Scotland, 832; reception of Morton in Holland, 846 O. MRT. I.
William the Conqueror, 616 C. RT. V.
William the Lion, of Scotland, 853 . . TAL. IV.
Williams, Farmer, 142 WAV. I.
—— Ned, supposed to be caught sweethearting, 141; marries Cicely Jopson, 143 . WAV. I.
Willingham Rectory, 273 HT. MID. II.
Willoughby, Lord, at Elizabeth's court, 255 KEN. III.
Wilson, Andrew, the smuggler, 158; execution of 161; Staunton's connection with, 278 HT. MID. II.
Wilson, David, book collector, 373 . ANT. I.
Wilson, Mrs. Alison, the Milnwood housekeeper, 724; urges her master to 'siller' the soldiers, 737; tells Morton of the straits of the Tillietudlem garrison, 802; on Morton's return, 845; resigns Milnwood to him, 847, 861 O. MRT. I.
Wilton, Abbess of, note, 681 R. R. I.
Windsor Castle, under Cromwell, 38 WOOD. V.
Winds, song to the, 476; sale of, 533 . PIR. III.
Winkelried, Arnold, Swiss patriot, 404 A. GEI. V.
Wines, of France and Burgundy, 559 Q. DR. IV.
Wingate, the steward, 18; his political speculations, 25 . . . ABB. III.
Wingfield, Lancie, the spy, 673, 676 . . R. R. I.
Wing-the-Wind, Michael, 67 . . . ABB. III.
Winnie, Annie, an old crone, 452 . . B. LM. II.
Winter, the General's servant, 773 . S. DT. V.
Winterblossom, Mr., 203; rapture over Tyrrel's drawing, 205; letter of invitation to him, 208; agrees to act second in the duel, 240 ST. RON. IV.

Win-the-fight, the attorney, 777 . . . Pev. III.
Winton, Earl of, 726 . Ch. Can. IV.
Wiser Raymondus, in his closet pent, 440 Ant. I.
Witchcraft, belief in, 207 Ht. Mid. II.
—— time of Richard I., 635 Iva. II.
—— in Scotland, Rose's tale, 37 . . Wav. I.
—— law against, cited by Oldbuck, 445; note on, 520 . . . Ant. I.
Witches and warlocks, 119 B. Dw. II.
Witch Gellatley, Rose's story of, 37 . . . Wav. I
Witch of Berkeley, 48 Abb. III.
Witherington, General, 773; his children cured by Hartley, 774; interview with his son, 777; death of his wife, 778; account of his life, 781 . S. Dt. V.
Within that awful volume lies, 723 . . Mon. II.
Without a ruin, broken, tangled, cumbrous, motto, 640 . . C. Rt. V.
Wits, time of James I., 603 F. Ng. III.
Wittenbold, General, stops Neil Blane, 849 O. Mrt. I.
Wogan, Captain, 71; sung by Flora, 78 Wav. I.
Wolf, rescues Roland, 7; joy at seeing his master, 15 Abb. III.
Wolfbrand Oldenbuck, printer, 385 . Ant. I.
Wolf-fanger, the hound, 431 A. Gei. V.
Wolf of Plinlimmon. *See* Gwenwyn. Bet. IV.
Wolf's Crag, 394; banqueting hall, 396; scene in, with Ravenswood and the Ashtons, 419; pseudo-burning of, 458, 461; identified with Fast Castle, 368 . . B. Lm. III.
Wolf's Hope, village, connection with the Ravenswoods, 412; entertainment of Marquis A—— at, 463 B. Lm. II.
—— prototype of, 670 Ch. Can. IV.
Wolves, in Scotland, 811, 833 . . Cas. D. V.
—— Swiss, danger of, 421 A. Gei. V.
Woman of the Tree. *See* M'Tavish, Elspat. H. Wid. IV.
Woman's brain inconstant, 754 . . . Pev. III.
Woman's faith and woman's trust, 618 . . Bet. IV.
—— last resource, — weeping, 747 . O. Mrt. II.
—— place in society, 697; virtues and vices, 704 C. Rt. V.
Women, camp-followers during the Civil War, 1645, 89 . . Wood. V.
—— deceiver of, otherwise unscrupulous, 704 C. Rt. V.
—— Eastern ideas of, 743 Tal. IV.
—— eternally thinking of children, 771; when power will be resigned to, 778 . . . Pev. III.
—— fond of discussing their neighbours, 392 Redg. IV.
—— fond of investigating mystery, 364; side with the oppressed, 462; whims of, 412 . . Pir. III.
—— gifted with light satire, 187 . . St. Ron. IV.
—— govern us at every turn, 640 . . Bet. IV.
—— guided by the opinion of others, 216 F. M. P. V.
—— inconsistencies of, admired, 416 . Pir. III.
—— naturally compassionate, 784 . . Mon. II.
—— respect for personal appearance, 287 St. Ron. IV.
Womenkind, Oldbuck's, 371; he agrees with Lycurgus and Mahomet as to their uses, 381; opinion of his, 417 . . . Ant. I.
Woodbourne, 242; attacked by smugglers, 268; Pleydell's visit, 326; arrival of Bertram and Dandie, 329; embarrassed breakfast party, 336 G. Mng. I.
Woodcock, the falconer, 17; assists Roland, 28; dressed as the Abbot of Unreason, 51, 54; accompanies Roland to Edinburgh, 59; advices, 63; meets an old companion, 67; switched by Henry Seton, 77; last admonitions to Roland, 79; struck down at Langside, and recognition, 162 Abb. III.
Woodend cottage, 181 Ht. Mid. II.
Wooden mare, note, 864 O. Mrt. I.
Woodstall, Henry, English soldier, 819 Tal. IV.
Woodstock, just devil of, 1, 188; parish church, 7; maypole, 18; mayor of, 48; commissioners, 71, 80, 188; park, 134; scuffle, 186 . . Wood. V.
Woodstock Lodge, 19; the chimney-piece, 20; occupied by the commissioners, 21; demon of, 49, 51; night scenes at, 57; reoccupied by Lee, 87; the Spanish chamber, 101; occupied by Cromwell, 147; labyrinth, search for the King, 168; note, 488 Wood. V.
—— the Novel, note on, 4 Wood. V.
—— Park, 213 Ken. III.
Woodville, Lord, visit from Browne, 884 Tap. Ch. IV.
—— Castle, haunted chamber of, 884 Tap. Ch. IV.
Wooing, forcible, in the Highlands, 692; note, 697 . . . R. R. I.
Word, the, slayeth, 700 Mon. II.
Wordsworth, his verses on Rob Roy, 686 R. R. I.
Wraiths, 84 L. Mont. II.
Wreckage furniture, 410; in Shetland, 533 Pir. III.
Wreck scene, Sumburgh Head, 391 . Pir. III.
Wright, or Key, Jean, carried off by Robin Oig, 692; ballad on, 697 R. R. I.
Writing, man's character told from, 679 Ch. Can. IV.
Writing-desk, Author's old, 5 . . . Wav. I.
Wylie, Andrew, Jarvie's old clerk, 619 . . R. R. I.
Wylie Mactrickit, Ailie Wilson's suitor, 846 O. Mort. I.
Wynd, Henry, the Smith. *See* Henry Wynd. F. M. P. V.

Yagger, Bryce Snailsfoot. *See* Snailsfoot Pir. III.
Yarlshof Castle, 363, 366 Pir. III.
Yawkins, the smuggler, note, 356 . G. Mng. I.
Yellowley, Barbara, 375; her economy, 377, 379; broken through, 381; noting the waste, 415; disapproves fortune-telling, 448 . Pir. III.
—— Jasper, 374 Pir. III.
—— Mrs. Jasper, her dream, 375 . Pir. III.
—— Triptolemus, his education, 376; emigrates to Shetland, 378; his reception of Mordaunt, 380; upset by the shelty, 408; his improvements, 418; at the whale-chase, 430; meets Magnus in the hut, 481; tells of his treasure trove, 482; a hostage to the pirates, 503; escapes, 504 . . . Pir. III.
Yes! I love justice well, motto, 489 . Ant. I.
Yes, thou may'st sigh, 345 F. M. P. V.
Ye thought in the world there was no power to tame ye, 837 Pev. III.
Yezed, Sword of the Lord, 744 . . . Tal. IV.
Yoglan, Zacharias, Jewish chemist, 236 Ken. III.
Yon path of greensward, motto, 24 . Wood. V.
York and Lancaster parties, 509, 512 . A. Gei. V.
Yorke, Rowland, 829 Mon. II.
York House, London, 900 Pev. III.
Yorkshire Tragedy, a play, 178 . . . Ken. III.
Young men will love thee more fair and more fast, 38 . . . Wav. I.
Young Nick and auld Nick, 607 . . . R. R. I.
Young Pretender. *See* Charles Edward. Wav. I.; Redg. IV.
Youth, the aged sympathise with the enjoyments of, 23 Q. Dr. IV.
Youthful independence, 537 R. R. I.
Youth of the dark eye, 723 Mon. II.
Yungfrauw Hagenslaapen, Hatteraick's lugger, 209; chased by the revenue cutter, 218, 222 G. Mng. I.

Zarah. *See* Fenella. Pev. III.
Zetland. *See* Shetland. Pir. III.
Zilia de Monçada. *See* Monçada. . S. Dt. V.
Zimmerman, Adam, 385, 420 A. Gei. V.
Zingaris. *See* Gipsies. Q. Dr. IV.
Zohauk, history of, 748 Tal. IV.
Zosimus, the Patriarch, 601; his zeal for the orthodox cross, 622; receives the Emperor's confession, 695; his tale of Constantine, 719 C. Rt. V.
Zulichium, enchanted princess of, 637 C. Rt. V.

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